



## *RASTAFARI REGAL LIVITY NEWSLETTER ~ SEPTEMBER 2016*

The journey of the project began in early 2012 when Ras Danijah Tafari, a Jamaican resident in Ethiopia, introduced an upcoming exhibition in Addis Ababa to the UK community, entitled ***Ras Tafari: The Majesty and the Movement***. The exhibition would bring together remembrances and artefacts from His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I connections with global communities. The Rastafari community in the UK was invited to contribute to this event and a committee was duly established for this purpose in July 2012.

Known as the RMM(UK) Committee, early core Directors consisted of Ras Danijah, Ras Cos Tafari, Sister Stella Headley, Ras Lionwyze, Dr Robbie Shilliam, Jah Blue, Ras Shango Baku, Ras Ray-I and Sister Addishiwot were co-opted onto the committee for their specific expertise. Information on the project was produced in the form of fliers designed by Local artist and designer Terry MacDonald Humphrey who became interested in supporting the project after discovering direct family links to James and Helen Piper, the famous pioneers to Shashamene. These were distributed widely within the local community accompanied by radio adverts and a film trailer to publicise the project. Ones were called upon to contribute any literature, journals, memorabilia, artefacts or other materials in their possession that could serve the needs of the project. The committee became heavily engaged in researching, documenting and writing the history of His Majesty's sojourn in the UK as well as the evolution of the Rastafari movement in Britain.

By mid 2013 several newsletters and updates on the project were produced by the Committee. A fact-finding visit to Ethiopia was undertaken by two team members Sis Stella and Ras Lionwyze in July 2013 to assess first-hand the uptake and progress of the project in Addis Ababa and Shashamane. Links were developed with the Ethiopian organising committee and other repatriates to ensure cohesion of effort between the UK and Ethiopia. Ras Danijah returned to Ethiopia and a visit to Ethiopia by Sister Addishiwot later that year served to strengthen the links.

The committee met regularly at venues in West and East London to develop the appropriate concept for the UK component. Responsibilities for research and documentation were accomplished and eventually a selection of thirteen exhibition panels were composed to reflect the objectives of the project. A dedicated itinerary was mapped out with contacts in Ethiopia for the May-June 2014 tenure of the exhibition at the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. Meetings were held with the Jamaican High Commission, The Ethiopian Consulate and Ethiopian Airways in London in the run-up to the departure to Ethiopia.

In early May 2014 committee members began their arrivals in Addis Ababa. Ras Ray-I was tasked with the filming and gathering of oral testimonies and Sister Addishiwot was to use her photographic expertise to capture the events and to provide Amharic translations when necessary. In mid-May the early arrival of Ras Shango Baku and Sister Stella were instrumental in agreeing a program of events for Shashamane that would follow the Grand Exhibition Opening scheduled for May 25<sup>th</sup> (African Liberation Day). By the date of the opening ceremony all six RMM(UK) committee members had arrived safely in Ethiopia along with representatives from the Sick Be Nourished project in Birmingham.



The Ethiopian Exhibition was a qualified success. In the opening address Exhibition Director and Curator Dr Desta Meghoo made special mention of the UK contribution, as did others who showed their appreciation for the focus, content and quality of the RMM(UK) panels. RMM(UK) members addressed delegates at the accompanying exhibition international Colloquium, outlining the research process and revealing some of the archived documents that had been recovered from a range of British institutions.

Following the grand opening, the focus shifted to the Shashamane programme. The RMM(UK) under its parent company name ***Rastafari Regal Livty***, utilising support from the Youths of Shashamene, held meetings with community groups at the Nyahbinghi Tabernacle, the EWF HQ, as well as with members of Twelve Tribes of Israel and the EABIC. Films such as ***The First Rasta*** and ***The Book Liberator*** were shown at the EWF HQ, followed by lively presentations and discussions by repatriates regarding the triumphs and tribulations of their individual and collective experiences in returning to '***The Promised Land***'. RMM(UK) pledged to publicise the hopes, expectations and aspirations of the community and to maintain the positive links that had been forged in the course of the project and this pledge has subsequently been followed through. At an all-Mansion gathering at the local Lily of the Valley Hotel, community representatives affirmed to work together with local Ethiopians to uplift the fortunes of Shashamane, to ensure its place on the international radar of the movement and to garner support for the future of this unique township.

On returning to London, the team arranged an afternoon event at the Queen Mary University in East London on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014 where a highly representative audience were given first-hand reports of the Ethiopian experience. For the first time in the UK, the exhibition Panels were displayed along with photos and video recordings of the visit to Ethiopia. In October the exhibition was invited to the Guildhall in Bath to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of His Majesty being given 'The keys to the City'. The exhibition was then displayed at the Bath Library for two weeks before being installed at Fairfield House in time for a 'Golden Sabbath' coronation grand opening on November 2nd, where it was the centrepiece of the annual Coronation celebrations. In February to March 2015 it was featured at ***The Drum*** in Birmingham where three accompanying presentations/discussions were hosted on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February and on the 19<sup>th</sup> March when the first film produced by ***Rastafari Regal Livty*** entitled ***The Magdala Campaign*** was given its debut showing to the gathered audience, celebrating the life and works of ***Ras Seymour Maclean***.

April 2016 signalled the ***50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie visit to the Caribbean***. As part of the celebrations to mark this momentous occasion, Rastafari The Majesty & The Movement (UK) exhibition was invited to the Montego Bay Cultural Centre, courtesy of the Institute of Jamaica. Four representatives from the RMM(UK) team were present for the grand opening on April 15<sup>th</sup> which was attended by the Rastafarian community and local Dignitaries, including the Mayor of Montego Bay CLLR Glendon Harris JP. The 'Rastafari Indigenous Village' members blessed the opening presentations and sealed the evening with Nyahbinghi chanting and praises. The Exhibition was on display at the venue until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016 and received local press and Radio coverage. We acknowledge the Curator Dr Kim Harris for the inspirational role she played and all the staff at the Montego Bay Cultural Centre.



Grand Exhibition Opening gathering ~ Montego Bay Cultural Centre ~ Sam Sharpe Square ~ Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
In the presence of the Mayor of St James Parish, various dignitaries and the Rastafari community.



The Jamaican community gather to explore the panels at the Grand Opening ~ Acknowledgements to the 'Rastafari Indigenous Village' for the provision of refreshments, food and herbs 'legally' available.

The Exhibition then went on display at the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton, London (June-September 2016), and signalled an exciting climax to the international journey of this remarkable project. By this time it will have been seen by thousands of visitors and audiences of all persuasions, who hopefully will be enlightened and inspired by this exposé of the fundamental truths of **Ras Tafari ~ The Majesty and The Movement**.

Now re-titled **Rastafari in Motion**, having been transformed with a brand new expansive treatment for the Brixton venue, the Exhibition opened on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June and has proved much more than a mere collection of panels recording **His Imperial Majesty's** crucial years in the UK and the evolution of the Rastafari movement in Britain. The broader reflections on international morality, equal rights and justice and the Ras Tafari way of life, have taken it far beyond its original scope, intent and purpose.





Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014 ~ Grand opening Nyabinghi blessings ~ Black Cultural Archives Brixton South London

The exhibition has exemplified the use of art and creativity as a vehicle for social interaction, positive profiling, collective learning and community enterprise. Its momentum has taken us on a voyage of discovery into the hinterland of the Rastafari global movement and afforded an assessment of our history and impact on the international community, a greater awareness of ourselves as a peculiar people unto the **Most High** and a surer recognition of our point of arrival on the world stage, despite the multiple barriers, hurdles and challenges to our existence in less than a century of life on this planet. As is **His Imperial Majesty Emperor Qadamawi Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of Himself and Light of this World, ever present** – so is the Global movement ever present, in this time.

#### Commentary by Danijah Yekuno Tafari ~ London ~ June 2016

"Sixteen years into the new century, the organic growth and development of the Rastafari Movement continues a pace into global proportions across all boundaries of countries, people and race. Covering every aspects of the human condition, the early struggles and liberation for the African World is won, the last vestiges of the 500 years colonial old imperial world was defeated and totally removed from the continent in 1992 with a new South Africa. Tens of thousands of Rastafarians have and are repatriating to their ancestral home of origin, and those who remain outside have discovered Africa within their soul, heart and mind as a genealogical and meta-physical reality. Today, Rastafari remain a movement of Peace, Love, Truth, Rights and Justice - an order of righteousness in the Almighty divine plan for humanity. The exhibition 'Rastafari In Motion' in Brixton, London, is in a good place at the Black Cultural Archives to explore, show and tell all about His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie 1 and the Ras-Tafari movement in Britain. The community interest organisation **Rastafari Regal Livty** have shown what clear vision, committed team work and courageous effort is able to achieve. We must congratulate and salute their work. May Jah the Father of us all reward all those involved in the glorification of his throne on earth.



Snapshots of the many visitors who have passed through June – September 2016  
Black Cultural Archives ~ London

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Further Information Sources

F/B - Rastafari The Majesty & The Movement (UK) Previous newsletters : [www.rascostafari.com](http://www.rascostafari.com)

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For all films on the project to date contact Ras Rai - Tel. +44(0)7476 510400



*"We must become something we have never been and for which our education, experience and environment have ill-prepared us. We must become bigger than we have been: more courageous, greater in spirit, larger in outlook. We must become members of a new race, overcoming petty prejudice, owing our ultimate allegiance not to nations but to our fellow men within the human community ~ "His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I<sup>st</sup>*