

# October 2022

The UK Black History Month Zone ([bhm22.imhistory.uk](http://bhm22.imhistory.uk)) ran from 3 to 21 October and was funded by UKRI.

The Zone provided school students from across the UK the opportunity to learn about Black historical figures that helped shape the modern-day UK.

The Zone featured **15 community and academic historians**, specialising in UK Black history, championing 15 historical figures. They connected with **382 students** from across the UK. **347 students (91%) actively participated** by writing Chat lines and asking follow-up questions.

## Key activity figures

Students logged in	382
Students active	91%
Schools	9
Historians	15
Live Chats requested	22
Live Chats taken place	19
Lines of live Chat	6,322
Average lines per live Chat	333
Questions asked	96
Questions approved	64
Answers given	82

## Who took part?

382 students from 9 schools across the UK logged into the Zone and connected with 15 historians.

75% of active students were from priority schools: 34% from underserved schools and 42% from widening participation schools.

## Activity

22 live Chats were booked. 19 took place.

Out of the remaining 3 Chats booked, 1 was cancelled and in 2 the school did not attend and did not give notice. All schools were chased and invited to rebook.

There was 1 live Chat where the teacher asked questions on behalf of their students. It is also common for students to share login details or computers during live chats. Therefore, the number of students engaged will be higher.

Students asked 96 follow-up questions of which 64 were approved and 13 were duplicates.

## School activity

Students from 9 schools across the UK participated in the Zone.

School	Students logged in	Active users	Chats attended	Chat lines (total)	Chat lines (per user)	Questions approved
Hornsey School for Girls, London (WP)	87	85	4	1,195	14	4
Shirenewton Junior & Infant School, Monmouthshire	86	82	3	986	12	5
Ladybridge High School, Bolton (WP)	70	59	3	600	10	0
Llanyrafon Primary School, Torfaen (U)	56	56	2	776	14	3
Clytha Primary School, Newport (U)	57	57	2	630	12	52
South Wilts Grammar School, Salisbury (U)	8	8	2	78	10	0
Loreto College, Manchester	16	7	1	28	4	0
Friskney All Saints Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Boston (WP/U)	2	3	1	52	17	0
St Ignatius Catholic Primary School, Sunbury on Thames*	0	1	1	18	18	0

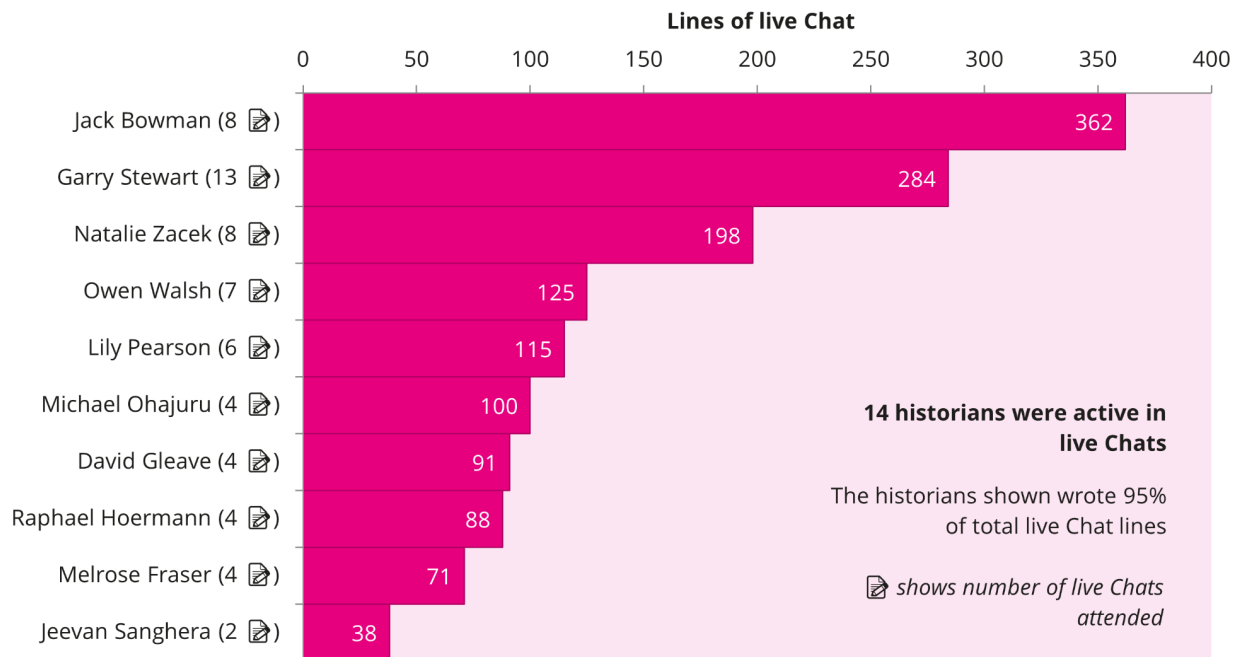
\* In these chats teachers typed questions on behalf of their students, with the chat displayed on a screen.

We want to increase the participation of under-represented groups. Find out what we mean by under-served (U) and widening participation (WP) schools, and how you can support us in working with more of these: [about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp](https://about.imascientist.org.uk/under-served-and-wp)

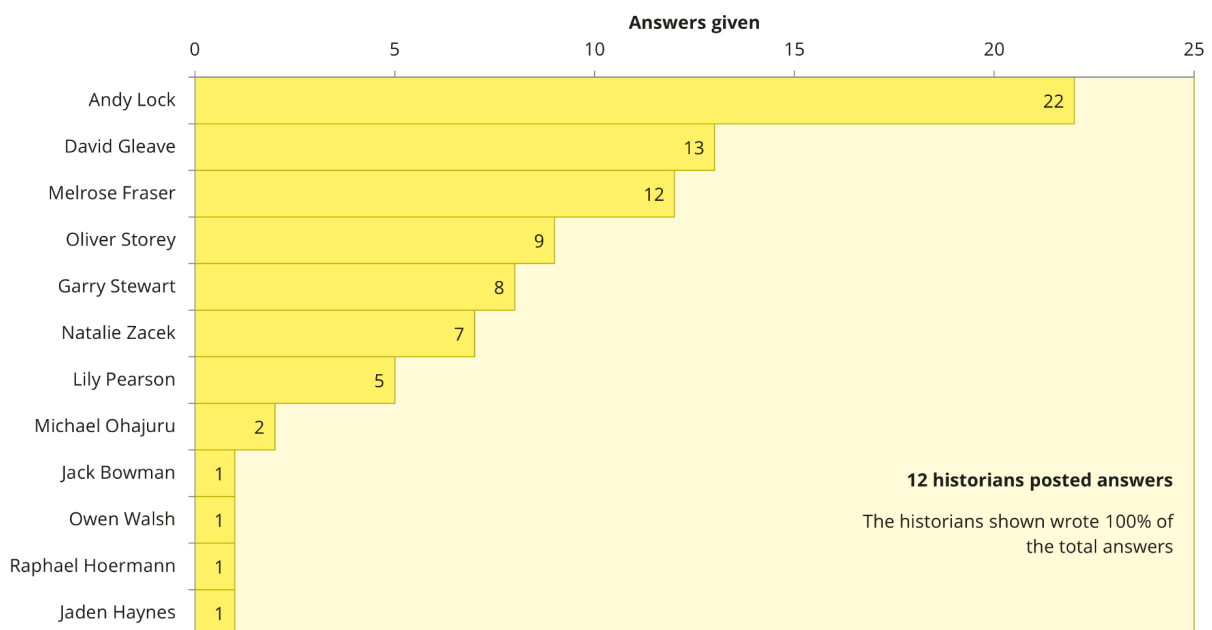
# Historian activity

During the Zone the historians interacted with students by writing 1,545 lines of live Chat, and providing 82 answers to 64 posted questions. On average, 3 historians took part in each live Chat.

## 10 most active historians in live Chats



## 10 most active historians in posting answers



## Live Chats

The word cloud below demonstrates what students and historians talked about in live Chats. The bigger the word, the more frequently it was used.



## Questions in Ask section

Here are some examples of questions students asked. The categories from top to bottom are: The historical figures, historical questions and general questions.

Why do you know a lot about George Bridgetowers early life and not much about his later life?

What football teams did Jack Leslie play for?

What rules did Britain make for Jamaica when Jamaica was under control by Britain?

What is the African ancestry?

Who is the most influential person in black history?

Why is there so much hatred towards black people?

## Good engagement

Students were able to ask questions specifically about the historical figures championed by the historian in the Zone and learn more about them.

**Student 1:** How did they cope with racism and did they ever stop doing something because of it?

**Lily (historian):** Jack Leslie coped with racism by carrying on playing and not letting it stop him. Racism stopped him from being able to play for England as when they realised that he was Black his name was taken off the team sheet and he was never called up to the squad again.

**Student 1:** What was Soubise's job?

**Natalie (historian):** When he was a child he was a slave on a sugar plantation. As an adult he taught fencing and riding to rich Londoners – but mostly he was famous for being famous. Sort of like the Kardashians!

**Student 1:** What era did Connie live in?

**Garry (historian):** Connie was born in the 1920s which was a difficult time due to the Great Depression which was a global economic disaster then followed by the Second World War from 1939 till 1945. Connie came to England as part of the Windrush generation.

General questions about history, society and experiences as a black person are useful in providing students with subject knowledge and context that they can link to their own lives and experiences.

**Student 1:** Why is Black history month different in America?

**David (historian):** Black people had a different experience, there were many enslaved people working on plantations in America. In the UK we tended to have individuals working as servants in the houses of rich people, there were no plantations in the UK

So the experience was different and the response has been different. It is important that we recognise the contribution of Black British people, not just Martin Luther King etc

**Student 1:** Why did people need slaves?

**Raphael (historian):** Good question. Slavery has existed in most societies across the world. With transatlantic slavery it was down to economics. The plantations needed a huge amount of workers and if you didn't pay them the profit was far greater.

**Student 1:** Who invented racism?

**Owen (historian):** That's a difficult question, but an important one. Hall argued that racism is a way of maintaining social inequalities, and is a set of ideas which changes over time depending on particular circumstances. So eg, racism under slavery justified the enslavement of Black people; racism in 21st century Britain justifies immigration restrictions or international wars

But some people think racist ideas go all the way back to Aristotle in ancient Greece. Others point to racist prejudices against Jewish people in mediaeval Europe. Or point to racist ideas about the Irish when England first conquered it.

Information about historians careers and what inspired them provides students with useful career information supporting the Gatsby Benchmarks and highlights careers paths to students.

**Student 1:** What inspired you to be a historian?

**Jaden (historian):** I find the past fascinating, and think it's really important to learn about the past to help understand the world we live in today.

**Owen (historian):** I think we need to understand the past in order to understand the world today, and to work out the kind of world we want for tomorrow.

**Lily (historian):** history was always my favourite subject and school so that is why I have carried on studying it at university. I have always found it fascinating to see how what has happened in the past has shaped our lives today, and think it is very important that we learn about what has happened before us.

## Feedback

Thank you for that information. They're such an inspiration and they will always be remembered for their greatness

**Student**

I enjoyed it - good fun - great questions!

**Michael** (historian)

The Chats have been great, thanks for the brilliant initiative. I've been impressed how easy the Chat is and how the kids seem to be able to ask questions direct etc. It's been really good

**Jack** (historian)

As the time is coming to an end, I'd like to say a huge thank you from the children for giving up your time and answering their questions. They have been fully engaged!

**Teacher**

Thank you so much, we've had a great discussion going our end and your responses have been very insightful.

**Teacher**

Thank you for teaching us, I really enjoyed it. Can you teach us again?

**Student**