



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Shepton Mallet Prison



Black History Month at Shepton Mallet Prison



Welcome to our special Black History Month exhibition. This event explores Shepton Mallet Prison's complex history and its association with the Black community, uncovering stories that reflect broader societal struggles against racism and injustice. These stories, though difficult, are essential to understanding our past. By sharing them, we aim to foster reflection, dialogue, and recognition of the resilience and courage shown by those affected.

We invite you to join us from October 1st to 31st for this important and moving experience.

Joel Campbell, CEO of Shepton Mallet Prison,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Joel Campbell".

A large orange circle containing white text.

**Celebrating
Heritage,
Empowering
Change:
Black History
month at
Shepton Mallet
Prison**

The exhibition is free to attend, and you can book your **FREE** tickets online at:
www.sheptonmalletprison.com.

Overview of the Exhibition

This exhibition consists of six mini exhibits that bring to light the untold stories of Black individuals during World War II and beyond:

1. **“Brown Babies” Exhibition** – Curated by Professor Lucy Bland, this exhibit delves into the little-known history of the children born to Black GIs and white British women during WWII.
2. **Britain’s “Brown Babies” Book** – Authored by Professor Lucy Bland, this book provides an in-depth exploration of the lives of these mixed-race children.
3. **The Case of Leroy Henry** – A detailed account of the wrongful conviction of African American GI Leroy Henry and the public outcry that led to his exoneration.
4. **The Execution of Private David Cobb** – The tragic story of Private David Cobb, a young Black soldier executed at Shepton Mallet during WWII.
5. **The Remarkable Life of Bernard Benedict James** – Celebrating the inspiring journey of Bernard Benedict James, a Black WWII veteran who overcame significant obstacles to become a leading aero space engineer.
6. **Diversity in Art at Shepton Mallet Prison** – An exploration of artistic expressions within the prison walls, highlighting the role of art in rehabilitation and diversity.

Plus

Evening Behind Bars: Reflection and Stories - a deeper exploration into the stories of the children born to Black GIs and white British women during WWII, with our guest speaker, Susann Savidge, Chair of SACN.

(Charge Applies for Evening Behind Bars)

“Brown Babies” Exhibition

Curated by Lucy Bland

This exhibit unveils the hidden history of approximately 2,000 children born to Black GIs and white British women during WWII, known as "Brown Babies." These children often faced prejudice and struggled with their identities in a segregated society.

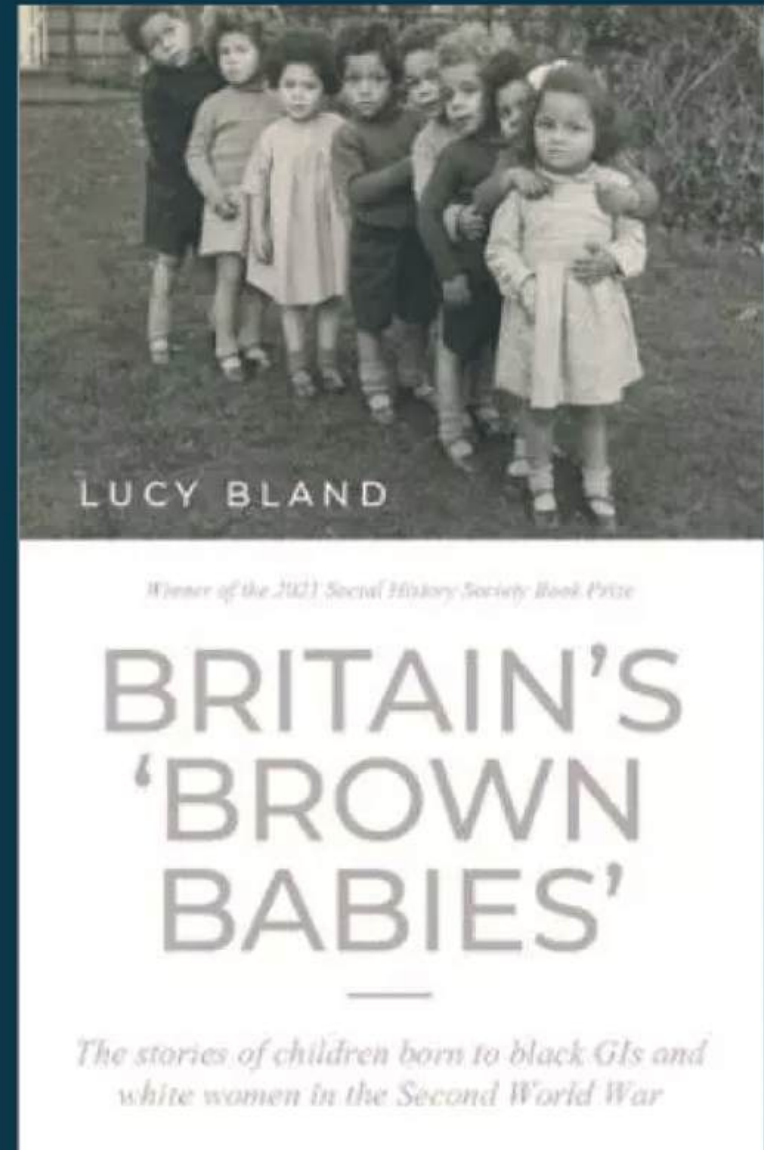
The exhibit, curated by Professor Lucy Bland, includes stories both heart-wrenching and hopeful, providing a compassionate insight into their lives and the societal attitudes of the time.



Britain's "Brown Babies" Book Written by Professor Lucy Bland

Professor Lucy Bland's book, Britain's "Brown Babies" sheds light on the mixed-race children born in Britain during WWII.

These stories are contextualised against government policies and public attitudes, highlighting the racism and identity struggles these children faced. This book is a crucial contribution to our understanding of the social history of post-war Britain.



The Case of Leroy Henry

African American GI Leroy Henry was wrongfully convicted of rape in 1944 in a case that exemplified the racial prejudice prevalent in the US Army during WWII.

Following a public outcry in Britain, and interventions by civil rights groups, his death sentence was overturned, and he was exonerated. This exhibit highlights the power of community action and the fight against racial injustice.



Black American GIs and a British vicar join voices at a hymn service for US soldiers in England, 1942
(Image: Haywood Magee/Picture Post/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

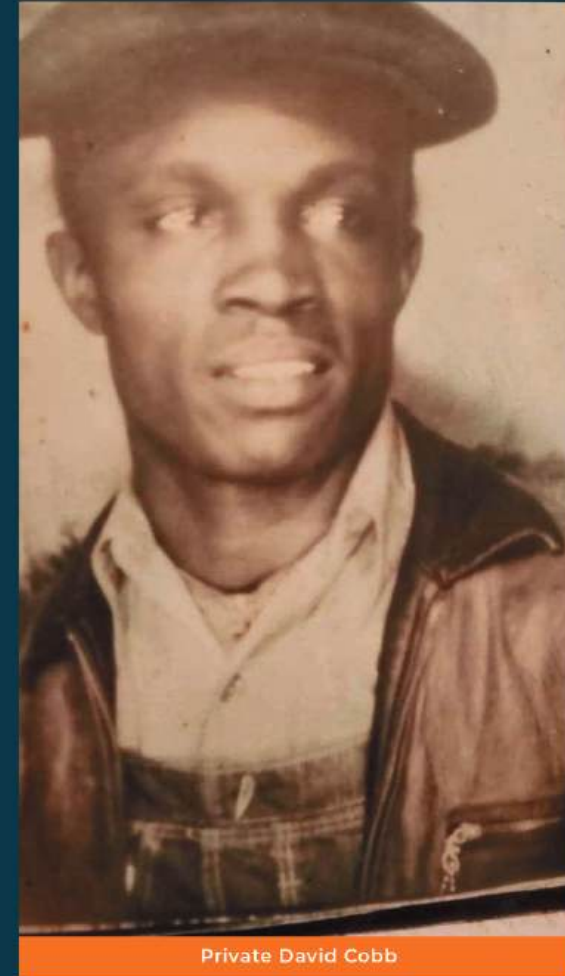


US Army was segregated under racist laws that kept black troops apart
(Image: National America Archives)

The Execution of Private David Cobb

Private David Cobb, a 21-year-old Black soldier from Alabama, was executed at Shepton Mallet Prison in 1943 after being court-martialled for the murder of his commanding officer.

His execution reflects the harsh military justice system of the time, underpinned by systemic racial biases. This exhibit examines the events surrounding Cobb's life, trial, and execution in greater detail, shedding light on the complexities and ethical issues involved.



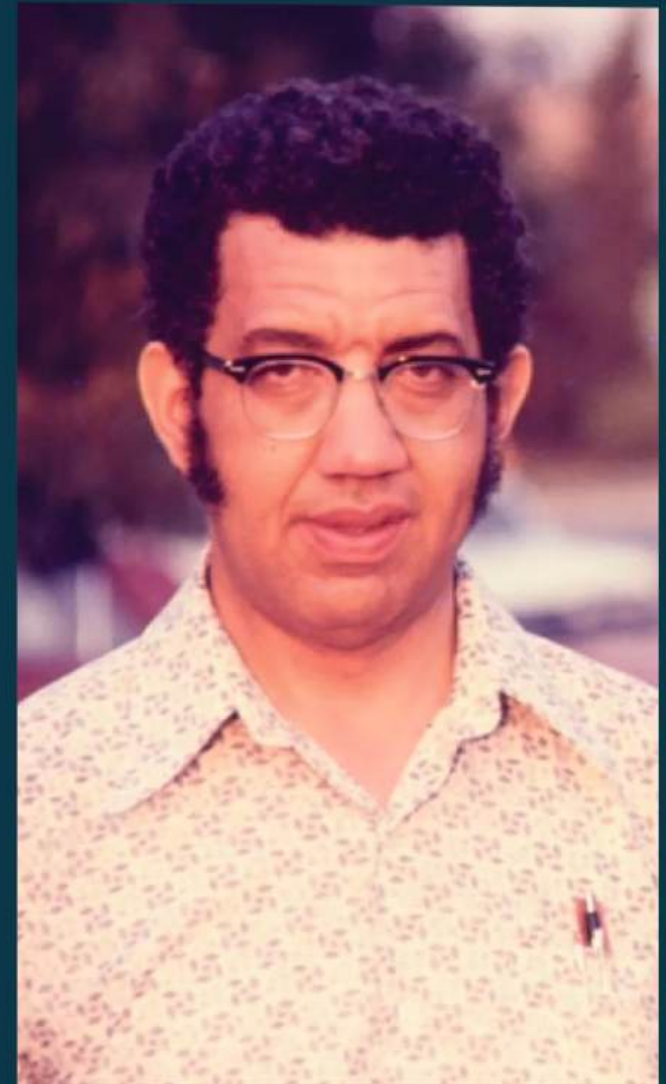
Private David Cobb

The Remarkable Life of Bernard Benedict James



Bernard Benedict James, a Black WWII veteran, faced wrongful imprisonment and racism, but went on to become an esteemed aerospace engineer contributing to NASA's Apollo and Mercury missions.

His story is one of resilience and accomplishment, symbolising the broader struggle for justice and recognition by Black individuals.



Bernard Benedict James

Diversity in Art at Shepton Mallet Prison

This exhibit showcases the work of Lucy Willis, who taught art classes at Shepton Mallet Prison. It explores the diverse tapestry of artworks created by inmates, highlighting how creative expression can be a powerful tool for rehabilitation and understanding.

The exhibition reflects the transformative power of art within prison walls and underscores the importance of the arts in building self-esteem and offering second chances.



Evening Behind Bars: An Evening of Reflection and Stories

Join us for a unique event, "Evening Behind Bars," on the 16th of October at Shepton Mallet Prison.

This special evening will offer a deeper exploration into the stories of the children born to Black GIs and white British women during WWII and their experiences growing up in a predominantly white society.

Our guest speaker, Susann Savidge, Chair of the Somerset African Caribbean Network (SACN), will lead a thought-provoking discussion on the lives of these children, who were often referred to as "Brown Babies." Gain insight into their unique struggles, and learn about the incredible strength and resilience they displayed in the face of adversity.

This event is an opportunity to reflect on the historical experiences of these individuals and to engage in meaningful conversations about their impact on our collective history.

We hope you'll join us for this memorable evening.

Spaces are limited, so we encourage early registration. For more details, please visit our website or contact us at:
www.sheptonmalletprison.com

Event Details:

- **Date: 16th October**
- **Time: 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM**
- **Location: Shepton Mallet Prison**
- **Tickets: £5 for members, £10 for non-members**

Thank You and Contact Information

We extend our deepest thanks to all our supporters, curators, and contributors, including,

Somerset African Caribbean Network (SACN)

Professor Lucy Bland

Susann Savidge

The Reddin Family

Shepton Mallet Prison Team and the many others who helped bring this exhibition to life.

To learn more about Shepton Mallet Prison and our programs, please visit our website or contact us at www.sheptonmalletprison.com



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