

Date 08 August 2022

Statement for website

The Bishop of London, colonialism and transatlantic slavery- history re-examined

Fulham Palace Trust is committed to addressing the issues of power, racism and inequality in the history we tell in our museum, and to be alert to any cultural bias that might exist within the organisation.

Fulham Palace Trust will seek to:

- Engage and involve the widest possible community in researching and writing the stories that we tell
- Ensure the diversity of the people involved in decision making
- Ensure that our site and online presence are welcoming and accessible to all

Fulham Palace Trust is pleased to announce that it is working with the Parents Action and Resource Centre (PARC) based in Ealing on a project to examine the stories that are told in the museum.

PARC is an independent community organisation that works to address the inequalities that currently exist in the education system. Amongst other initiatives, PARC operates the Queen Nzinga Saturday club for children aged 7 to 13.

PARC directors visited the museum on 19 April 2022 to discuss the museum displays with Dr Cassandra Gooptar, who has been involved in education projects including developing resources and co-hosting workshops geared at primary and secondary schools, and is engaged in conducting commissioned research on historical individuals and institutions linked with transatlantic slavery. The exhibition content was then discussed with the children and families at PARC's Saturday club.

Changes to the museum displays and the guided tour script are being prepared over summer 2022 and will include further information about the role of the Bishop of London as the "colonial diocesan", and the exploitative nature of plant collecting in North America and the Caribbean.

In addition to this project Fulham Palace Trust is working with four organisations including PARC to develop a temporary exhibition for launch in October 2022. The organisations will be working with Adisa, a spoken word poet, finding inspiration from stories of physical and spiritual resistance in the Caribbean and North America during the height of the transatlantic slave trade, which ultimately led to the ending of the slave trade and slavery itself in the British Empire. We hope that the exhibition will encourage visitors to think about how history is told and by whom, something that PARC covers with children and families as part of its Saturday club sessions.

All of these initiatives would not be possible without a significant research report delivered by Desirée Baptiste, a specialist researcher on colonialism and transatlantic slavery who has conducted commissioned research for heritage bodies and for exhibitions. In her role as consultant researcher in 2021-22, Desirée produced a vast, fully referenced report of the core stories relating to the Bishop of London, colonialism and transatlantic slavery and a 250-year historical timeline. This valuable research, and Desirée's insights and perspectives on the material and FPT, grounded in expertise, was supplemented by two shorter focussed reports by two PhD students and graduates, Dr Cassandra Gooptar and Isaac Crichlow, who also provided insights on the varied links between the Bishops of London and historical slavery. Further work is ongoing subject to funding.

Founder and director of PARC, Ade Banjoko, commented on the project, "We are delighted to collaborate with the Fulham Palace Trust on this project. It directly ties into the work we are currently doing to include voices that have been historically underrepresented in museums and other institutions."

Sian Harrington, CEO of Fulham Palace Trust, comments, "Fulham Palace Trust is firmly part of the UK museums community which is determined to challenge the standard narrative of British history. PARC does such inspirational work with children and families, and we are so pleased that they are happy to engage with us on such an important subject. We look forward to continuing to work with PARC and other groups as co-producers of new work for display at the Palace."

The projects were made possible by an Arts Council England funded, Museum Development London grant and an Arts Council England grant.

-ENDS-

Notes for editors

For further information please contact:

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About Fulham Palace

Fulham Palace is the historic home of the Bishops of London. Purchased in AD 704, for centuries the Palace and surrounding estate served as a country retreat for the Bishops and their families, later becoming the Bishop's permanent residence in the early 20th century until the last Bishop moved out in 1973. The Palace and 13-acre botanic garden are now managed by Fulham Palace Trust, an independent charity dedicated to the ongoing preservation, restoration and interpretation of this historically important site.

About Parents Action and Resource Centre (PARC)

Parents Action and Resource Centre (PARC) is an independent community organisation based at Northolt Village Community Centre, Ealing Road, Northolt UB5

6AD. It aims to address inequalities in education by supporting parents and empowering communities. It carries out a number of different activities including: Queen Nzinga Saturday School Club for children aged 7 to 13, Coffee Saturdays for parents and educators to network and share best practice; exclusions advocacy training and clinic; inclusive curriculum development support and education advice. Email: info@parentsactionresource.org.uk. <http://parentsactionresource.org.uk>