

Sankofa Project (July 2017)

The [Sankofa](#) project investigates Liverpool's Black social history. The project is led by National Museums Liverpool, with funding from the [Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund](#), and works with individuals and community groups to support collections relating to the city's Black heritage.

Project Curator, Mitty Ramagavigan, here explains the aims of the project and some of the activities carried out with the local community in Liverpool.

Could you tell us about the background to the project and how it started?

The Sankofa project is something that National museums Liverpool has wanted to do for a long time and thanks to the support of Esmee Fairbairn we were able to start working on it in July 2016. It's clear that there are really interesting objects relating to Liverpool's Black heritage in our collections but there are even more incredible stories and objects out in the community.

What are the main aims of the project? How long will it run for?

The Sankofa project aims to progress our understanding of Liverpool's Black history by bringing together stories and objects, and supporting people and communities to look after their unique and often hidden history. Connecting stories from people and community groups, and those within museum collections, will form a rich picture of Liverpool's Black experience. It will run until July 2018 but hopefully its legacies will be much longer.

How have you engaged with the local community, both organisations and individuals?

We've run various events to highlight the importance of looking after your own history and celebrating local Black History, and not just doing that in October! We've also been at Granby street market and Africa Oye, to let people and organisations who might not always come to the museums about the project too. I've been trying to meet as many people as possible who might be interested in getting involved, so it has

involved a healthy amount of chats over tea. Next month we'll be starting a series of free workshops from learning how to take and oral history to researching your family tree. All of these are designed to make support people as much as possible and uncover those hidden histories.

What will be the main outcomes of the project and how will it have a longer-term impact in relation to issues of community involvement in heritage and collections?

One of the main out comes of the project will be creating the Sankofa website which will share NML's collections but also share objects and memories from the Local community. It aims is to be collaborative and to build on these relationships for potential future projects. We're still working on what all the legacies of the project could and should be but hopefully we'll be able to further build on the fantastic relationships we've built during the project. We wouldn't rule out an exhibition or display in future.