

Reference: XXX
Accession Ref: XXXX
Name: Nana Oguntola
Address: [Not given]
Date of Birth: [Not given]
Place of Birth: [Not given]
Date of Interview: [Not recorded]
Interviewed by: Roger Kitchen
Duration: 00:08.34

Nana Oguntola became involved with The Rose around late 2019 or 2020, when she was invited by Reverend Edison of the Queensway Methodist Church in Bletchley, through the Council of Faiths, to join a panel bidding for a commemorative pillar. The focus was on George Floyd and slavery. Prior to this, Nana knew of The Rose and had visited a few times but had not been actively engaged in its events.

Since securing the George Floyd pillar, Nana has organised events there, including George Floyd commemorations and Nelson Mandela Remembrance Day. She describes The Rose as a powerful, reflective space. The physical setting—sunken and enclosed by pillars—creates a sombre, thoughtful atmosphere suited to themes of justice, equality, legacy, and reconciliation. For her, it feels like entering a distinct space within Milton Keynes, one that encourages reflection and remembrance.

Nana believes The Rose has become a unifying place for the city. Beyond individual pillars and specific commemorations, it serves as a communal gathering point during significant moments, such as after the Queen’s death, as well as for events addressing issues like women and sexual violence. She sees it as “the soul” or “beating heart” of Milton Keynes—a unique space where people from diverse backgrounds come together to commemorate shared values, people, and causes. It offers seriousness, reflection, and unity.

Securing the George Floyd and slavery-related pillars was particularly meaningful for the Black community. Nana notes that previously there were few pillars representing Black history or experiences. Having these pillars installed was affirming and symbolic of visibility and recognition—an acknowledgment that Black stories and contributions matter and deserve space within the city’s heritage.

Looking ahead, Nana suggests stronger engagement with schools. She proposes sharing a yearly calendar of events with schools to encourage student participation. She believes young people should learn the stories represented by the pillars, as they are the future

custodians of this legacy. Greater educational involvement would help ensure that the heritage commemorated at The Rose continues to be understood, valued, and carried forward.