

BLACK OXFORD UNTOLD STORIES in association with  
BODLEIAN LIBRARIES presents

# REIMAGINING COLE

SATURDAY

20 OCTOBER 2018

10AM – 4PM

WESTON LIBRARY

Art Fund\_

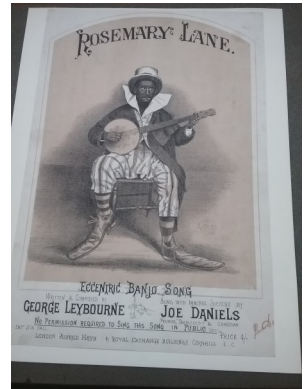
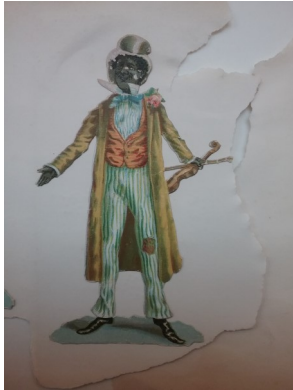


social  
history  
society



Bodleian Libraries  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

## The background to the Re-Imagining Cole symposium Saturday 20th October 2018 10.00 — 16.00 Weston Library, Oxford



Images from the Bodleian Library collections: left, John Johnson Collection Minstrels 3 (18d); right, John Johnson Collection Minstrels 3 (2); with a caricature image of Christian Cole in the centre, MS. Eng. a. 2033, fol. 3.

This is the only image of Cole'. That's the caveat I append to the caricature image of Christian Frederick Cole, the University of Oxford's first Black African Scholar in 1873 when I use the image (above, centre) to illustrate a lecture or write an article about him.

Last year the picture was widely used in media promotion of the unveiling of a memorial plaque to Cole, at University College, to honour him and his achievements. Every time I saw a press piece about the plaque with the image of Cole as a 'minstrel' adjacent to it, I cringed. Then I started to wonder, why is this caricature, along with other caricature images, the only portrayal of Cole? Who produced it, and for what purpose?

Progressing from these questions and thinking more broadly, I considered Cole's presence in Oxford, fifty years after the introduction of photography in 1839. Is there a photograph or portrait of him? I considered why Cole's achievements were portrayed publicly in the form of parody when his contemporaries were commemorated through portraits or statues.

My initial thoughts, reflections and questions about Cole's imagery developed into a detailed study delving through archives and photographic catalogues of cartoons, caricatures and 19th-century portraits. One collection I looked at was the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, held at the Bodleian Libraries. This is one of the largest and most important collections of printed ephemera in the world, and reflects types of ephemera produced from all periods, especially from the 19th century to the Second World War. I looked at the section on 'Minstrels' as the caricature of Cole has a strong resemblance to 'negro minstrels' popular at the time. The collection provided a fascinating source of contextual and background information.

This research formed the foundation for the Re-Imagining Cole. The symposium examined the background, context and depictions of previously unseen caricatures of Cole, exploring why Cole and his historic achievements were only portrayed in the form of parodies. The symposium also examined the broader issues of race and representation in caricatures and portrait art. Finally, the symposium posed the question, 'Should Cole's image be re-imagined?'

## **PROGRAMME**

9.30 – 10.00 Registration Coffee will be served in Blackwell Hall

### **MORNING SESSION: INTRODUCING COLE**

10.00 – 10.05 Welcome: Dr Alexandra Franklin, Coordinator, Centre for the Study of the Book, Bodleian Libraries

10.05 - 10.20 Keynote presentation: Kenneth Tharp CBE, Director, The Africa Centre

10.20 – 10.25 Introducing Christian Frederick Cole – Pamela Roberts

10.25 - 10.50 Dramatized presentation with Gary Cordice (Cole) and Prince Plockey (Joseph Renner Maxwell)

10.50 – 11.20 Africans in English Caricature, 1769-1819: Black Jokes White Humour  
Dr Temi Odumosu

11.30 – 12.00 **COFFEE**

A exhibition of Cole and Cosmopolitan Oxford caricatures from the Shrimpton collection available to view in the hall

12.00 – 12.20 Cole at University College, the University of Oxford - Dr Robin Darwall-Smith:

12.20 – 12.40 The Shrimpton Collection - Colin Harris

12.40 – 13.00 In search of Cole through Victorian portraits - Pamela Roberts

13.00 – 14.00 **LUNCH** A sandwich lunch will be served in Blackwell Hall

### **AFTERNOON SESSION: RE-IMAGINING COLE**

14.00 - 15.30 Addressing the paucity of respectful acknowledgment of black success - Robert Taylor

Creating a new public image of Christian Cole - Alex Wenham

Roundtable and audience discussion facilitated by Carol Leeming.

The facilitated discussion questions will explore:

Should Cole's image be re-imagined, if so, why?

What a re-imagined image should tell an audience, and who decides?

If an image of Cole is to be reimagined, in what medium would be most appropriate and fitting to communicate Cole's significant achievements?

Dr Temi Odumosu

Pamela Roberts

Robert Taylor

Alex Wenham

Dr Robin Darwall-Smith

15.30 15.45 Moving Forward

15.55 – 16.00 Evaluation and close



## **Participants' Biographies**

### **Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp CBE, FRSA, Director, The Africa Centre**

Kenneth is a key figure in the UK arts and culture scene with over 35 years professional experience in the sector. He began his career as a dancer; as one of the leading dance artists of his generation, he performed for 13 years with the internationally-acclaimed London Contemporary Dance Theatre and then with other leading companies during a 25-year career as a performer, choreographer, teacher and director.

From 2007 to 2016, he was Chief Executive of The Place, the UK's leading centre for contemporary dance development. He took up post as Director of The Africa Centre at the end of May 2018, in its new home in Southwark, London.

He is a devoted champion of the arts, cultural learning, creativity and diversity, and frequently presents as a keynote speaker in a variety of contexts, from schools to leadership courses, industry-related events and the corporate sector. He is a regular contributor to Speakers for Schools.

He has served on various arts Boards, including The Royal Opera House and The Royal Opera House Benevolent Fund. He is currently a Patron of Akademi and The Place; a Trustee of New Adventures, the Chineke! Foundation and Orchestra, and is a School Governor.

He has appeared in eight successive editions of the annual Power list of Britain's most influential people of African and African Caribbean heritage, as well as in Who's Who. In 2003 Kenneth was made an OBE in recognition of his services to dance, and in June 2017 was made a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, also in recognition of his services to dance.

### **Pamela Roberts FRSA Founder and Director of Black Oxford Untold Stories**

Pamela Roberts is an award-winning creative producer, historian, author and playwright. She has over twenty years' experience in media production, working as a television producer and director for independent production companies and terrestrial broadcasters. Pamela set up Artistry to conceive, produce and deliver a major award-winning specialist international Black Media Festival to provide a showcase for emerging and established filmmakers. Pamela has received numerous awards for her work, including being recognised for outstanding contribution to media by H.R.H the Queen of England in 2004.

Artistry specialises in delivering Black heritage projects that challenge the traditional narratives of Black heritage and history to illustrate a new or different perspective. One of Artistry's initiative is Black Oxford: Untold Stories, a project which celebrates the contributions and legacies of the University of Oxford's Black scholars from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

Pamela's efforts to raise the profile of pioneering Black scholars, both through her work and her book, *Black Oxford: The Untold Stories of Oxford University's Black Scholars*, resulted last year in the achievement and unveiling of a plaque at University College, University of Oxford, to honour Christian Frederick Cole.



## **Carol Leeming FRSA - Chair/Facilitator**

Carol Leeming, is multi-disciplinary, international artist from Leicester, hailed as a polymath, is Artistic Director/ Lead Artist of Dare to Diva Company, working in literature, performing arts & digital media. Winner of East Midlands Women's Award for Outstanding Woman in Arts Media & Music, she is a multi-award winning writer, published poet, singer /songwriter, composer, performer, musician, playwright, dramaturge, director/film maker and curator.

Carol's literary work has been published, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Leicester, produced and performed for regional theatre e.g. Curve and Brighton Dome Theatre, with film work screened at Phoenix Cinema Leicester and Online. Carol has worked with major publisher and major/ independent record labels, with international tours, and hit singles to her credit, with film soundtracks for major feature films e.g. UK smash film *Trainspotting*. Carol is currently producing a new play, and a second collection of poetry and music album.

## **Gary Cordice - Christian Frederick Cole**

Gary spent the earlier part of his career in professional musical theatre in productions such as Starlight Express and Five Guys Named Moe playing lead and supporting roles. He was also a part of the original cast of The Lion King when it opened in Germany, Hamburg. Gary is also a writer, who has devised and directed works with youth groups on original dramas around Kent and on his own one-man plays. He is also a vocal and singing coach

## **Prince Plockey - Joseph Renner Maxwell**

Prince trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. His theatre credits include Jamie in ALL THAT, King's Head Theatre; Caliban in THE TEMPEST for Iris Theatre; H.R. HAITCH, The Union Theatre for Shrapnel Theatre; FUTURE VOICE, Southwark Playhouse; YOU FORGOT THE MINCE, Edinburgh Festival / UK tour. The European tour of THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MARTIN LUTHER KING for TNT Theatre directed by Paul Stebbings. For Lazarus Theatre Company, Giovanni in TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE, Tamburlaine in TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT, Coriolanus in CORIOLANUS, Agamemnon in TROILUS & CRESSIDA, and Gloucester/King Richard in RICHARD

## **Dr Temi Odumosu - Art Historian**

Temi Odumosu is an art historian, creative educator, and curator at Malmö University in Sweden. She is the author of *Africans in English Caricature 1769-1819: Black Jokes, White Humour* published by Brepols (2017). Her international research and curatorial practice is concerned with the visual and affective politics of slavery and colonialism, Afro-Diaspora aesthetics, decolonial praxis, archival re-enactment(s), critical strategies for digitisation, and more broadly exploring how art mediates social transformation and healing. Recent curative interventions in Scandinavia include *What Lies Unspoken: Sounding the colonial archive* (National Gallery & Royal Library of Denmark, 2017-2018); *Milk & Honey* (Botkyrka Konsthall, Sweden, 2017); and *Possession: Art, Power & Black Womanhood* (New Shelter Plan, Denmark, 2014). Temi Odumosu's research is currently funded by the Riksbanken Jubileumsfond in the School of Arts and Communication, at Malmö University.

## **Colin Harris - Shrimpton Catalogue Expert**

.Colin came straight to the Bodleian after A levels and then worked 50 years in what is now called Special Collections, which included manuscripts and rare books. In that time, Colin worked front-of-house in the reading rooms helping and advising researchers, the last 10 years of his career being the Superintendent of the Special Collections Reading Rooms. Colin retired September last year. He is the leading authority on the work of the Shrimpton caricatures and catalogue.

## **Dr Robin Darwall-Smith - Archivist**

Dr Robin Darwall-Smith is the Archivist of University and Jesus Colleges, Oxford. He also worked for several years as Archivist of Magdalen College. He read Classics at University College as an undergraduate and postgraduate, before training as an archivist at the University of Liverpool. He has researched and published extensively on the history of Oxford and its Colleges, and his books include *A History of University College, Oxford* (OUP, 2008). He is currently working on the 18th-century chapters of a planned history of All Souls College.

## **Robert Taylor - Photographer**

Robert's portraits explore and celebrate people. Born in Birmingham, he came to photography via the British Royal Air Force, qualifying as a barrister, and several years in educational publishing in Nigeria. His work is exhibited and collected widely, and is in permanent collections including the National Portrait Gallery, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Royal Society, and several Oxbridge colleges. For the last 10 years he's specialised in strategic portrait collections of women of outstanding achievement in STEM, and academe in general.

## **Alex Wenham Stone carver**

Alex Wenham is a prizewinning stone carver based in Oxford. Specialising in carving work for heritage locations, over the last twenty years he has provided stone carvings for some of Europe's most prestigious buildings, including the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral, Chartres Cathedral, Château de Versailles and the Louvre, as well as for various Oxford colleges and institutions and for private collections.

## Overview of Participants' Presentations

### **Kenneth Tharp CBE, Director, Africa Centre**

Tharp presented an overview of the familiar stereotypical Western media images of the African.

Up to date, modern images of advanced technological societies displayed that countered these 'old' stereotypical images of Africa and therefore Africans.

Innovation, dynamism and can-do attitude and ability of the African Continent linked to Cole and his achievements as a pioneer.

### **Pamela Roberts, Director, Black Oxford Untold Stories**

Roberts outlined the prevailing and available images of Cole, the stereotypical caricatures, minstrel depictions.

A fifteen minutes dramatization, written and directed by Pamela Roberts, presented an Overview of Cole's life, his poetry, *Reflections on a Zulu War*, and established the context for the caricatures which depicted him . The dramatization included a fictionalized meeting between Cole and Joseph Renner Maxwell, a Black Oxford scholar at Merton College, an advocate of miscegenation, and an ardent critic of Cole. The enactment depicted the intense conflict, rivalry and spirited exchanges between Cole and Maxwell at the time.

### **Dr Temi Odumosu, Art Historian, Malmo University**

Dr Odumosu presented a series of provocations presented around the excavation of the problematic, '*looking back*' sensitivities, complexities of historical caricature images of Black people.

Visibility/Invisibility

iconography making race

Black bodies in material bondage

Corruption by imagery

Violations of public consciousness

Caricature as performative space

Caricature as a form of further attack

How in what ways, what methodologies, mediums do we attempt to Re-imagine them

Commemoration

Coding & Decoding of images

Colonial Gaze



## **Robin Darwall-Smith, Archivist, University College, Oxford University**

Darwall-Smith presented:

an overview of Cole as a Non-Collegiate student and the Non-Collegiate Movement.

Cole's life at the college and university - debates, e.g. arguing against the Death Penalty.

Cole's course of study - Classics, the hardest and most demanding of all Oxford University degrees.

Cole's subsequent difficult financial circumstances

Cole's financial supporters and benefactors which included Gladstone and University College Master Bradley.

## **Colin Harris - The Shrimpton Collection Oxford**

Overview of the Shrimpton Collection - from photographic studio later incorporating publishing and caricatures.

The collection contained 1,200 caricatures

Several caricatures in the collection feature Black people

Cole caricatures featured in the *Great Guns of Oxford* series .

Shrimpton caricatures produced by undergraduates which lampooned Dons, Masters and the political figures of the day.

Caricatures were sold to students and visitors to Oxford for a shilling.

## **Robert Taylor, Photographer, Portrait of Achievement Series**

Robert outlined *Setting out to address the paucity of respectful acknowledgement of Black Success - Portraits of Black Achievement Book*.

The focus of his portraiture work with Black sitters, its focus on the '*observation of the individuality of a person.*'

Rather than White Western classical poses or the '*tendency to exoticise*' which he deemed not good photography of Black people

Effective modern portraiture should address:

- The psychological attitude of the subject

- Issues with the photography industry with technical matters, e.g. default setting for white people

- Editing Software

- These technological issues are due to the technology is set up for white people

- Transforming the spaces

- Create an interpersonal effect with the viewer

## **Alex Wenham, Stone Carver**

Alex outlined the different styles of public portraiture, e.g. painted photographic stone, statuary etc.

Oxford portraiture, e.g. portraiture, gargoyles heads

Highlighted available stone niches that could be used around the city

Standard/General budget £30,000-£50,000

Need for key stakeholders/committee to take matters forward to include

Champions, Supporters of Cole but also

- Local Authority

- Civic Society

- Historic England

- Oxford Heritage Societies

- Oxford University

- Some Key Stages

- Funding /Budget

- R&D Feasibility

- Timescale

- Planning Consent/Location

- Engage Public Media Campaign

## Roundtable Discussion Ideas & Suggestions

The facilitated discussion explored the following questions:

1. Should Cole's image be re-imagined, if so, why?
2. What a re-imagined image should tell an audience, and who decides?
3. If an image of Cole is to be reimagined, in what medium would be most appropriate and fitting to communicate Cole's significant achievements?

Black -led process with other key stakeholders for Re-Imagining Cole Project

Create a holistic 360-degree Re-Imagining of Cole self- selecting that:

- i. restores gives gravitas greater meaning
- ii. breathe life into the various fragments of his life available
- iii. use of the creative arts to bring Cole to life

Cole is part of Oxfords' story & Britain's story

Location consensus Cole in Oxford but also a Global Icon

Use of different/combinations of mediums and in different locations

Use of Cole's voice, i.e. his writing in any Re-Imagining of Cole

Greater public awareness/media as Cole and his achievements

Cole exhibition archive artefacts etc. & education materials

Links with Black Communities of Sierra Leone, Oxford and other Black Communities.

Story Telling/Story Making of Cole

An abstract artefact that conveys more than a just likeness but a story/facets of Cole the person.

Gauge impact of Cole's pioneering achievement on today's Oxford University African students & alumni

Cole's caricature gives some semblance of likeness that could be used

Cole's representation and identity is important.



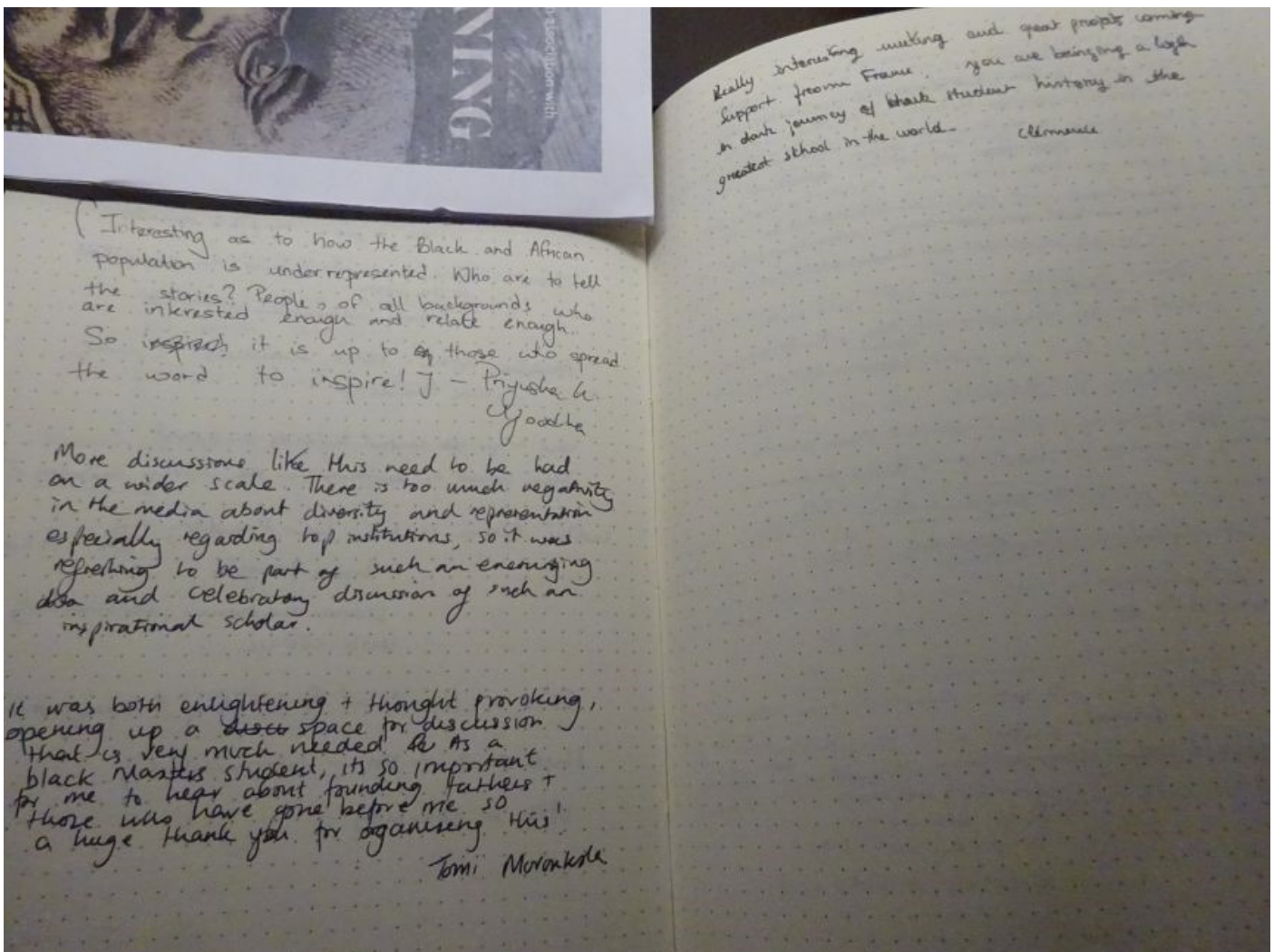
## Feedback and Evaluation

The programme brought together academics, historians, students and members of the local community to discuss and debate the 'reimagining' of Cole's image.

Attendees were invited to share their personal perceptions of Cole and the impact that his legacy has had on them. During discussions Cole was described as an inspiration, and the event itself as 'enlightening' and 'much needed'.

One student said: 'As a Black Masters student it is important for me to hear about founding fathers and those who have gone before me, so a huge thank you for organising this!'

Another highlighted a broader need for events of this kind in academia and beyond: 'More discussions like this need to be had on a wider scale. There is too much negativity in the media about diversity and representation especially regarding top institutions, so it was refreshing to be part of such an encouraging and celebratory discussion about such an inspirational scholar.'



Dr Alexandra Franklin, Coordinator of the Centre for the Study of the Book, at the Bodleian Library, said: 'The Bodleian Libraries are grateful to Pamela Roberts for convening a symposium full of ideas, debate, and drama. These scholarly exchanges bring archives to life.'

Of the event's impact, Pamela Roberts said: 'I am delighted that the symposium reached such a broad, diverse audience. The roundtable discussion concluded that Cole was not only part of Oxford's story, but Britain's story and a re-imagined image will afford him the gravitas and greater meaning his achievement and legacy deserve.'

## Re-Imagining Cole symposium Evaluation/ Feedback

[Your organisation/College/Institution (optional):

1

	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities and venue					✓
Food				✓	
Overall experience					✓

### Morning Session: Introducing Christian Frederick Cole

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Keynote presentation Kenneth Tharp					✓
Introducing Cole Pamela Roberts					✓
Introducing Cole drama presentation					✓
Africans in caricatures Dr Temi Odumosu					✓
Cole at University College Dr Robin Darwall-Smith					✓
The Shrimpton catalogue Colin Harris					✓
In search of Cole Pamela Roberts					

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

*It was really powerful to get the wider context about Cole's life - The dramatic presentation was great. Temi Odumosu's contribution was very thought-provoking.*

### Afternoon session: Re-Imagining Cole

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Dr Rob Berkeley					
Addressing the paucity of respectful acknowledgement of black success Robert Taylor					✓
Creating a new public image of Christian Cole Alex Wenham					✓
Roundtable discussion					✓

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

*I liked the practical focus of these presentations; there's lots to build on.*



## Re-Imagining Cole symposium Evaluation/ Feedback

[Your organisation/College/Institution (optional):

1

*Good / Great*

	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities and venue					✓
Food				✓	
Overall experience					✓

### Morning Session: Introducing Christian Frederick Cole

*Great*

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Keynote presentation Kenneth Tharp					✓
Introducing Cole Pamela Roberts					✓
Introducing Cole drama presentation					✓
Africans in caricatures Dr Temi Odumosu					N/A
Cole at University College Dr Robin Darwall-Smith					✓
The Shrimpton catalogue Colin Harris					✓
In search of Cole Pamela Roberts					✓

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

*This was a rich and fascinating morning session, and dialogue. Loved the dramatic presentation, which brought the archive to life!*

### Afternoon session: Re-Imagining Cole

*Great.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Dr Rob Berkeley					✓
Addressing the paucity of respectful acknowledgement of black success Robert Taylor					✓
Creating a new public image of Christian Cole Alex Wenham					✓
Roundtable discussion					✓

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

*How wonderful to participate in a proper open discussion on "re-imagining" of Cole. Rich, thought-provoking, and inspiring!*



## Re-Imagining Cole symposium Evaluation/ Feedback

[Your organisation/College/Institution (optional):

]

	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities and venue	-				✓
Food	-				
Overall experience					✓

### Morning Session: Introducing Christian Frederick Cole

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Keynote presentation Kenneth Tharp					
Introducing Cole Pamela Roberts					✓
Introducing Cole drama presentation					✓
Africans in caricatures Dr Temi Odumosu					✓
Cole at University College Dr Robin Darwall-Smith					✓
The Shrimpton catalogue Colin Harris					✓
In search of Cole Pamela Roberts					✓

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

### Afternoon session: Re-Imagining Cole

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Dr Rob Berkeley					✓
Addressing the paucity of respectful acknowledgement of black success Robert Taylor					✓
Creating a new public image of Christian Cole Alex Wenham					✓
Roundtable discussion					✓

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

my hope is that this is the beginning  
of a process - that will achieve the  
goal we all desire

## Re-Imagining Cole symposium Evaluation/ Feedback

[Your organisation/College/Institution (optional): *Oxford University*]

	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities and venue					X
Food					X
Overall experience					X

### Morning Session: Introducing Christian Frederick Cole

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Keynote presentation Kenneth Tharp					X
Introducing Cole Pamela Roberts					X
Introducing Cole drama presentation					X
Africans in caricatures Dr Temi Odumosu					X
Cole at University College Dr Robin Darwall-Smith					X
The Shrimpton catalogue Colin Harris				X	
In search of Cole Pamela Roberts					

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations

*Thank you from the bottom of my heart*

### Afternoon session: Re-Imagining Cole

	1	2	3	4	5
Presentations: Dr Rob Berkeley					
Addressing the paucity of respectful acknowledgement of black success Robert Taylor					X
Creating a new public image of Christian Cole Alex Wenham					X
Roundtable discussion					X

Any additional comments you would like to add about the morning session and presentations



## A photographic overview of the symposium

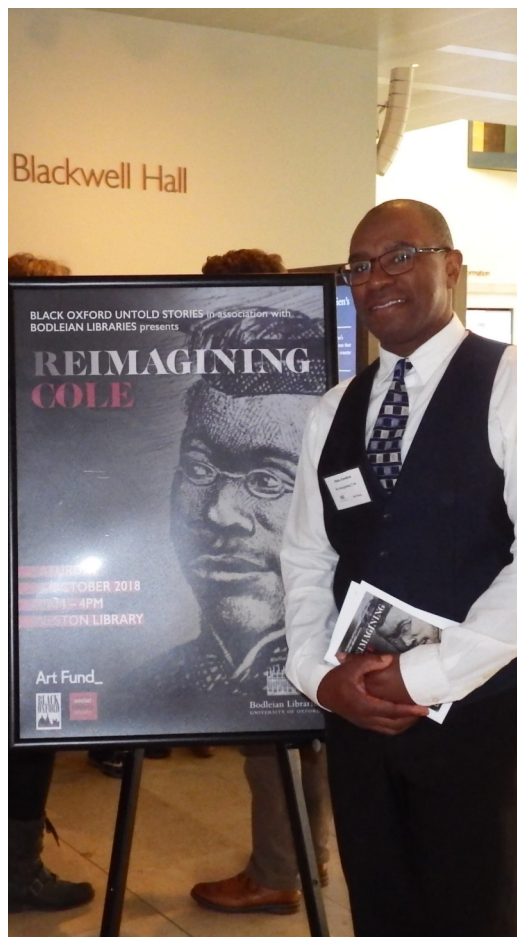


**Kenneth Tharp CBE**



**Pamela Roberts**





**Gary Cordice as Christian Cole**



**Prince Plockey as Joseph Renner Maxwell**







Panel discussion following the drama presentation



Dr Temi Odumosu





**Dr Darwall-Smith and Carol Leeming**



**Oxford University students Jo and Abibah**



**Oxford University student—William Movelle Makolle**





Discussions over lunch







**Alex Wenham**



**Roundtable discussion chaired by Carol Leeming**

**Black Oxford Untold Stories would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their assistance and support with the**

## **Re-Imagining Cole Symposium**

**Bodleian Libraries**

**Art Fund**

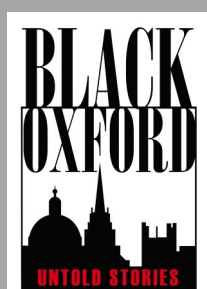
**Social History Society**

Dr Alexandra Franklin, Coordinator, Centre for the Study of the Book, Bodleian Libraries,  
Julie Anne Lambert, Librarian of the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera,  
Janet Walwyn, Madeline Slaven, Sally Ann Gilchrist.

Elizabeth Adams, University College Librarian, Philip Burnett, University College Library  
Assistant. Dr Sophie Smith, University College, Armand D'Angour, Jesus College,  
Paul Frecker, The Library of Nineteenth Century Photography.

Daphne Cunningham, Co-Chair Oxford University Black and Ethnic Minority Staff Network

Oxford University African Society, Oxford University African Caribbean Society, Common  
Ground



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