

MUSEUM OF BRITISH COLONIALISM



ANNUAL REPORT
2018

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2018, the Museum of British Colonialism was just an idea. We had just one team member and a website. Twelve months later we have:

- **Built** a passionate team of over 20 volunteers, collaborating and working together across the UK, Kenya, Italy, Japan and Germany
- **Created** a number of dynamic media pieces including a podcast listened to by almost 70,000 people, a documentary in collaboration with HistoryHit screened to sell out crowds in Nairobi and London, digital maps shared and seen by almost 80,000 people, and videos that have engaged audiences across the globe
- **Attracted** an active Twitter audience of over 1,700 who have supported the museum to reach over 500,000 impressions and engagements
- **Given** talks at the Labour Heritage Society, Goldsmiths University and Africa House and represented the museum at two international conferences, International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) in Accra and International Federation of Television Archives (IFTA/FIAT) in Venice
- **Received** £7,000 in funding that facilitated two field trips and extensive documentation
- **Started** the beginnings of our first exhibition on the Mau Mau detention centres.

OUR TEAM

The development of our team has been core to our success this year.

Susan Wambui Kibaara

Catie Harvey

Camilla Omollo

Geeta Jethwa

Tayiana Chao

Silvia Mwendia

Annie Pfingst

Sandra Grant

Jeremy Bortz

Romy St John

Ranjana Thapalyal

Luna Diaz

Beth Rebisz

Gabriel Moshenska

Adam Rodgers Johns

Olivia Windham Stewart

Hannah McLean

Anaïs Walsdorf

Mary Wanjiru Njoroge

Hellen Masido

David Nzioka



OUR WORK

The Museum's first project focuses on The Mau Mau Emergency. The majority of activities undertaken and work completed this year has been on this topic.

Beyond the development of our team and network, key activities have been:

- Producing our Operation Legacy Documentary, in partnership with HistoryHit
- Conducting archival and field research in both the UK and Kenya
- Presenting our work and building our digital audience
- Developing our first exhibition

This section provides a short overview of those activities.

Operation Legacy Documentary

In 2009, a group of Kenyan war veterans sued the British government in order to reveal the truth about what really happened in Kenya between 1952-1960. The case exposed a cover up so deep it was to rock the British establishment and change the way we view colonial history forever.

In 2018, the British Museum of Colonialism co-produced a documentary with HistoryHit TV to tell this incredible story. The documentary is now available online and will also be screened across the UK and Kenya through 2019.

Archival and Field Research

In September 2018, five members of our team undertook field work exercise in Nyeri county, with Anthony Maina from Museums of Kenya. The aim of the field work was to:

- Visit sites where former camps are known to have stood.
- Establish whether there are any physical structures from the camps that remain today
- Examine the sites from an archaeological perspective and possibilities for future exploration
- Record exact GPS coordinates of former camp sites
- Document the sites for purposes of digital mapping and reconstructions
- Interview former veterans on knowledge and experience within camps

Sites visited included, Nyeri museum and Mau Mau flag site opposite DO's office, Kangubiri Girls (formerly Aguthi Works Camp), Mweru High School (formerly Mweru Works Camp) - Mukuruweini, Karunaini where Field Marshall Dedan Kimathi was shot, Chinga Dam (constructed by detainees from Othaya works camp), Ruirung'u stadium, and Karatina University to learn more about the Centre for Liberation Studies.



View of Aguthi (Mungaria) Work Camp, from J.M. Kariuki's 1963 book 'Mau Mau Detainee'.



The same view, taken on the Museum's research trip to Nyeri. Moha, above, stands in the former location of the watchtower.



Brick from Mweru High School with the initials MWC, for Mweru Works Camp



Former cell with barbed wire still visible

We also conducted interviews with:

- Mr. Wambugu Nyigi, Mau Mau veteran and Hola massacre survivor
- Mr Wangombe, who prepared Dedan Kimathi's stretcher and carried him when he was shot in the forest
- Mr. Kimathi, the forest ranger who took the famous photograph of Kimathi on a stretcher



Mr. Wambugu Nyigi



MBC team with Mr Wambugu

Exhibition

Based on our field work the MBC team is proposing Aguthi Works Camp, now Kangubiri Girls' School as the focal point for our first exhibition. We propose this site for a number of reasons:

1. Unlike some sites, the presence of a **visible and permanent physical structure** is still in place - it has now been converted into a girls' school
2. Our team has visited the site and has gathered some **preliminary material** (outlined below)
3. We have a small number of **interviews with individuals** connected to and knowledgeable about the camp, including a previous detainee (see below for inventory)
4. The site is **still in use** as a boarding school so presents interesting opportunities to engage young Kenyans in exhibition and museum activities and explore intergenerational knowledge gaps
5. The **site is gazetted** (listed) under the National Museum of Kenya, which means there is easier access and a stronger case for historical documentation and preservation
6. A variety of additional archival and historical material would be available to complement the MBC team's primary / original research

Exhibition Content

We propose a mixed media exhibition that presents original work by the MBC team alongside historical, archival and public material.

Original content will include:

- 70+ photographs of the camp structure as it stands today. Images accessible [here](#) and include:
 - Cell blocks now converted into dormitories
 - Confinement / torture room (original structure / doors / barbed wire)
 - Remnants of original trenches
- 40+ short video clips, accessible [here](#); some edited into [field diary](#)
- 4 recorded interviews: Anthony Maina (National Museums of Kenya), school caretaker, Principle, and Mr Wambugu (former detainee - accessible [here](#); translation pending!)
- Notes and sketches by the team, as well as Mr Wambugu
- Operation Legacy Documentary, as a complimentary piece of content

We hope to expand upon this by conducting a follow up visit to the school to **collect new images**, conduct further interviews with former detainees or people who have knowledge or experiences of the camp in living memory and presenting a **digital reconstruction of the site using 3D modelling**.

Digital reconstructions and 3D modelling anticipate approximately 3 to 4 months of development work and the engagement of a 3D modelling intern or team member.

Potential Additional or Complementary Content

There is a wealth of additional material on Aguthi within archives in the UK and Kenya. Complementary content could therefore include archival material, such ground plans, correspondence, detainee letters, [parliamentary records](#), [video footage](#), contemporary newspaper reports and accounts drawn from history books.

ENGAGEMENT

The Museum was founded to creatively communicate a more truthful account of British colonial history. As such, engagement is central to our work. Over the course of 2018, we were pleased to see our audience grow steadily across all platforms.

Digital

- Our website attracted 3,915 unique visitors and a total of 9,217 visits this year.
- We had visitors from over 85 countries, including Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australasia; the highest engagement came from the UK and Kenya, as well as other former colonies
- Our Twitter audience grew to 1,700, with over 500,000k impressions over the year
- 69,000 people listened to our HistoryHit podcast
- Our Operation Legacy Documentary was released in September 2019, the documentary is available through our website and was screened to a sold out audience in Nairobi
- We are building our presence on Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram and have shared field diaries across our platforms.

Events

Alongside our digital and field work, we hosted and participated in a series of events in the UK, Kenya, Ghana and Italy.

2018 events included:

- A lecture at Labour Party Heritage Society, London
- A lecture at Goldsmiths University, London
- Conference presentation at IASA Conference, Accra
- Conference presentation at FIAT / IFTA, Venice
- Documentary screening at PAWA254, Nairobi, Kenya followed by a panel discussion with Faith Allube (KHRC), Gitu wa Kahengeri (Chairman, Mau Mau War Veterans' Association), Boniface Mwangi and Chao and Susan from The Museum of British Colonialism team
- Presentation at East Africa Forum, London

We have reached an audience of over 2,000 people through our events and sell out screening. We have been encouraged and inspired by the response to our work and look forward to 2019.

ORGANISATIONAL STATUS AND FINANCES

The Museum of British Colonialism is a company limited by guarantee (company number 10960532) in our second year of operation. We applied for charitable status with the Charity Commission in November 2018 and have been informed that our application may take 6 months to process. Our Board of Trustees currently comprises a Company Director, Treasurer and Secretary. We are looking to expand this in 2019.

Profit and Loss

Income	
Private Donations	694
Bank Interest	-
Seed Funding Loan	2,000
Kickstarter	4,795
TOTAL INCOME	7,489

Expenditure	
Operational - Core	535
Website	76
Additional Tech - Core	518
Mau Mau Project	5,149
Total Expenditure	6,279

Net Income & Expenditure	1,210
TOTAL BALANCE AS OF 31ST DECEMBER 2018	1,100

LOOKING AHEAD

The Museum team is looking forward to 2019, as we continue to grow our team of volunteers, hold more screenings, develop our first exhibition and conduct more field research and digital platform development for public engagement. Our early 2019 event at The Museum of Free Derry was a huge success and our screening to an audience of 185 at SOAS in February sold out within 48 hours. We also look forward to more funding!

WITH THANKS TO

Our work would not be possible without the generous encouragement and support of the following individuals and organisations:

Our amazing team of volunteers all around the world; African Digital Heritage; Museums of Kenya; Kenyan Human Rights Centre; Gitu wa Kahengeri and the Mau Mau War Veterans' Association; PAWA254 and Boniface Mwangi; Muthoni wa Kirima; Anthony Maina; the British Institute in Eastern Africa; HistoryHit - particularly Dan Snow, Nathaniel Tapley, Helen Carrie and Felix; The Pat Finucane Centre and Museum of Free Derry; University College London; Goldsmiths; Glasgow School of Art; David Anderson at The University of Warwick; Ian Cobain; Alex von Tunzelman, Labour Party Heritage Society; Vinay Patel; Thant Myint U; Decolonising Our Minds (SOAS); Dan Leader and Leigh Day; Tony Badger; Caroline Elkins, FIAT / IAFA. And all our families and friends.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at museumofbritishcolonialism.org

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/museumofbc

See us on Instagram at [instagram.com/museumofbc/](https://www.instagram.com/museumofbc/)

Watch us on YouTube at [youtube.com/channel/UCZk5mzpbgpY41SFutZ9M8IA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZk5mzpbgpY41SFutZ9M8IA)

Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/museumofcolonialism](https://www.facebook.com/museumofcolonialism)

Email us at info@museumofbritishcolonialism.org

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