

Subject Guide



Ephemera



Ref. Green/3/4



Ref. Emeline



Ref. Pagnell/5/5/3

Introduction

Black Cultural Archives has been collecting material for the archive for over 30 years, mainly acquired through donation, but on occasion through purchase. The Ephemera collection at Black Cultural Archives represents one of the largest collections that the archive holds.

What is Ephemera?

It can be difficult to categorise exactly what ephemera is; ephemera includes a broad range of minor (and sometimes major) everyday documents intended for one-time or short-term use. Ephemera is usually printed, such as: greeting cards, posters, leaflets, advertisements, notices, flyers, business cards etc. It can also be handwritten in the case of postcards and calling cards.

Why is Ephemera important?

Ephemera is important because it creates a snapshot of activity at any given time. As many of the items are not designed to be kept, it offers a unique look at what was happening culturally and politically within a community during certain periods.

The ephemera collection also captures activity that may otherwise not be captured. Some of the material, particularly relating to cultural events, has not been retained by the people and organisations who created it as it only happened once, and may not have been seen as important at the time.

Some of the political material is deliberately created and distributed secretly, so that messages can be sent throughout certain communities, another reason why it can be hard to find, but is important to keep.

The Ephemera collection is currently organised loosely by subject. Below are some of the key areas that are covered by the collection, but this is not exhaustive:

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Theatre

The collection contains a number of leaflets, posters and souvenir programmes. The collection contains material from the 1960s to present. There are a number of posters and leaflets from established companies such as Talawa, Carib Theatre, the Tricycle, and the National Theatre amongst others.

Politics

The collection also contains a number of political leaflets from the 1970s, and particularly during the 1980s. There is material relating to the pan-African and Black Power movements as well protest marches and defence campaigns.

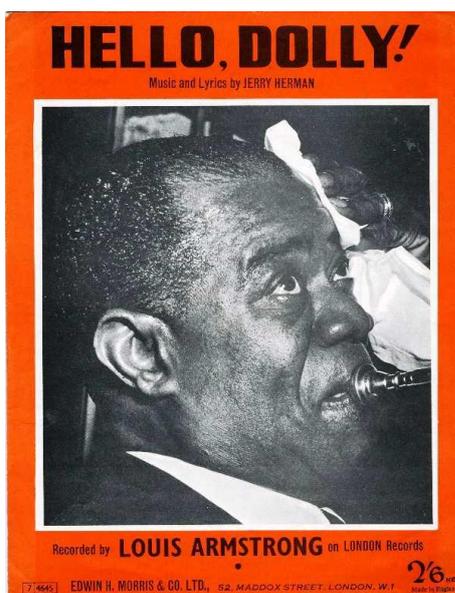
There are a number of leaflets relating specifically to events and campaigns around the [Black Women's Movement](#).

Publishing

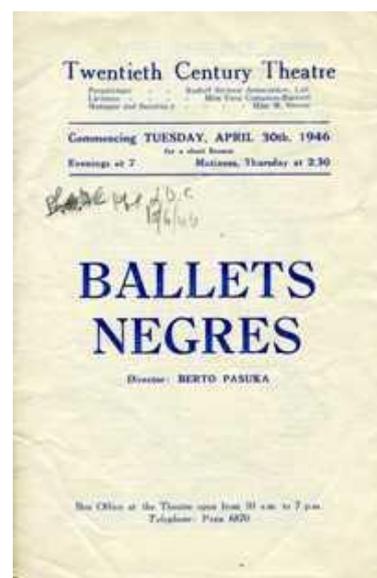
During the 1970s and 1980s there was a rise in independent publishers and book fairs. The collection contains a number of leaflets, particularly relating to the Radical and International Book Fair, organised by Bogle L'ouverture. Please see the [Publishing guide](#).

Black History Month

We have a number of leaflets and programmes documenting the breadth of Black History Month events that have taken place since its inception in 1987.



Ref. Ephemera/80



Ref. Wong/6/49

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2. Other Collections

2.1. Ephemera Collection (ref. Ephemera)

The first place to look for the largest collection of ephemera, is within our ephemera collection. As outlined earlier, the collection is organised roughly into subject themes, which are searchable via our [online catalogue](http://www.calmview.eu/BCA/CalmView/default.aspx) (<http://www.calmview.eu/BCA/CalmView/default.aspx>) using either the reference number, or a word search.

2.2 The Papers of Stella Dadzie (ref. Dadzie)

Stella Dadzie is a published writer and historian, best known for *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's lives in Britain*, which won the 1985 Martin Luther King Award for Literature.

Her career as a writer and education activist spans 25 years. She has written numerous publications and resources aimed at promoting an inclusive curriculum and good practice with black adult learners and other minorities.

Within the collection there a number of files of ephemera (**ref. Dadzie/5/13-16**) which contain a number of leaflets relating to a wide variety of events and causes. The collection relates mostly to political, including material relating to the National Front and immigration issues.

2.3 The Papers of Ansel Wong (ref. Wong)

Ansel Wong was born on 4 October 1945 in San Fernando, Trinidad & Tobago. In 1965 Wong arrived in the UK to attend Hull University, and in the early 1970s Wong was involved in the West Indian Students' Union/West Indian Students' Centre. He was chairman of the West Indian Students Union, edited a number of their publications and contributed articles. His arts organisation, the 'Black Arts Workshop', regularly held workshop sessions and staged productions with the support of the Union.

During the 1970s Wong was also heavily involved in education activities and from 1974-1976 Wong sat on the Council for Community Relations in Lambeth, ILEA. The Ahfiwe School was a supplementary education scheme for which Wong was Education Co-ordinator.

Within the collection there are a number of leaflets and posters relating to the Black Panther movement (**ref. Wong/6**). There are also a number of leaflets relating to cultural activities, such as a programme for Les Ballets Negres (**ref. Wong/6/49**) from 1952.

2.4 Prints (ref. Prints)

In addition to the ephemera collection there is a collection of printed material, mostly posters. There is a collection of postcards (**ref. Prints/44**) which highlight the racist and stereotypical imagery depicting Black people.

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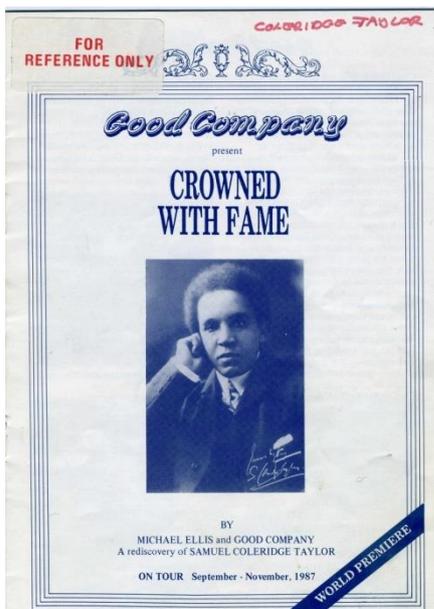
There are other postcards (**ref. Prints/50**) which feature holiday destinations, primarily in the Caribbean.

There are also some posters relating to advertising (**ref. Prints/57 and Prints/65**).

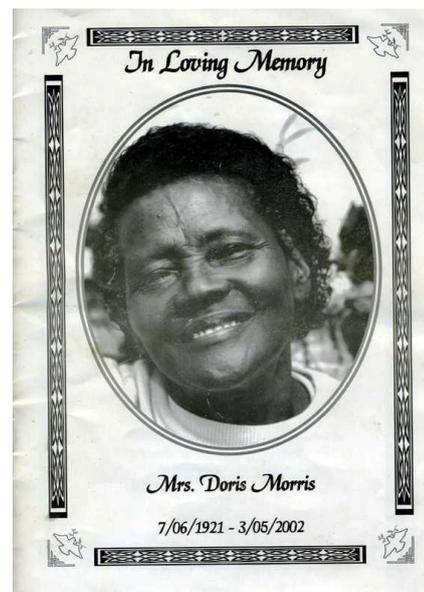
2.5 Adverts (ref. Advert)

There are also a number of advertising packages and ephemera within the collection from 1854-2004 and includes packaging for tea, cocoa and hair dressing products.

Please see the Representation guide.



Ref. Coletay/2



Ref. Morris/4

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Other Sources

This list is not exhaustive; most organisations that hold archival material will have large ephemera collection. Below is a list of additional sources that may be of most interest:

Birmingham City Library and Archives, Black Sources;

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Lib-Central-Archives-and-Heritage%2FPageLayout&cid=1223092751642&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper>

British Library; The British Library holds a large collection of ephemera.

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/ephemera/>

Bristol Black Archives Partnership;

http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/leisure_and_culture/records_and_archives/A%20Guide%20to%20African-Caribbean%20Sources%20in%20Bristol%27s%20Museums%2C%20Galleries%20%26%20Archives_0.pdf

Butetown History and Arts Centre; <http://www.bhac.org/coll.html>

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). The Huntley Collection at the LMA holds a large number of material relating to their political and publishing activities. Please click here for a subject guide produced by LMA on material relating to African and African Caribbean communities in London; <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/visiting-the-city/archives-and-city-history/london-metropolitan-archives/Documents/visitor-information/21-black-caribbean-community-archives.pdf>

The Ephemera Society; <http://www.ephemera-society.org.uk/>

V&A Theatre collections; <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/r/researching-theatre-and-performance/>

