

Links & Liberty

The Slave Trade, Abolition and Legacy

This year marks 200 years since the Abolition of the British Slave Trade Act of 1807. Our exhibition commemorates that anniversary - when Parliament made it illegal for British ships to transport enslaved Africans to the colonies. It made the abolition of slavery in Britain and the British colonies possible.

Slavery has existed in many forms throughout history.

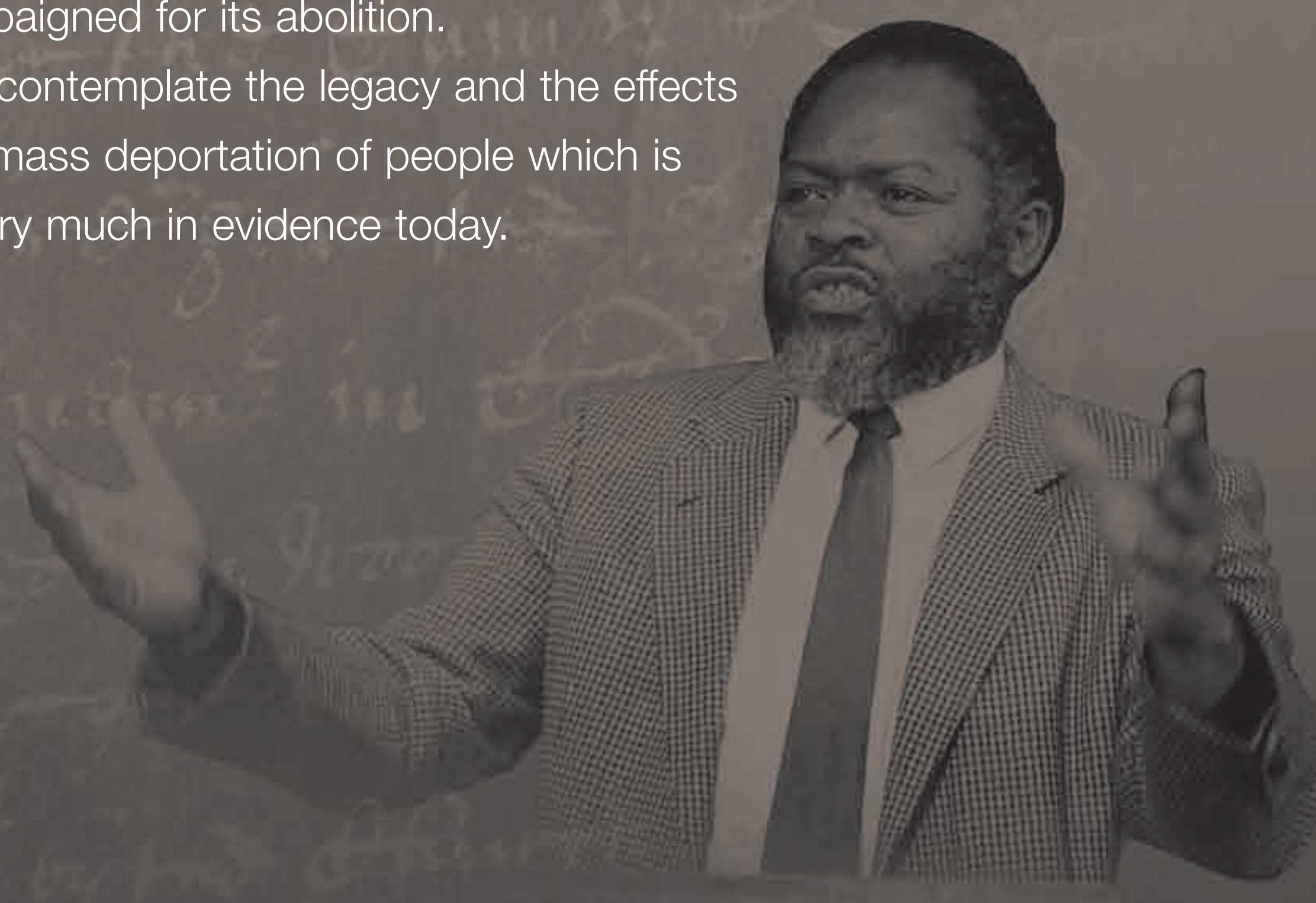
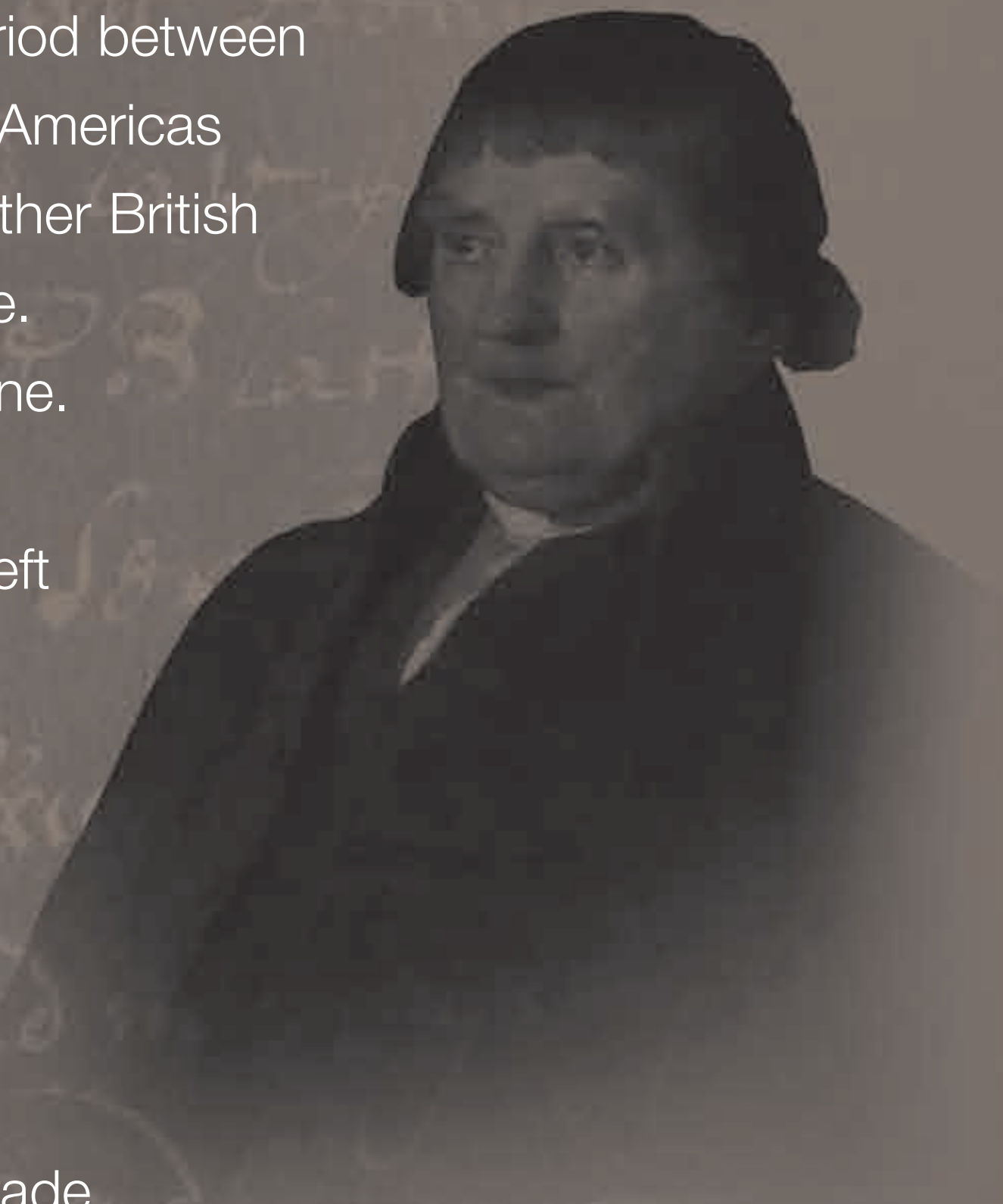
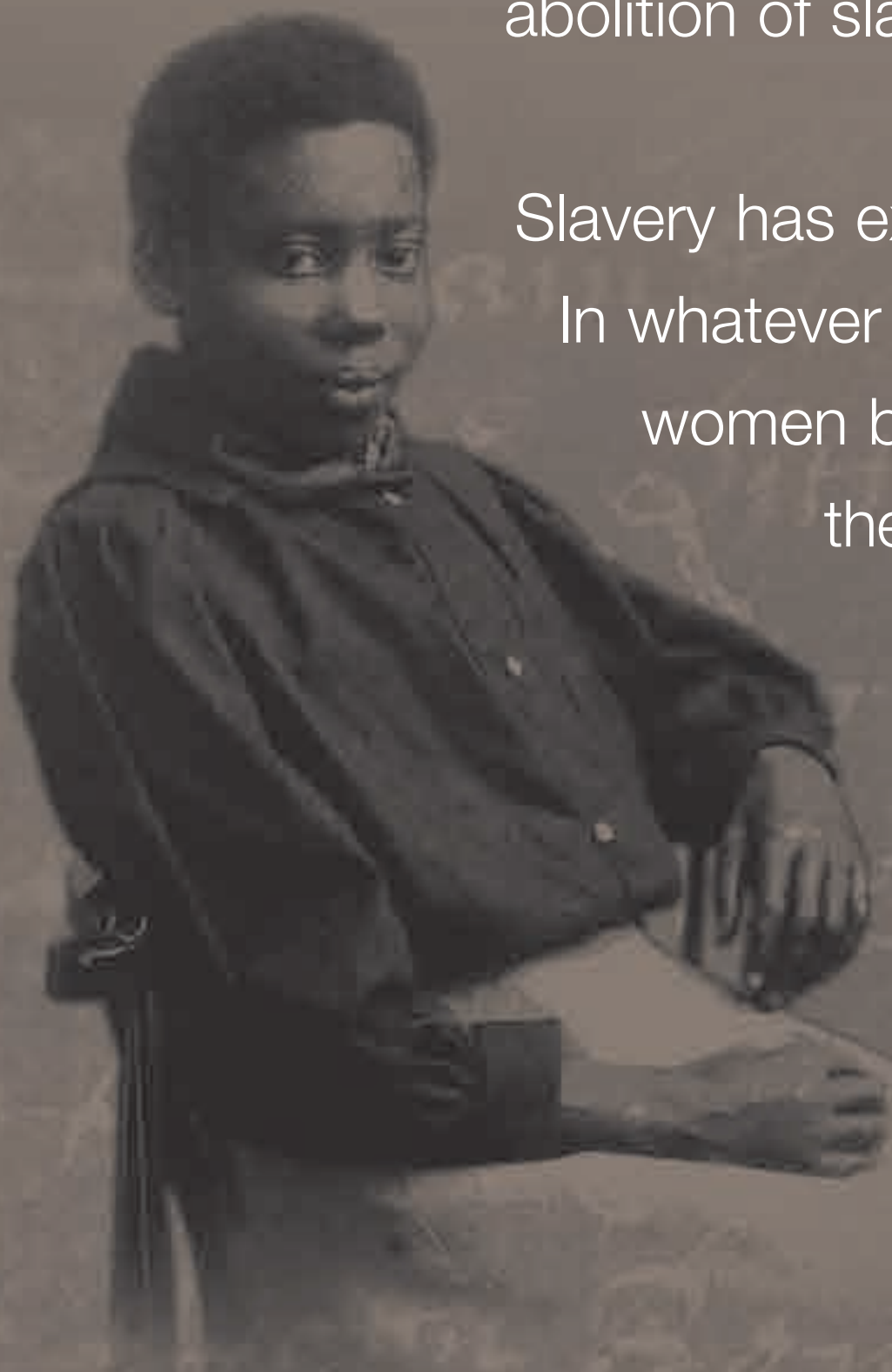
In whatever society, slavery means the possession of men and women by capture, birth or purchase and the enforcement of their labour against their will.

The focus of this exhibition is on the trafficking of people in the transatlantic slave trade from West Africa to the Caribbean from the 16th century to the 19th century. During this period between 10 and 12 million Africans were forcibly taken to the Americas and the Caribbean by merchants in London and other British ports that made their fortune from this brutal trade. Over 2 million enslaved Africans died in transit alone.

Here we tell the story of those who have been left out of many histories – the people who were brought to Haringey because of the slave trade. We look at buildings, places and documents from the borough and the connections for those involved in and who profited from the slave trade.

We also discover more about the local figures who campaigned for its abolition.

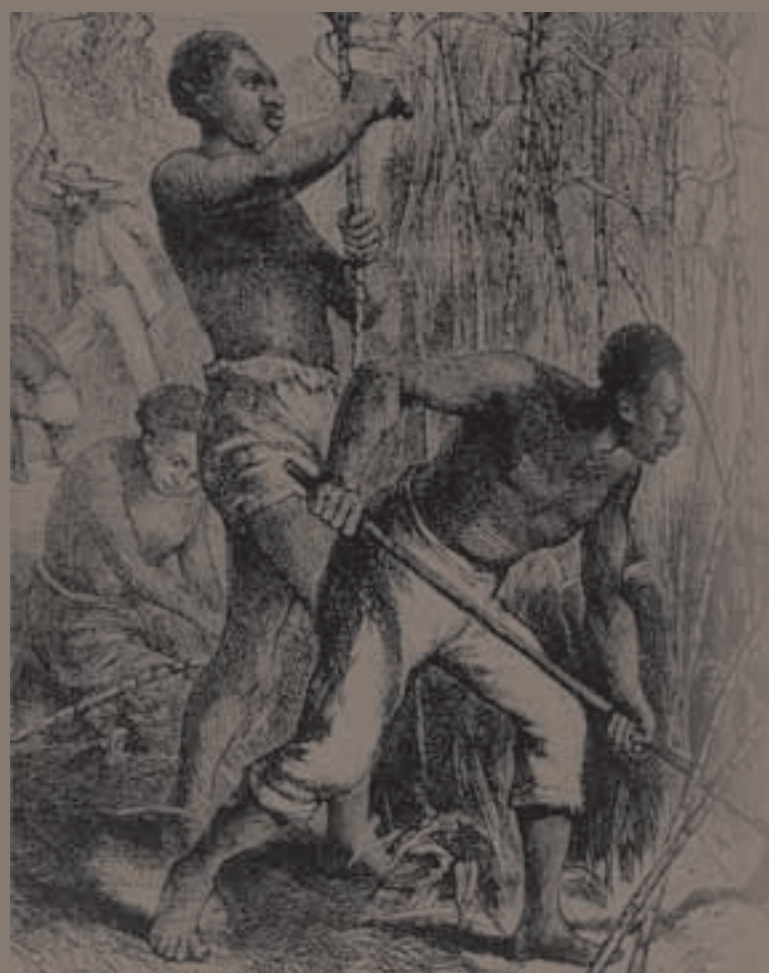
And we contemplate the legacy and the effects of this mass deportation of people which is still very much in evidence today.



Satisfying a Sweet Tooth

Beginnings of the Slave Trade

The origins of slavery in the Caribbean lay in the search by the Spanish for precious metals in their new colonies. The local inhabitants – the Caribs – were used at first. As their numbers declined, Black slaves from Spain – who had been imported from Africa from the 15th century – were sent. This trade was taken over by other European countries, among them the English, securing a hold in supplying slaves to the Spanish colonies.



The slave trade grew and grew because of the need for large numbers of workers in the Caribbean sugar industry. This was because of the high demand in Europe for sugar. Sugar could only be grown profitably on very large estates with low labour costs. The profits made were used to justify slavery. Cotton and coffee were also grown but on a limited scale.



Riches and Luxuries

In the 16th century, sugar in Tudor England was a rare but expensive food. As sugar was highly-prized, Royalty had their own comfit-maker (sweet-maker). In 1554 when King Philip of Spain arrived in England to marry Mary Tudor, amongst his Royal servants was Balthazar Sanchez, his comfit-maker.

When Philip returned to Spain, Balthazar stayed. Such was his own riches built up from making sweetmeats, Balthazar was able to afford a large manor house off Tottenham High Road called Stoneleys.

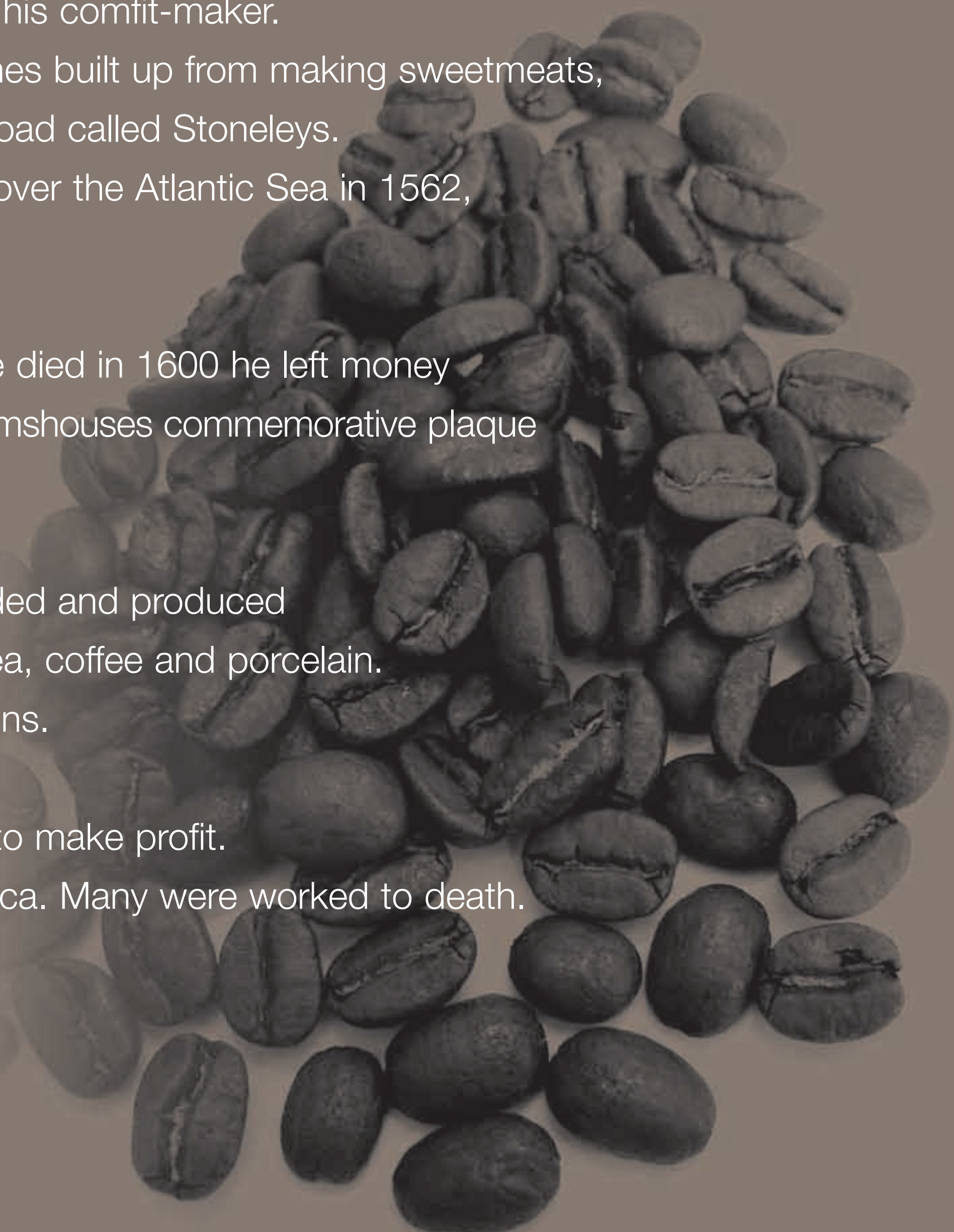
Just as the slave trader Captain John Hawkins took the first slave ship over the Atlantic Sea in 1562, so more and more trade in sugar came back to England.

Balthazar's success and wealth from sweet-making flourished. When he died in 1600 he left money in his will to build almshouses for the poor in Tottenham. The Sanchez Almshouses commemorative plaque can be seen today in the museum courtyard.

By the 18th century people in Haringey enjoyed goods and luxuries traded and produced from the far-flung corners of the British colonies. From the East came tea, coffee and porcelain. From the West came sugar, cotton, tobacco and rum from the plantations.

Plantation labour was all important to produce these luxury goods and to make profit.

Slaves were driven to work much harder in the Caribbean than in America. Many were worked to death.



Enslaved Africans in Haringey

The Evidence

For hundreds of years - well into the 19th century - Haringey was a rural area, made up of small villages. Amongst these small populations, we know that people from Africa lived here. Their names are recorded in the baptism and burial records in the Tottenham and Hornsey church parish registers.

The parish registers of 1610 from All Hallows Church in Tottenham reveal the earliest piece of evidence: 'Walter Anberey, the son of Nossor Anberey, borne in the kingdom of Dungala in Africa was baptised upon the third day of February...'

The earliest image we have of a young African boy in Haringey is from this painting of 1675. He was a servant at Bruce Castle. We do not know his name. Slaves were often given grand names such as 'Scipio' or 'Pompey', or sometimes not even a real name such as 'Nobody' or 'Gift'.

Who Were They?

Records survive throughout the 1700s to include men and women, young and old, named and un-named individuals. We even learn of married couples from entries in a burial register:

'6th April 1760 Sarah Claret, wife of Robert, a negro'

Nothing more is known about Sarah. Robert Claret died in 1762 aged 65 years. Their names are recorded forever, together, in the community where they lived. These are likely to be the names given to them by slave owners. We do not know their African names. Their original identities have been stripped. Did they live as a free family or as slaves serving a household? If slaves, who did they belong to? Most enslaved families were constantly separated as slaves were sold on. Perhaps Robert and Sarah were some of the luckier ones.

The survival of the names of these individuals demonstrate the wide displacement of people removed from their homes because of Britain's activities in the slave trade. These people are the living embodiment of the riches and profits made for others from the successful transactions of this trade.

Where did these people come from? From Africa? Or taken from the Caribbean back to England? How did they get here? Were they cruelly-treated? Were they escaped slaves?

These captured Africans had their own families, their own lives, their own histories – even if this information has not been recorded.

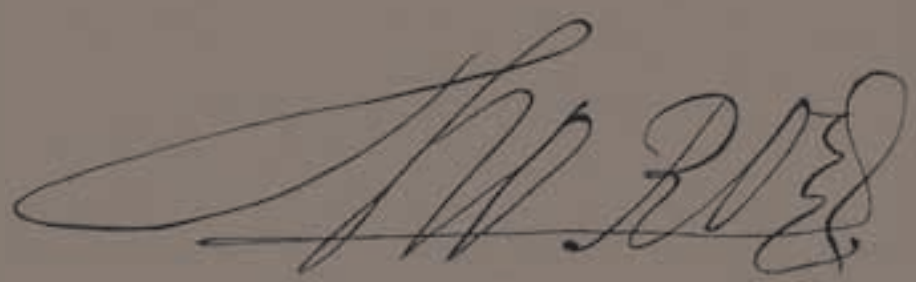
Masters & Servants - the Slave Trade in Haringey

Slave Owners

Slave owners lived in Tottenham and Hornsey. Ships' captains, home from their journeys, could be seen walking in the streets with their 'Black' in attendance. Many were just passing through. Others were here to stay. Local church records are the only rare commemorations of those Africans who died here. Some have no name. They are marked as the captain's property. *'1733 Captain Lissles black from Highgate'*



SIR THO^S ROE.



The keeping of African servants and pages was fashionable amongst wealthy and noble families. Sir Thomas Rowe's family were prosperous merchants who owned estates in Muswell Hill. They had two African servants in their household during the 1690s. They were named Henry and William.

In Tottenham during the 1670s, Henry Hare, the 2nd Lord Coleraine of Bruce Castle, owned an African servant boy.

The painting shows the young boy dressed in rich and luxurious clothing.

He wears a silver collar around his neck indicating his enslaved status. Was he treated well? Was he only considered to be an amusement for Lord Coleraine's children?

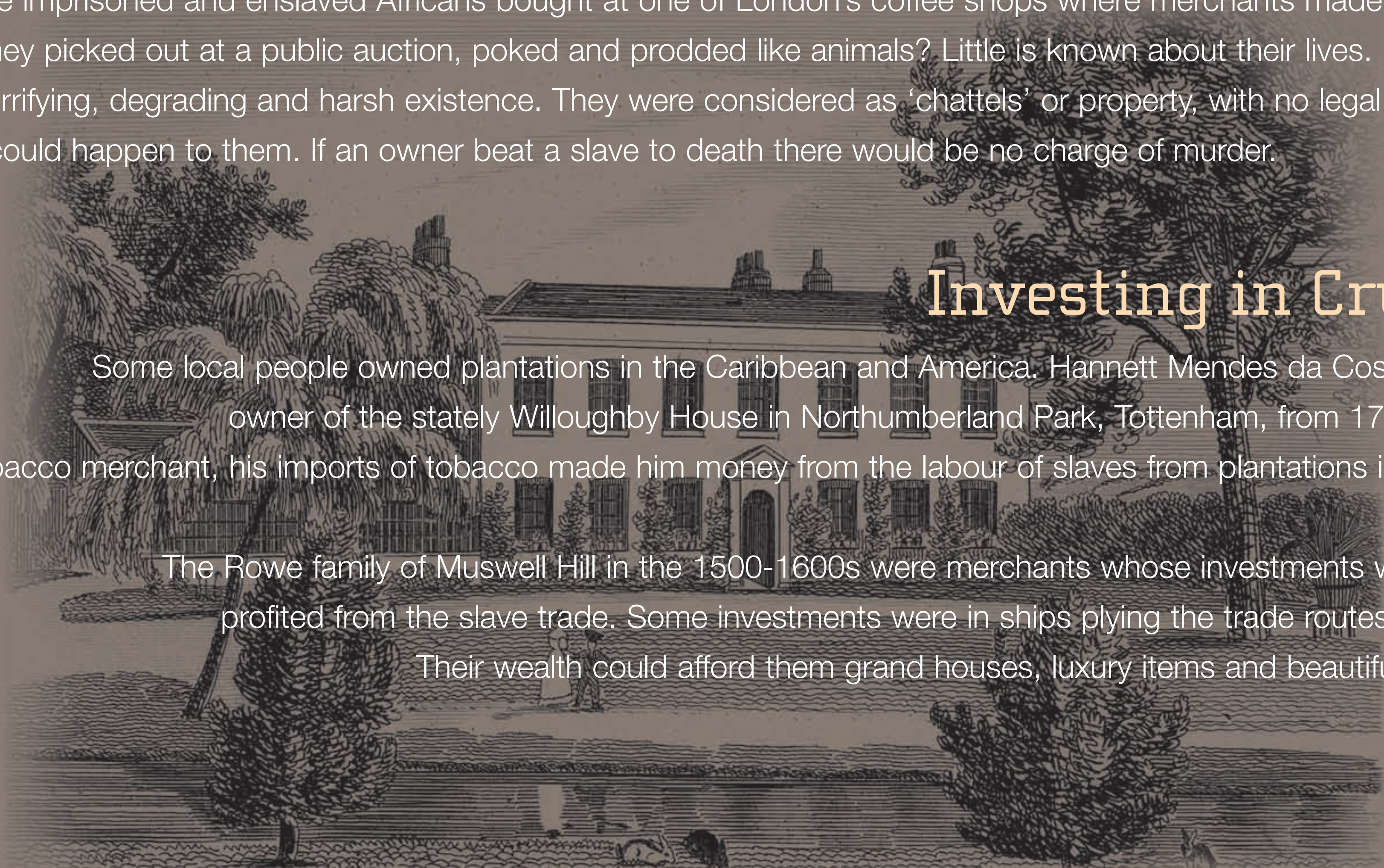
'Boy' For Sale

Were these imprisoned and enslaved Africans bought at one of London's coffee shops where merchants made deals? Or were they picked out at a public auction, poked and prodded like animals? Little is known about their lives. It was a terrifying, degrading and harsh existence. They were considered as 'chattels' or property, with no legal rights. Anything could happen to them. If an owner beat a slave to death there would be no charge of murder.

Investing in Cruelty

Some local people owned plantations in the Caribbean and America. Hannett Mendes da Costa was the owner of the stately Willoughby House in Northumberland Park, Tottenham, from 1764 - 1775. A tobacco merchant, his imports of tobacco made him money from the labour of slaves from plantations in America.

The Rowe family of Muswell Hill in the 1500-1600s were merchants whose investments would have profited from the slave trade. Some investments were in ships plying the trade routes for Africa. Their wealth could afford them grand houses, luxury items and beautiful gardens.



Engraved from an Original Drawing for the Supplement to Robinson's History & Antiquities of Tottenham Middx.

WILLOUGHBY HOUSE, TOTTENHAM, MIDDX.

Oppression, Rebellions & Campaigning

Fighting for Freedom

From the moment of capture, many Africans fought for freedom, resisting their conditions and fate by running away. 18th century London newspapers carried adverts from slave traders and owners for the recapture of runaway slaves.



During the 1700s the shipping insurance newspaper 'Lloyd's List' recorded the many slave revolts at sea. It is estimated a revolt occurred on one in every eight journeys on British slave ships. Most were suppressed by the ship's crew. Slaves were then punished, tortured and brutally whipped for their resistance. Many were killed by being thrown overboard.



Slave rebellions took place on the Caribbean plantations during the 1600s and 1700s. Bloody uprisings were fought in Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Granada, St Kitts and St Vincent. The Maroons of Jamaica were the descendants of runaway slaves who successfully resisted their owners in 1655. Establishing themselves in the remoter parts of Jamaica, their independence was eventually confirmed by a government treaty in 1739.

The Beginnings of the Anti-Slavery Movement



View of CANE WOOD the largest Villa of the Earl of Mansfield near Highgate in Middlesex. Published according to Act of Parliament by James Knapton 1772.

A lot of people in this country were beginning to recognise the evils of slavery. But it was not until the end of the 18th century that a movement began here with the aim of abolishing the trade.

Following the high profile Somerset Case of 1772 - brought to court by the campaigner Granville Sharp - slavery was declared illegal on British soil. Lord Mansfield of Kenwood House near Highgate was the judge of that case.

His significant ruling was that James Somerset, a runaway slave in England who had been recaptured, could not be sent back to Jamaica. His comments were:

'Slavery is so odious that it must be construed strictly. No master was ever allowed here to send his servant abroad because he absented himself from his service or for any other cause. No authority can be found for it in the laws of this country and therefore we are all of the opinion that James Somerset must be discharged.'

Granville Sharp used the Somerset Case to test the legality of slavery in Britain. This controversial case attracted wide interest. News of the ruling reached the Caribbean where it encouraged enslaved Africans who had taken part in plantation revolts.

Abolition & Local Campaigners

It was the strength of the actions and voices of people resisting and campaigning that made the difference in the Anti-Slavery Movement. Along with the revolts of enslaved Africans, local people here contributed towards the end of the slave trade. The Abolition Movement – as it became known – was working with others all around the country to transform Britain. It became Britain's first popular protest movement. Abolitionists believed that owning people as property and treating them inhumanely was wrong.

William Wilberforce, Granville Sharpe and Thomas Clarkson are usually the figures associated with this mass abolition movement. But there are many who are not remembered. Amongst those we should remember are local people from Haringey. Unknown Africans and other white people would also have joined the Anti-Slavery Movement. We remember them too although their names are unrecorded.

The Quakers

The Quakers – now known as the Religious Society of Friends – were a group of non-conformist Christians who had objected to slavery since their formation in the 1600s. Until the Tolerance Acts of 1689 and 1696 their own group had been persecuted and often imprisoned for dissenting views. The name 'Quaker' was a term of ridicule given to describe them.



Quakers were not allowed to preach or meet within a 5 mile radius of the City of London. Places like Tottenham and Highgate became homes for Quakers. A meeting-house in Southwood Lane, Highgate, is said to have been founded in 1662. George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, had visited fellow Friends in Tottenham in 1689. By 1691 the Tottenham Monthly Meeting place was formed, with a permanent Meeting House built by 1714.



In 1783, following the news of the court case of the Zong slave ship when 133 enslaved Africans were drowned, the Quakers gave a petition against the slave trade to Parliament.

William Dillwyn (1743-1824)



In 1774 William Dillwyn, an American Quaker, came to England. He was educated by the eminent scholar, Anthony Benezet, who decided that William would dedicate his life to the ending of slavery. He came to London to campaign to release slaves in this country and America. He decided to live here and joined the Tottenham Monthly Meeting in 1777. He made links with the campaigner Granville Clarke. The young Thomas Clarkson met him to learn more about the slave trade in the United States.

William Dillwyn helped establish the first Anti-Slavery Committee in London in 1787. All but three were Quakers. He was the man attributed to bringing the idea of an Anti-Slavery Movement to England from the Quakers in America. He is buried in the Quaker burial ground on Tottenham High Road.

Spreading The Word

African Abolitionists



Early voices heard in the Abolition Movement included that of Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780). His book *The Letters of Ignatius Sancho* was published in 1782 after his death.

This was the first prose published by an African writer in this country.

A former slave, he lived in Greenwich, becoming an accomplished composer, writer and businessman.

Ottobah Cugoano was another ex-slave living in London as a free man. His popular work *'Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species'* was published in 1787.

It was the first direct book on Abolition in English.

Another African active in the Anti-Slavery Movement was Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797). A powerful speaker and lobbyist, he wrote and published a best-seller about his life and carried out speaking tours about the Movement around the country. It is likely he would have passed through Tottenham on his way to Cambridgeshire to meet with his future wife, Susannah Cullen. Their daughter, Joanna Vassa (1795-1857), is buried in nearby Abney Park Cemetery.

Priscilla Wakefield (1750-1832)

The Quaker Priscilla Wakefield lived at Tottenham Green. She was a local philanthropist and was recognised nationally as an author of children's science and geography books. She wrote sixteen titles in all, some re-printed many times. She never once ventured from home and yet wrote knowledgeably about other parts of the world, to include Africa and North America.

Her book *'Excursions in North America'* was published in 1806. It describes the letters of a gentleman and his young companion with their friends in England. One of the characters was called 'Sancho', an African slave who was the Englishman's young companion. Priscilla would have known and read the work of the real-life African Ignatius Sancho.

In 1799 Priscilla published *'Mental Improvement; or the Beauties and Wonders of Nature and Art in a Series of Instructive Conversations'*. It is presented as a series of conversations amongst an imaginary family, the Harcourts. One conversation discusses the sugar industry and the slave trade. Intended for children, Priscilla wrote this with a moral message – that slavery was wrong. She hoped to teach and improve the minds of her young readers.

Like Priscilla Wakefield, women played an important role in the Abolition Movement. A third of the membership was female. Many towns had all-women Anti-Slavery groups campaigning. Their involvement was not always appreciated by others like William Wilberforce MP. But women were always the majority in the audiences at Anti-Slavery meetings.



The Power of the People - Petitions & Persuasion

Am I Not a Man and a Brother?

The renowned potter Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) worked alongside William Dillwyn and Thomas Clarkson to form the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787. He designed a seal which became the iconic image of the Abolition campaign. It showed an enslaved African in chains, kneeling, his hands lifted to heaven. The motto read: "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?"

Wedgwood reproduced the design in a cameo with the black figure against a white background. Hundreds of cameos and medallions were donated for distribution. The image became widely reproduced on domestic objects like crockery. It became popular with women who wore it on hair pins, purses and other fashion accessories.

The image, however, shows a docile and supplicatory enslaved African. This was far from the truth. It reflected nothing of the frequent and fierce rebellions of the enslaved people in the New World plantations. Nonetheless this image helped publicise support for the cause.

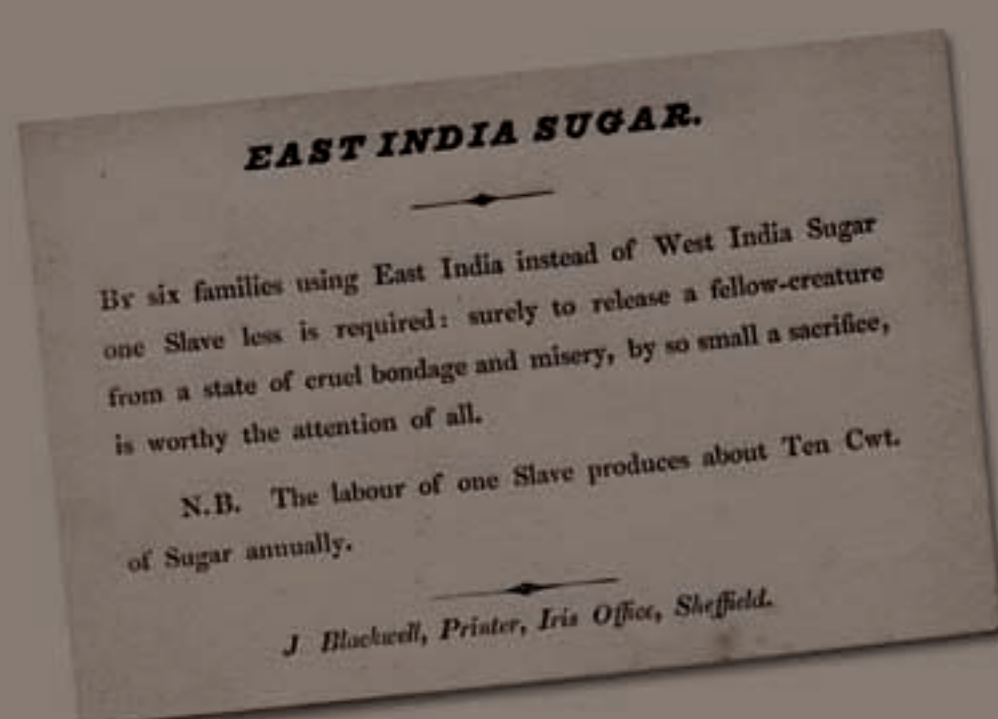


Influencing Public Opinion

The Abolition Movement had struck a chord in the public's imagination through their different strategies. The Quakers were amongst the first of many to petition Parliament – in fact it was a subject that produced the greatest number of petitions. With public meetings, debates and mass letter writing - all helped to sway public opinion about the iniquities of the slave trade.

The voice of the people was picked up by politicians. The Abolitionist MP William Wilberforce spoke in Parliament from 1789 to appeal for the Abolition cause. Within two years he brought the first Abolition Bill in 1791. It was not voted in. A year later the House of Commons changed their minds. But it went no further as the House of Lords rejected the Bill.

Women and the Sugar Boycott



A radical protest was organised in response to the rejection of the Abolition Bill.

The Quakers led the country in the boycotting of slave-produced goods. With women forming a large section of the Anti-Slavery campaign groups, the boycott took hold.

More than 300,000 people from working and middle class families were encouraged by the appeals to women to stop buying slave-produced sugar or wearing clothes with slave-grown cotton. Many stopped buying sugar altogether. Others chose Indian-grown sugar instead.

Alongside the Tottenham author Priscilla Wakefield, some women wrote poetry to publicise the campaign.

Their work often focused on the subject of an enslaved mother and her predicament - maltreated and separated from her children. This was an image repeatedly emphasised by women campaigners.

The vital role women played in the fight to abolish the slave trade and slavery can not be underestimated – even though women did not even have the right to vote.

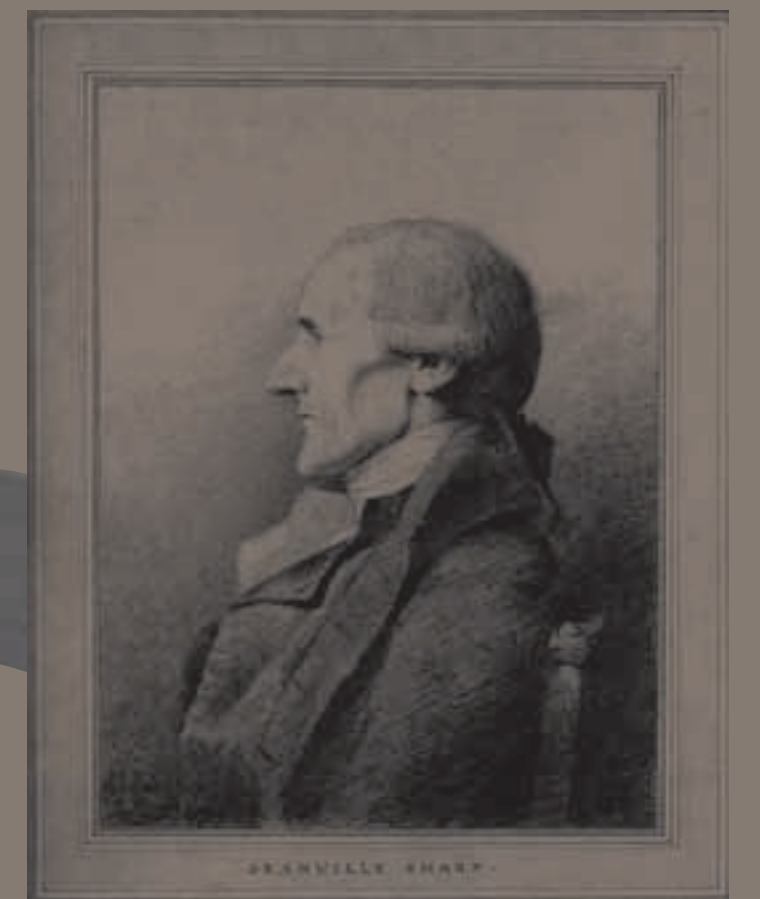
What happened in 1807?



In 1793, just as the Abolition Movement seemed near to success, the French Revolution began in France. Campaigning stopped and the cause was not taken up again until 1804.

Slave rebellions continued in the colonies throughout this time, with the successful Haitian Revolution on the island of St Domingo (1791-1804).

On 25th March 1807 the Slave Trade Bill was passed by royal assent. It was now illegal for British ships to engage in the slave trade.

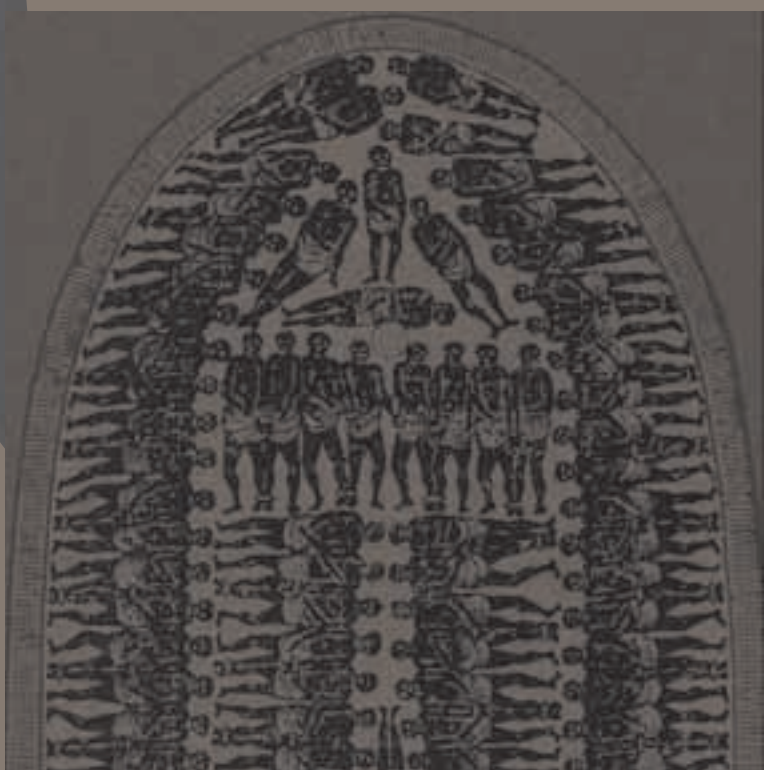


How did this happen?

We are told this was a period when there was a shift in moral values about the high profit enterprise of slavery. We are told white British men like the Abolitionist MP William Wilberforce and Granville Sharpe were 'instrumental' in the dismantling of the slave trade.

What is clear is the role of the enslaved themselves. African abolitionists were key in spreading the message across the world. Their own perspective on the abuse of human rights differed from their 'liberal' counterparts. The increasing number of slave revolts in the Caribbean too were becoming much harder to suppress.

End of the slave trade?



This new law did not mean the end of slavery in British colonies. It did not make a single slave free. It meant a fine for ships found transporting kidnapped Africans into bondage after 1807 (encouraging captains in fear of fines to throw captives overboard). The Royal Navy patrolled the seas watching out for illegal slave traders. But illegal trafficking of people carried on nevertheless. As late as 1860, the *Nightingale* sailed from Liverpool. It was not checked. It was equipped for the slave trade.

The slave trade had been big business for Britain. Once Britain ceased trading in slaves it looked elsewhere for cheap labour - to its largest colony, India. Slave manpower was replaced with indentured Indian servants. Most Indians that moved to the Caribbean as workers received similar treatment to that of the African slaves.

The law of 1807 was only one part of the process in stopping the slave trade. The revolt of slaves all across the New World continued. The withdrawing of investments in the slave trade – either direct or indirect – also had an impact. Because of their honesty and integrity, many Quaker families had been involved in the banking business or insurance. Their involvement in the Anti-Slavery Movement saw more ethical investments in trade and shipping. From Tottenham's Meeting, there were the Barclays and William Fry in banking, William Janson, an underwriter of West Green Road, and Richard and Edmund Janson, who were both stockbrokers.



London Yearly Meeting c. 1840
Key: 1, Thomas Skillicorn, 2, William Allen, 3, Josiah Forster, 4, George Stacy
5, William Forster, 6, Luke Howard

Work To End Slavery Continues

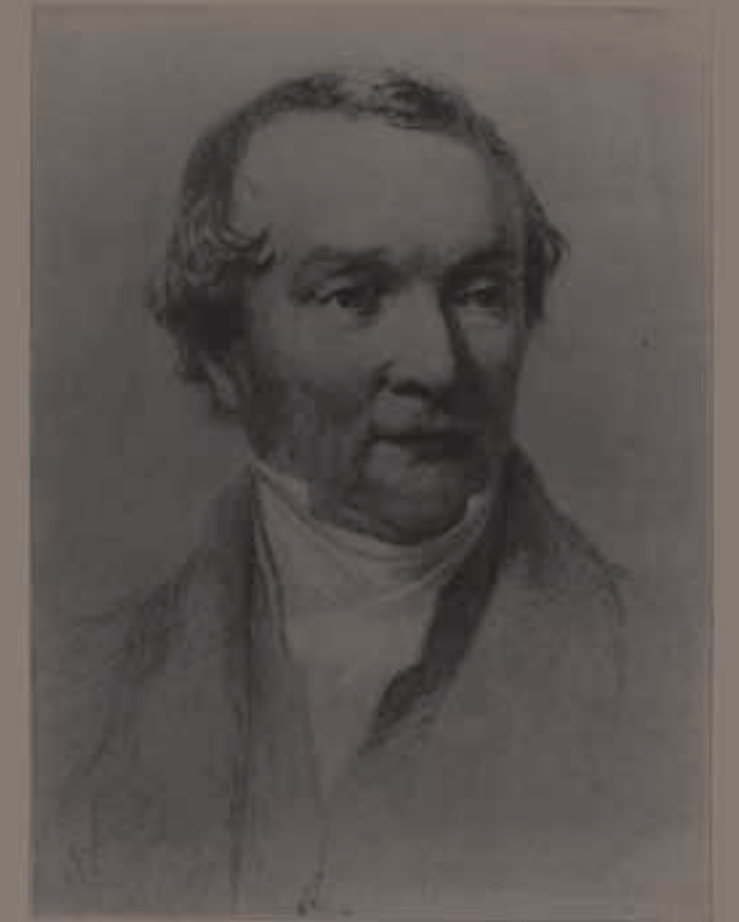
The African Institution

The campaign to abolish slavery continued after the abolition of the slave trade was agreed in Britain and her colonies. The Quakers' interest changed following the 1807 Act. They wanted to remedy the terrible effects that slavery had produced.

A group of Quakers formed the African Institution. Amongst their number was Tottenham Quaker and chemist Luke Howard (1772-1864) and his business partner William Allen.

The group recognised that slavery had destroyed the whole basis of African society.

The Institution sought to improve the lives of African people both with Christianity and education.



The Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1823. George Stacey, a Tottenham Quaker, was prominent in its ranks.

The society campaigned for the emancipation of slaves as well as to end slavery in the America, Brazil, the Spanish colonies, the French colonies and the Dutch, Danish and Swedish colonies.

Freedom



The Slavery Emancipation Act was set in 1833. Even then freedom was not granted immediately in the Caribbean. There was a seven-year apprenticeship to be served. By 1838 this was thought unworkable and full emancipation – the freeing of slaves – was achieved that year.

In theory, the end of slavery had come. But, after the apprenticeship scheme, the Caribbean was still not totally free. Former enslaved people received no compensation and had limited representation in law. The indenture labour from India and China was also introduced after slavery. This system resulted in much abuse. It was not abolished until the early part of the 20th century. After indenture, Indians and Africans struggled to own land and create their own communities

Membership of the Anti-Slavery Society increased after the Emancipation Act came into force in 1834.

The focus was to end slavery in America. Once it was abolished, after the American Civil War, funds were raised in Britain for Freedman's Aid, to help ex-slaves in their early days of freedom.

Continuing to the End - The Forster Family

The Forsters were Tottenham Quakers who were active campaigners in the Anti-Slavery Movement.

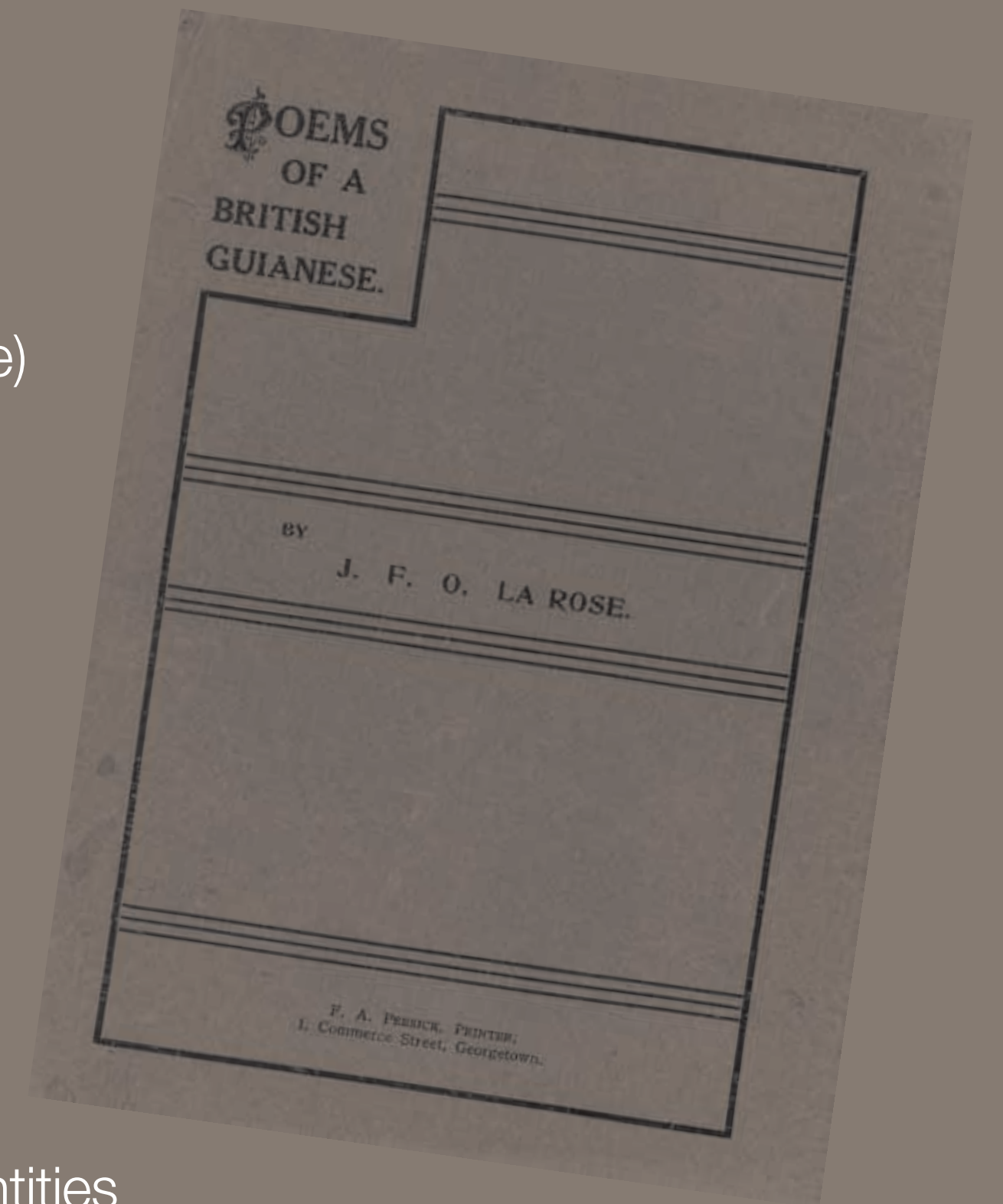
Amongst his philanthropic pursuits, Josiah Forster (1782-1870) wrote several books on the slave trade. His brother William (1784-1854) was one of the Friends who presented the Address of Yearly Meeting in 1849 on the Slave Trade to the Sovereign and other Authorities in Europe. In September of 1853, both William and Josiah formed a deputation to the President of the United States of America on the Slave Trade. Such was their commitment to the cause that William persevered with the deputation, despite being ill. He died shortly afterwards and was buried in America.

Slavery was not abolished in the United States until 1865.



“Awake, oh Afro-Guianese, this land is not thine own...”

The transatlantic slave trade has affected all our histories. Its legacy is with us today. The impact of that legacy continues to be discussed from different viewpoints. In 1933, Joshua La Rose, of British Guiana (now Guyana), wrote these words (above) in a poem to commemorate the centenary of Emancipation Day on 1st August. His poem highlights the legacy for millions of people of African descent throughout the world. His ancestors - like himself and his fellow British Guianese – lived in a foreign country, having been removed by force from their original homeland because of the slave trade.



United By Language

Forced migration led to the rich cultural traditions of Africa being transferred across the globe. In the Caribbean, amongst the descendants of enslaved Africans, new identities and traditions have evolved and adapted over the centuries. The Creole languages were developed alongside - a secret language that plantation owners did not understand.

Enslaved people found this new way to communicate, helping them survive and to resist their owners.

Knowing Your Roots

Capture, transportation and enslavement meant separation from families, homeland, language and heritage.

Individuals were given European names and had few legal rights.

Knowing who you are and where you come from is an important part of one's identity. This loss of identity and the lack of official records about individuals has presented great challenges for those trying to establish their own roots.

Kwame Kwei-Armah, the actor and writer, lives in Haringey.

He was born Ian Roberts in 1967 to West Indian parents who come to this country from Grenada.

He changed his name after researching his genealogy and discovering that 'Roberts' was the name of a Scottish slave-master. This name had been given to the family after the Abolition of Slavery in 1833.

Kwame traced his ancestors back to Ghana and he reclaimed the family name.

He says he was an angry young man at the time and this decision upset his parents. It was an important decision for him as he did not want to pass on a heritage of slavery to his own children by giving them the name 'Roberts'.

Once he had changed his name Kwame felt he was able to focus his energies on a positive future rather than a negative past.

Legacy

Many African and Caribbean people have come to Europe as a result of migration since 1945. They continue to suffer discrimination and to be at a disadvantage in terms of their political, social and economic position. This is largely the result of racism and racial superiority developed to justify and sustain transatlantic slavery.

Culture



By coming to this country, the enrichment of the cultures of Europe has followed by introducing traditions and features from their Caribbean and African heritage. Literature, art, music, cooking and language have all been significantly influenced. Obvious examples include the Blues, Jazz and Reggae as some of the most important types of music developed since 1900.

Carnival was an important feature of life on plantations. The traditions of carnival developed in the Caribbean have influenced other carnival traditions throughout the world. Locally the Tottenham Community Festival and Carnival and other carnival groups in Haringey celebrate these traditions each year.

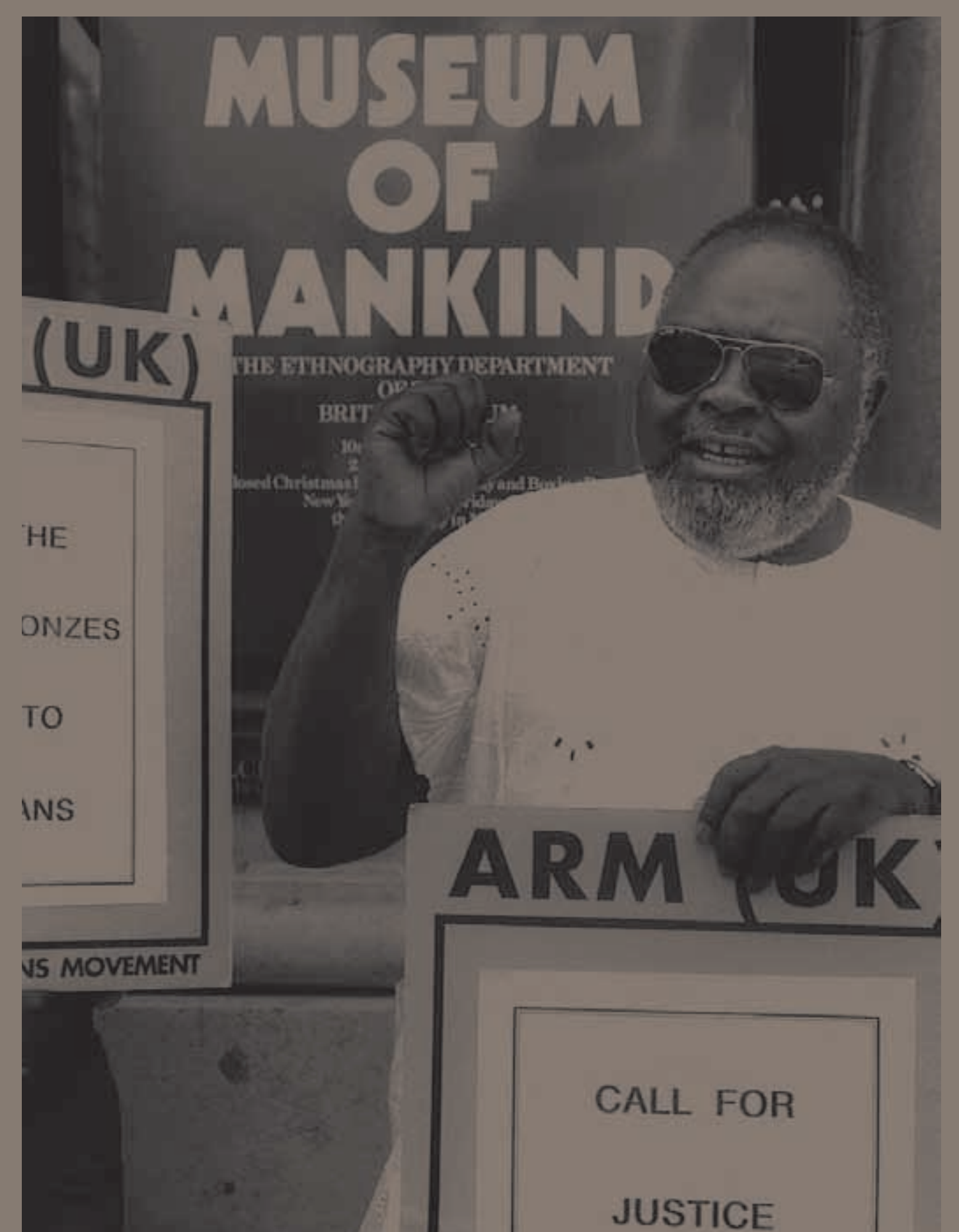


Healing, Reparations and Bernie Grant MP

The debate for reparations from the British Government for the brutal and terrible acts of slavery continues. There was no greater advocate and campaigner for reparations than the late Bernie Grant (1944-2000), who was MP for Tottenham. At the State Opening of Parliament in 1987, Bernie Grant caused a sensation by turning up in African robes. Although from Guyana, this was not traditional clothing from that country. He was acknowledging his own ancestral roots. He refused to compromise.

In Parliament, Bernie Grant founded the Parliamentary Black Caucus, and took up a leading role in establishing contacts with Black people and politicians throughout the world. He traveled widely, especially to Africa and to his beloved Caribbean region.

Bernie was instrumental in the establishment and campaigning of the Africa Reparations Movement. ARM (UK) believes that people of African origin have an historic task to perform. The group is tasked to ensure that the truth of what happened to people of African origin is exposed and that reparations are made to African people.



This is the work of campaigners throughout history.

Slavery continues in 2007.

What will you do?