

# Student Curator Project

Encouraging and embracing inclusivity and diversity in partnership with our students

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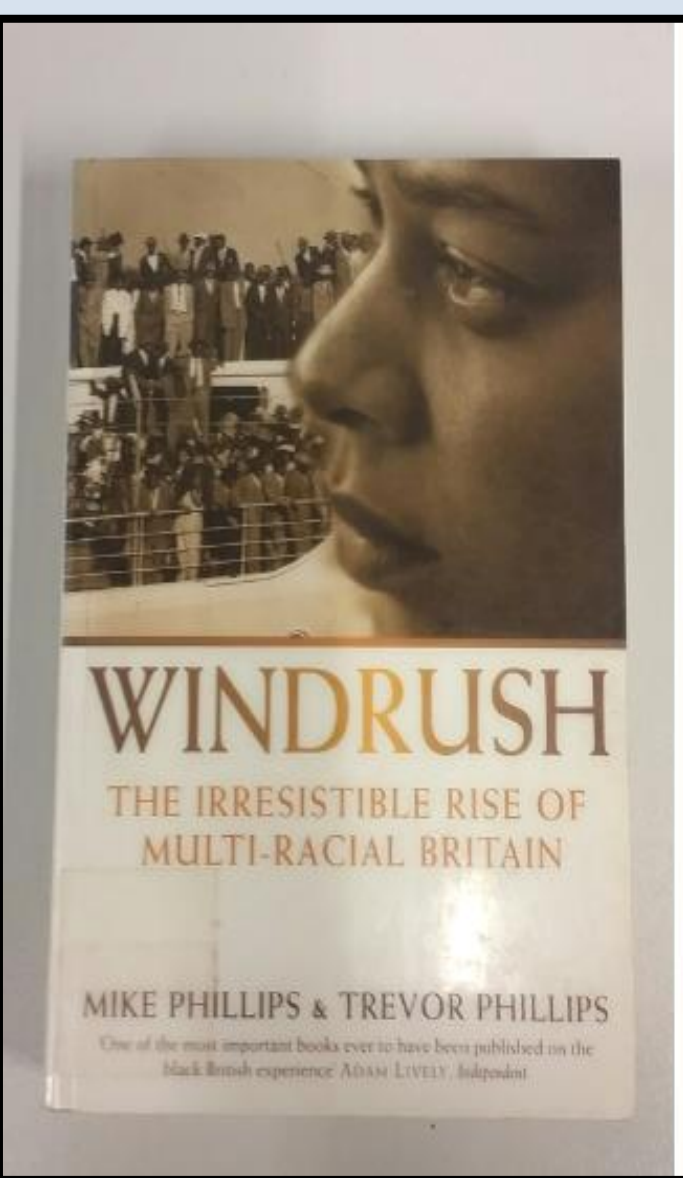
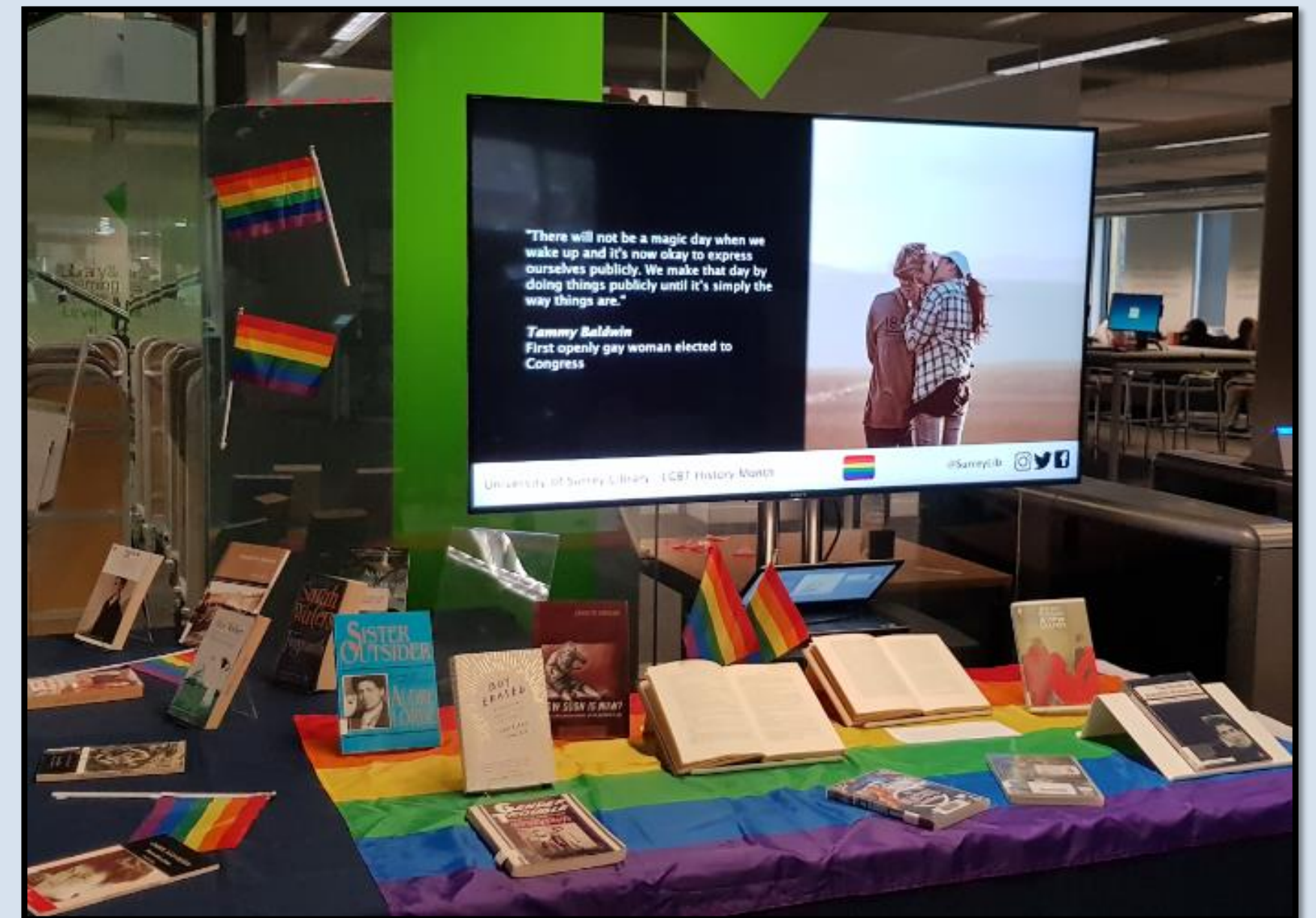
## Background and aims

The University of Surrey Library and Learning Support Services and the Students' Union have worked on this collaborative project to support, recognise and celebrate diversity and inclusivity on campus. The Student Curator project encourages the student voice in building and broadening our library's collections. With students as the lead, a small project team in the Library have worked alongside the Student Curators to:

- Find existing materials in the collection, both print and virtual
- Explore our Archives and Special Collections and share materials of interest
- Curate a display, both physical and virtual to showcase their discoveries
- Manage a small project budget purchasing new titles to develop our collection

Themes this year have been:

**Black History Month, LGBT+, Disability and Invisible Disability Awareness, Healthy Learning**



### Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain

As someone of West Indian heritage, I couldn't do anything about Black History Month in Britain while ignoring Windrush – especially due to the recent scandals in Parliament! Here, we see how life was for West Indians emigrating to England in 1948. Fifty years on, the Windrush generation tell their stories of settling into and influencing the British climate.



Joel Weller, Student Curator

## Approaches taken by the Student Curators

Each Student Curator and theme has built on the experience of the last:

- Physical displays in the library using book and archive collections
- Creation of AV displays and slideshows to highlight digital items from library collections, inspirational quotes, reflections from the Student Curators themselves
- Innovative use of the online reading lists to share finds from our existing collections and to promote new purchases
- Use of library social media accounts and our blog to promote the theme, talk to the student population and share finds
- Use of our library social spaces to hold a talk on their theme

## Impact so far...

Initial feedback has shown increasing interest and engagement from students via social media and comments cards:

*"Thank you for showcasing these diverse and inclusive reads! The world needs more books like these!"*

- Student Curator campaigns have been in the top 3 for the Library's social media accounts
- 2,204 Twitter impressions for one post, over 650 likes and comments on Instagram, over 340 views of the online reading lists
- Student societies coming forward to volunteer to be part of the project
- Students suggesting items to purchase via social media and comments cards
- Students reserving items from the online reading lists to use for their dissertation research
- Over 150 titles added to the collection by the Student Curators to date



## Reflections and lessons learned

"The response from people who I know and didn't know has been spectacular. People from various backgrounds {...} stopped to look at the display and took an interest in what I was doing – giving insight on how the display affected them, and that was the goal!" (Joel Weller, Student Curator)

"Fantastic opportunity to work closer with our students and build some very long-lasting relationships." (Library staff)

- It was time intensive for Library staff to properly support and facilitate the Student Curator
- Difficult to work to timescales with final year students
- Needed to continually adapt our working approaches as we worked with different students

## Next steps

- Have a celebration event with our Student Curators at the end of the year
- Look to involve students more heavily in the ongoing management and facilitation
- Getting students to set the programme of topics for the coming year
- Explore how the on-going work on decolonising the curriculum can be advanced through the Student Curator project
- Work closer with University marketing to further highlight the project around the University
- Investigate how the Student Curator project can be integrated with graduate skills and digital competencies framework