

LEEDS BI-CENTENARY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Highlighting African achievements, liberation and aspirations:
in commemoration of the British Parliamentary Abolition Act 1807

Invites you to the

Launch of

'From Abolition to Commonwealth'

West Yorkshire remembers indentured labour in Africa and the Caribbean

a major bi-centenary exhibition

the Seven Arts Centre

31a Harrogate Road, LS7 3PD

July 08

Launch 6.30–9pm Thursday 24th

RSVP

(0113) 262 2270



East Indian Indentured Workers on Cacao Estate in Trinidad

Image courtesy of Project Gutenberg, USA/Brandon Head

About the Exhibition

2007 saw the commemoration and celebration of the 200th anniversary of the end of British slave ships and an end of British-sponsored transportation of enslaved African people across the Atlantic, it *did not* mean the end of slavery itself. It was twenty-six years later that a law was passed to begin the emancipation of slaves in British Colonies.

Following *abolition* in 1807 and emancipation in 1833, indentured labourers were taken from India to the Caribbean to replace the ex-enslaved African men and women on the plantations, a system which soon spread throughout the British Empire.

The term *indentured labour* refers to the practice of binding workers to an employment contract for a fixed term in exchange for payment of travel, housing, food and/or wages, working for any employer who would buy his or her contract of indenture. The indentured labour system saw the migration of almost two million South-Asians in less than a century.

Few of these labourers returned to South Asia on completion of their indentures and many became imbedded in the local communities. As the Commonwealth developed out of the declining Empire thousands of the descendents of former indentured labourers migrated to Britain and many have settled in Yorkshire.

This exhibition highlights some of those West Yorkshire-based descendant's histories and memories, their travel documents, pictures and heirlooms. Using display panels, audio-interviews and an illustrated pamphlet, the exhibition looks at some of the 150,000 indentured Indians who went to Natal in South Africa to work on the sugar plantations, the 32,000 who went to British East Africa, in present-day Kenya, to build the 900-mile Railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria - and more than 300,000 who migrated to the British Caribbean to work on the sugar plantations there.

PUBLIC SHOWING 11am - 6pm FRIDAY 25th - 31st JULY 08

RSVP

Paul Auber (0113) 262 2270 paul@leedsbicentenary.com
LBCTP Leeds West Indian Centre, 10 Laycock Place, Leeds LS7 3JA

6.30 Arrival – Refreshments and incidental music

7.00 Welcome

Arthur France MBE

CHAIR

Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project

Dr Carl Hilton

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project

7.15 Blessing and Remembrance

Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi

Leading activist of Sikh traditions in Leeds

7.25 Exhibition Background

Tony Stanley

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project

7.40 Exhibition Launch

Dr Nima Poovaya-Smith

FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF ALCHEMY,

a cultural enterprise company based in Yorkshire

8.00 Tour the Exhibition

Refreshments

Incidental Music

Seiko Susso, Kora

Surmeet Singh, Sitar

Upneet Singh, Tabla

Acknowledgements

LEEDS BI-CENTENARY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT
Staff & Management Committee

EDUCATION & MUSEUMS COORDINATOR
Dalia Gabay

RESEARCHERS
Fiona Cosson, Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi, Will Jackson

SEVEN ARTS CENTRE
Paul Fallon

Other LBCTP 2008 Events

SungFest— 1st August

A sung festival marking Emancipation and, the official LBCTP closing programme, 6-8pm Space@Hillcrest, Cowper Street, Leeds 7. Tracing the story of people of African descent through their music and song, including sections on pre-slavery music and song, plantation songs and *negro spirituals*, songs from the Civil Rights era and contemporary uplifting songs.

When We Ruled Master Class—5th October

Following on from his successful 30-week Black History Course, author of *When We Ruled* Robin Walker presents 3 advanced lectures: (L1) The Lost Civilisations of the African Interior, (L2) The Queens and Great Women of Medieval Africa & (L3) The Early History of Ancient Ethiopia. 9am—5pm at Space@Hillcrest.

Information & Reservations

Paul Auber (0113) 262 2270
paul@leedsbicentenary.com

