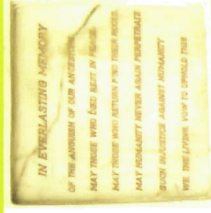
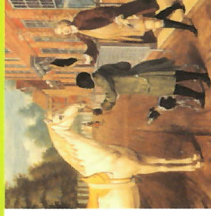
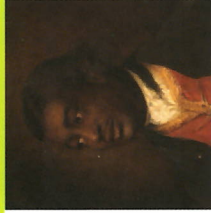


# Trading in Human Lives

## The Richmond Connection

BY VALERIE BOYES



# **Trading in Human Lives – the Richmond connection**

Valerie Boyes

Published by *The Museum of Richmond*, 2007.  
Produced in co-operation with the *Richmond Local History Society*, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund *Awards for All*

# 1. BRITAIN'S PART IN THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE c.1650-1807

Text ©Valerie Boyes

Cover design by Sally Lacey Publishing Design

Printed by Pulsar Print Management Ltd

Based on the exhibition to commemorate the Bi-centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade held at the Museum of Richmond March 21<sup>st</sup> – July 29<sup>th</sup> 2007

## Colonisation and the origins of the Slave Trade

From the early 1600s Britain established colonies in the West Indies and on the East Coast of America. Commodities much desired in Europe like cotton, tobacco, indigo, ginger and sugar were grown on plantations.

The early West Indian plantations were run by indentured white labour under contract. However, by 1670 a greater labour force was needed, mainly because of the increased demand for one product – sugar.

Drinks like coffee, tea and cocoa were bitter, so Britons liked to sweeten them with sugar. They developed a sweet tooth and the demand for sugar grew.

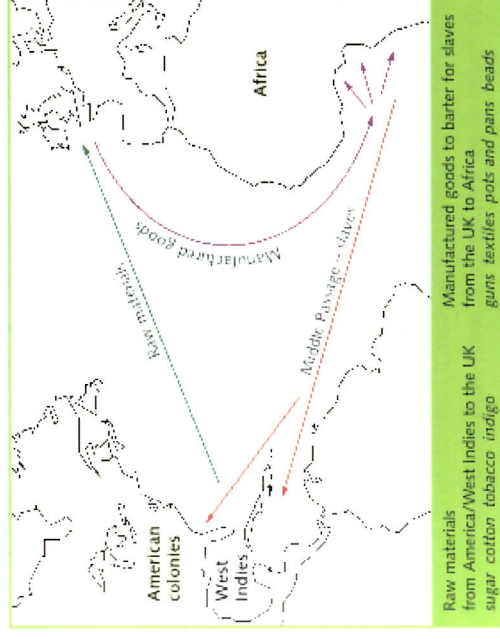
### Sugar consumed in Britain per head per year

1700 – 4 lb

1748 – 10 lb

1800 – 20 lb

The increased demand led to the importation of slaves from Africa, which, from the 1660s, became highly organised. In 1662 Charles II granted English trading rights in Africa to the Royal Africa Company. The trade in slaves became a profitable trade in itself and a triangular Atlantic trading voyage developed.



The Atlantic slave trade triangle

## Acknowledgements:

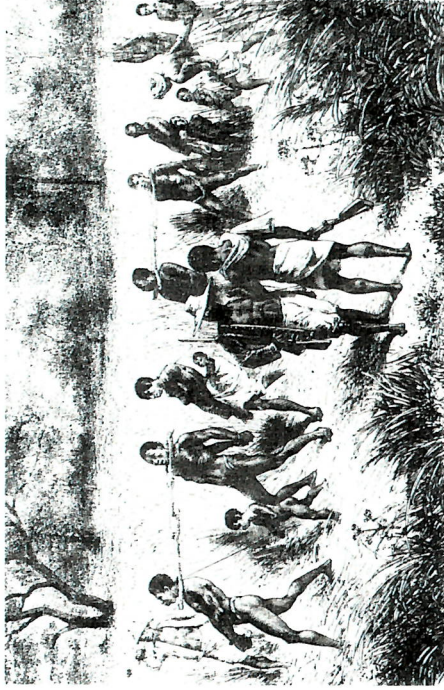
- Stephen Bower for production of map, chart and family trees
- Grahame Boyes for research and technical assistance
- John Cloake for his unrivalled knowledge of the finer points of Richmond's history
- Gillian Collins of the Barnes and Mortlake History Society, for information about Edward Colston



Slaves, obtained by barter or capture, were marched, shackled together, in 'coffles' to the African coast – a journey which could take eight weeks.

Olaudah Equiano was seized by slavers at the age of ten in Biafra and eventually shipped to Barbados. His autobiography is our only account written by one of the Slave Trade's victims. He tells how he was captured by free-lance slavers who sold him on:

*One day when all our people were gone out to their works as usual and only I and my dear sister were left behind to mind the house, two men and a woman got over the walls, and in a moment seized us both, and without giving us time to cry out or make resistance they stopped our mouths and ran off with us into the nearest wood.<sup>1</sup>*



A slave coffle

On arrival at the coast, captives were kept in forts, also known as castles, or rowed to a storage ship, where they were kept in crowded and unsanitary conditions. They were then transported by ship across the Atlantic on the Middle Passage. Ships carried between 250 and 600 slaves. Each slave was given half the space allowed to criminals being deported as punishment. Up to 20% of slaves and crew died on the voyage.

Equiano tells of the dreadful conditions on board ship:

*... we were all put under deck. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us.*

*[This] was aggravated by the galling chains and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.*

*I had never seen among my people such instances of brutal cruelty, and this not only shown towards us blacks but also to some of the whites themselves. One man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope that he died in consequence of it.<sup>2</sup>*

Having reached their destination, slaves were inspected, sold and branded. Once on the plantations they were subjected to hard physical labour.

A Jamaican Plantation owner in 1793 listed in his stock:

*250 negroes at £70 each  
80 steers at £15  
60 mules at £28*

### Life could be harsh in the eighteenth century

- **In Africa:** Arab traders had sold Africans as slaves for centuries.
- African people enslaved each other, mainly as a result of tribal wars.
- **In Britain** the very poor, though free, often lived harsh lives in degrading conditions.
- Men could be captured by press gangs and taken away to man the Royal Navy's ships where conditions were dangerous and cruel.

### So why was the Trans-Atlantic trade so deplorable, even in these harsh times?

- It was ruthlessly organised on a huge scale.
- Human beings were seen as commodities – as livestock to be traded.
- In its 150 years of operation at least **12 million human beings** were displaced from their homeland.

By 1760 Britain had become the leading European carrier of slaves. By 1807, when the Trade was abolished, British ships had carried at least 3.4 million slaves from Africa to the Americas.

<sup>1</sup> Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, written by himself* (1789)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*



## 2. THE WEST INDIES CONNECTION IN RICHMOND

Richmond residents with West Indies connections are found in records of memorials in the parish church of St Mary Magdalene.

For example –

*William Risby Whithorn of Jamaica died 27<sup>th</sup> April 1773 aged 23 years*<sup>3</sup>

*Anna Cassy, wife of Alexander Cassy, Jamaican merchant, died 1789*<sup>4</sup>

A stone in the Vineyard Passage Burial Ground records

*John Matson Esquire... Chief Justice and President of the Council of the Island of Dominica who died in London on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of January 1805 in the 59<sup>th</sup> year of his age.*

In 1816 the Rev. Richard Burgh Byam went out to Antigua to take possession of a property known as Byams and became a member of H.M. Council for Antigua. He later became, for forty years, vicar of Kew and Petersham.

In nearby Mortlake, Edward Colston lived at Cromwell House from 1689 until his death in 1721. He was a trader member of the Royal Africa Company and made a fortune from the slave trade. He left money to Mortlake charities and his name survives in Colston Road.

### THE LASCELLES FAMILY

In the eighteenth century, members of the Lascelles family lived and were buried in Richmond. Their enormous wealth was made through their involvement in the West Indies trade.

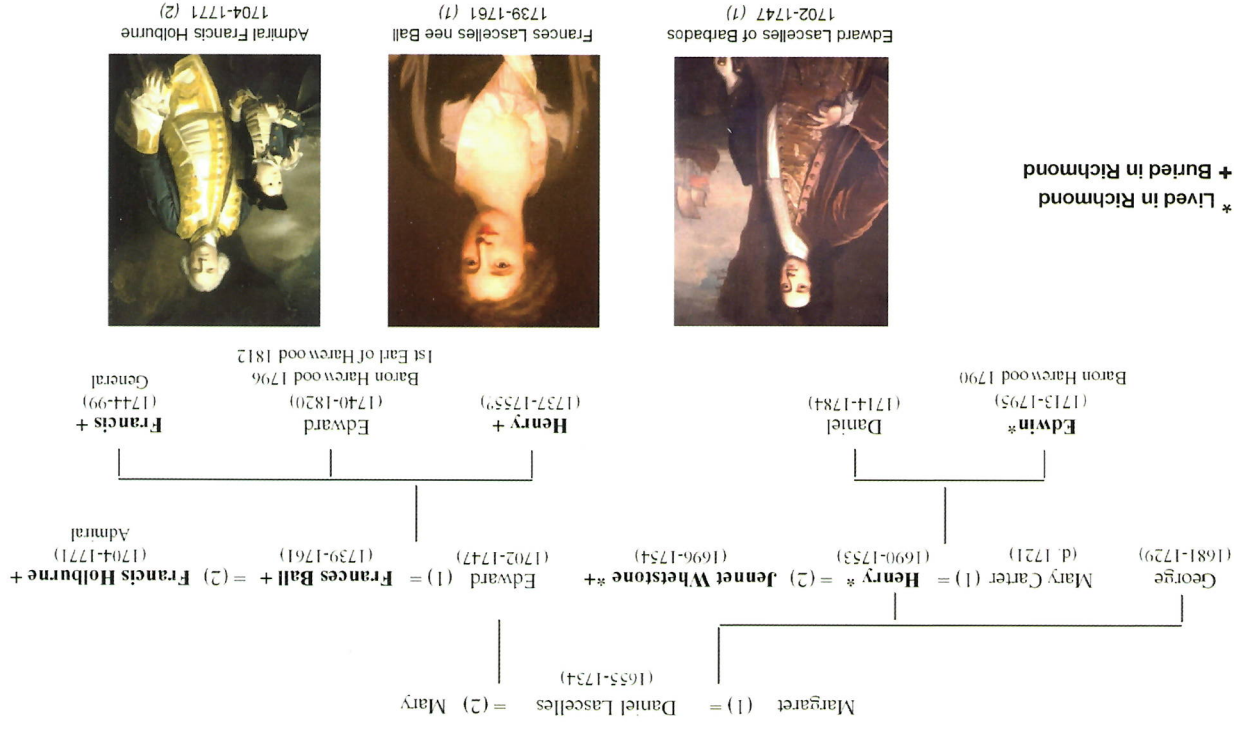
Henry Lascelles came from a family based in Northallerton in Yorkshire. He, his brother George and his half-brother Edward set up a business based in Barbados and London. Henry lived, from 1738 until his death in 1753, in a house later known as Lichfield House which stood on part of the site of the present block of flats and shops – Lichfield Court.

The Lascelles brothers were very involved in the West Indies trade, importing sugar to a London warehouse. They also imported and traded in slaves in

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London*, vol. 1: *The County of Surrey* (1802) p. 471

<sup>4</sup> Owen Manning and William Bray, *Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (1804) p. 432

### MEMBERS OF THE LASCELLES FAMILY WITH RICHMOND CONNECTIONS



(1) Reproduced by the kind permission of the Earl and Countess of Harewood and Trustees of the Harewood House Trust  
 (2) Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Barbados. Henry formed a consortium with a group of British merchants to set up an innovative concept of the 'floating factory'. This involved a group of ships moored off the African coast to receive slaves from the forts at Cape Coast on the Gold Coast (now Ghana).<sup>5</sup> Henry had a contract for the provisioning of British troops based in the West Indies and also a contract for maintaining the African forts, which were the bases of the Royal Africa Company. First Henry and then Edward were tax collectors for the port of Bridgetown, Barbados – one of the most lucrative of all customs posts.<sup>6</sup> Henry lent money to Barbados plantation owners. Contrary to popular belief, the West Indies Trade was not always economically viable, since there were fluctuations in trade and some plantation owners became bankrupt. After Henry's death his heirs took over many plantations in payment of debts. One of these plantations, on Tobago, was named Richmond. The plantation house still exists and is run as a tourist guesthouse.

Henry Lascelles died in 1753 at the house in Richmond. His second son, Edwin, who continued to live in the house until 1756, used the fortune inherited from his father to build Harewood House in Yorkshire. He became Baron Harewood in 1790, so raising the family from the gentry into the aristocracy.

### Buried in the Church of St Mary Magdalene

Though Henry Lascelles and his first wife are buried in Yorkshire, Henry's second wife, Jennet, was buried in Richmond. Her will, dated 1754, describes her as *widow of Richmond*. The Parish registers note

*Burials* 1754 April 29 Mrs Lascelles

Edward Lascelles, the half-brother of Henry had married, in Barbados, Frances Ball, daughter of Guy Ball, a planter and member of the Barbados Council. The Ball family may have come originally from Richmond since there is a record of part of a memorial (now lost) in the Parish Church, which commemorated Frances's grandparents.<sup>7</sup>

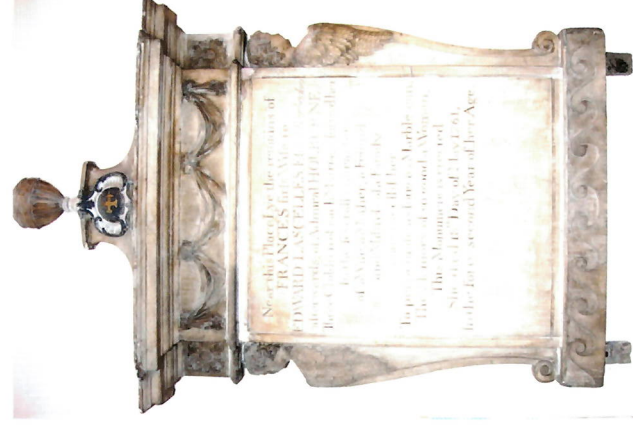
<sup>5</sup> S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: the World of the Lascelles, 1648–1834* (2006) p. 75

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75

<sup>7</sup> Carlless, *Inscriptions on Floor of Richmond Parish Church* (1864), MS in Richmond Local History Library, p. 86

After Edward died, Frances married, in Barbados, Captain Francis Holburne, as her second husband. A black stone slab in the south aisle indicates her burial in the church along with him, her brother, Guy Ball, two of her three sons by Edward Lascelles – Henry (d.1755) and General Francis (d.1799). Their other son, Edward, became 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Harewood in 1812.

There is an impressive memorial to her on the west wall.



Her second husband, Francis Holburne, had also been involved in the West Indies trade. In 1745 he was captain of the *Argyle*, involved in Caribbean privateering and in the same year was managing Canewood plantation on Barbados.<sup>8</sup> He eventually became Admiral Holburne and stated in his will

*I desire to be buried in the Church at Richmond in the county of Surrey near the remains of my late wife.*<sup>9</sup>

### 3. THE BLACK PRESENCE IN RICHMOND AS A RESULT OF THE SLAVE TRADE

By 1770 15–20,000 black people lived in Britain. The largest concentration was in London, which reached its height in the 1780s. Some came from ships, having served in the British army and navy, and black Loyalists came from America after the War of Independence. Many were brought over from the West Indies and America with their owners and became domestic servants.

The status of black servants was ambivalent – some were seen as slaves, some as free and some inhabited a grey area in between. In the later eighteenth century court cases abounded relating to runaway slaves and whether they were

<sup>8</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 115

<sup>9</sup> National Archives, PROB 11/969 Will of Francis Holburne



free or not. The most celebrated was the case of James Somerset, 1772. The judge in the case, Lord Mansfield, gave a judgment, which was ground breaking for its time. However, though there was rejoicing in the black community, Mansfield had only ruled that no slave could be forcibly removed from Britain and sold into slavery. He had not technically declared them free in Britain.

### Evidence of the Black Presence in Richmond in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries

In the early eighteenth century there was an inn named 'The Black Boy' in George Street, on the site of the present 'Boots'.

It was said that Richard Colston of Mortlake had two black servants, James and 'Black Mary'. Mrs. Marshall, the novelist described Colston and his household on their way to church –

*James, the black servant, walked behind bearing the books.*<sup>10</sup>

*Being unmarried, his [Colston's] sister Anne kept house for him, assisted by his two female servants, Alice and 'Black Mary', and his two personal man-servants Arthur and John.*<sup>11</sup>

Young black servants were often prized. Ladies liked to have their portraits painted with them to contrast their white skin with the black. They were often dressed in extravagant clothes and treated like pets, as seen here in this portrait from Ham House.



**Elizabeth Murray, Lady Tollemache with a black servant**

by Sir Peter Lely, c.1651  
(National Trust, Ham House)

Evidence of the continuing ownership of black people, even in England, was commented on in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of November 1771, which recorded

*Wednesday, at a sale of a Gentleman's effects at Richmond, a negro boy put up, and sold for 32l (£). In this land of liberty.*

Between 1662 and 1780 twenty black people were recorded in the Richmond parish registers, but there may have been more who were not specifically identified.

### Extracts from the parish Registers

St Mary Magdalene, Richmond

*Burial 1662-April 19 Dinah, a blackmore*  
– the first identified black entry in Richmond

*Burial 1703 September 29 A Black from Sir Richard Levett's*  
Sir Richard Levett lived in Kew and had been Lord Mayor of London 1699–1700.

*Burial 1705 September 29 Francis Thomas a black from Piggs*  
– possible evidence of a black person employed in local industry. Isaac Pigg was a tile maker with premises at the bottom of the Hill on what is now the Petersham Road.

*Baptism 1715/16 January 6 Caesar a Black of riper years of Mr Vandeput*  
Mr (later Sir Peter) Vandeput lived at Carrington Lodge (now 31–33 Sheen Road). People had their slaves christened for religious reasons, but it was also thought to be a way of asserting their freedom.

*Baptism 1760 January 18<sup>th</sup> Aurelia base born dau. of a black man and a maid servant of Mr. Haggetts.*

Mr [Nathaniel] Haggett lived in a large house on Lower Road (now Petersham Road) just south of Compass Hill.

*Baptism 1790 December Mary Hartie. Her daughter of Richard Moore of Jamaica, a mulatto girl aged about 5 years*  
Mulatto = of mixed black and white race

St Anne's Kew

*Baptism 1714 May 12<sup>th</sup> Antonio, a servant of Sir Charles Eyre, an adult person*

Sir Charles Eyre had a house at Kew, later rented by Queen Caroline.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Maurice S. A. Cockin, *A Story-book about Mortlake and her Church* (reprinted from an undated original, 1954) p. 18

<sup>11</sup> F. Mattingly, *Edward Colston 1636–1721* (1971) p. 8

<sup>12</sup> Acknowledgements to John Cloake for information about masters of servants.



## THE DUCHESS OF QUEENSBURY AND JULIUS SOUBISE

The eccentric Kitty Queensbury, who lived at Douglas House, Petersham (now the German School) had a black servant. The Duke's cousin, Captain Stair-Douglas, who had brought him from the West Indies on the royal naval vessel *HMS Richmond*, had given him to her in 1764. Although he had been named *Othello*, she named him *Julius Soubise* after a dashing French general at the court of Louis XV.

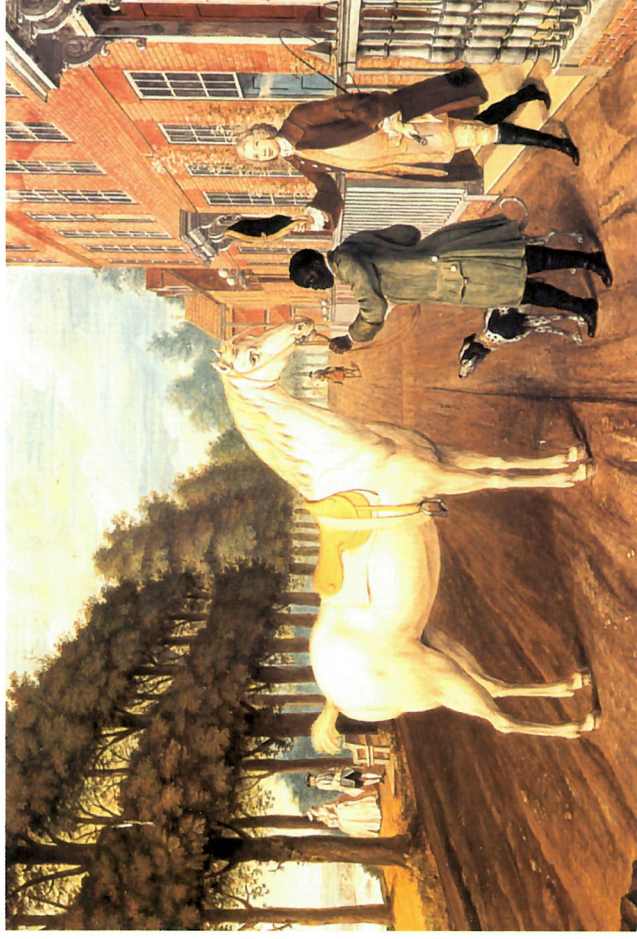
The duchess lavished affection and money on him and he became a man-about-town, an expert horseman and fencer and notorious for his flamboyant lifestyle. The duchess and her protégé were lampooned in polite society.



**The Duchess of Queensbury and Julius Soubise**  
engraving by William Austin, 1773 The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.  
Political cartoon (1) 10

The Duchess had to send Soubise to India after he was accused of attacking one of her maidservants. There he found success as a riding and fencing master.

## THE BLACK GROOM ON RICHMOND HILL



**The Terrace, Richmond Hill**  
by Augustin Heckel, 1749 (Sotheby's)

The elegant gentleman in the painting by Augustin Heckel is probably Sir William Riehardson, seen leaving No. 4, The Terrace, Richmond Hill, which he occupied in 1749 when the painting was executed. The black groom was probably Sir William's servant. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who lived over the road from Sir William at *Wick House*, had a black servant whom he used in his painting commissions.

## 4. IGNATIUS SANCHO (1729–1780) An African Man-of-Letters

Amongst the black people who came to Britain between 1650 and 1800, just a few made their mark in society. One was Ignatius Sancho, who lived in Richmond in 1749–51 and 1766–74.

Ignatius Sancho was born in about 1729 on a slave ship carrying slaves from Africa to the West Indies, and his mother and father died soon after his birth.



He was brought to England at the age of two and given to three austere maiden sisters who lived in Greenwich. They gave him a second name, Sancho because they thought he looked like Sancho Panza, the servant in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Though the young man was keen to learn, the sisters resisted allowing him an education, since they wished to keep him domesticated.



**Portrait of Ignatius Sancho**  
by Thomas Gainsborough, 1768  
(National Gallery of Canada,  
Ottawa)

He was fortunate to meet John, Second Duke of Montagu, who lived near the sisters at Blackheath. The Duke owned Caribbean estates and had taken an interest in the education of black people and he gave the boy access to books and encouraged him in his studies. Through the patronage of members of the Montagu family and his own intellectual drive, Ignatius Sancho rose from being a slave/servant, to valued personal retainer, to independent tradesman and a respected man of letters.

After the Duke's death in 1749, Sancho fled from the sisters to the Duke's widow, Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu. She made him her butler, a very important post in a noble household, and when she died in 1751 she left him a legacy of £70 and an annuity of £30 per year.

Sancho savoured the delights of London society, where he met many of the people who were to become his literary and artistic friends, like the author Lawrence Sterne and the actor David Garrick, who also had connections with Richmond. However, by 1766 he was in debt. So he returned to the Montagu household and worked as valet to the Second Duke's son-in-law George Brudenell, Earl of Cardigan. The Montagu title had died out with the death of John, the second Duke. George Brudenell was later made first Duke of Montagu of the new creation.

## MEMBERS OF THE MONTAGU FAMILY ASSOCIATED WITH IGNATIUS SANCHO



**George Brudenell**  
(1712-1790)  
Earl of Cardigan  
Later 1st Duke of Montagu (2nd creation)  
*Sancho became his valet, and he later helped him set up his shop in Westminster*



**Mary Churchill**  
(1689-1751)  
2nd Duchess of Montagu  
*Sancho became her butler. She left him a legacy and annuity in her will*



**Mary Montagu**  
(1711-175)  
Hersess to Montagu estates



**John Montagu**  
(1690-1749)  
2nd Duke of Montagu  
*Mentor to Sancho*

The relationship between Sancho and the Montagu family seems to have been one of mutual obligation.<sup>13</sup> The Duke paid for Sancho's portrait to be painted by Gainsborough whilst they were in Bath, though it is possible that Sancho knew Gainsborough before the sitting, through the Garricks and the Montagus.<sup>14</sup> Here there may be another Richmond connection: Gainsborough lived for a short time on Richmond Hill and is buried in the churchyard of St Anne's, Kew.

When Sancho's health deteriorated and he had to leave the Duke's service, the Duke helped to set him up in a grocery shop in Westminster where many of his patrons came from London's aristocratic and intellectual society.

#### THE RICHMOND CONNECTION

The Montagu family owned a house in Richmond which stood by the river in what is now Buceleuch Gardens.

Letters written by Sancho were published after his death and some of them are headed 'Richmond', like the following addressed to 'MRS F'' (possibly the wife of Mr Fisher, a musician):

*Richmond, Oct 20, 1769*

*I sent you a note in Mrs. Sancho's name this day fortnight importing that she would hope for the pleasure of seeing you at Richmond before the fine weather takes its leave of us... Come and scamper in the meadows with three ragged wild girls [a joking reference to his daughters] – Tell your coachman to drive under the hill to Mr. B's on the Common, where you will be gladly received by the best half of your much and greatly obliged friend,*

IGNATIUS SANCHO<sup>15</sup>

As an older man, who had himself experienced moments of profligacy, Sancho gave advice to his neighbour the wayward Julius Soubise.

*To Mr Soubise*

*Richmond, Oct. 11, 1772*

*Young man, thou canst not discern wood from trees.... Happy lad what a fortune is thine! – Look around you upon the fate of almost all of our unfortunate colour – see slavery... Providence has been very lavish of her bounty to you. – Vice is a coward; – to be truly brave, a man must be truly*

<sup>13</sup> Vincent Carretta (ed), *Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (Penguin edition, 1998) p. xi

<sup>14</sup> R. King, 'Ignatius Sancho and Portraits of the Black Elite' in R. King, S. Sandhu, J. Walvin and J. Girdham, *Ignatius Sancho: an African Man of Letters* (1997) p. 29

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35

*good.... You have the best wishes of your sincere friend (as long as you are your own friend).*

IGNATIUS SANCHO<sup>16</sup>

Sancho had married Anne Osborne, a black woman originally from the West Indies, and they had seven children. Three of them died before they were six. The Richmond parish register records the death of one of Sancho's children and his presence as a witness at a marriage.

*Burial 1769 March 28<sup>th</sup> John Sancho a child*

*Marriages 1758 July 15<sup>th</sup> Francis Williams of St Andrew's Holborn and*

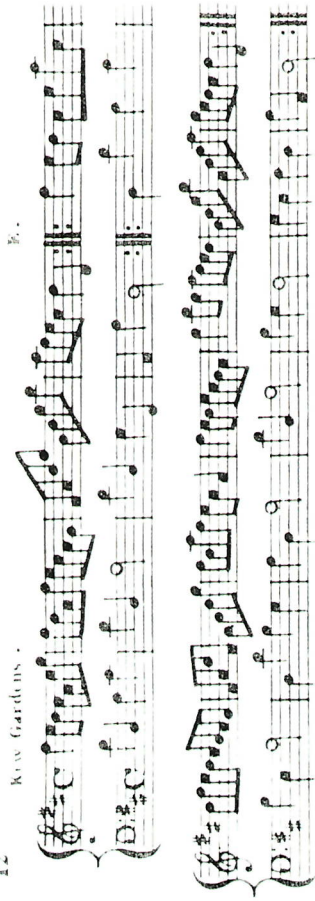
*Anne Moore of R[ichmond]; Exams*

*Witnesses Ignatius Sancho, Andrew Moore*

Sancho wrote minuets, songs and dances, some with titles associated with Richmond: like 'Kew Gardens', 'La Loge de Richmond' and 'Bushy Park'.

12

Kew Gardens.



The First Cu. foot it and Calf off two Cu. ♩ Foot it and calf up again ♩ Crofs over two Cu. Lead up to the top and Calf off ♩ Foot it hands round all Six ♩.

A dance, 'Kew Gardens', published in

*Minuets, Cotillions and Country Dances for the Violin, Mandolin, German*

*Flute & Harpsichord, composed by an African [Ignatius Sancho], c.1767*

THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF IGNATIUS SANCHO  
Sancho first came to public attention in 1775 when, after the death in 1768 of Lawrence Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy*, a letter which he wrote to Sterne in 1766, was published.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 46–7



His letters were published posthumously in 1782 and attracted an amazing 1,181 subscribers. They included people who lived in the Richmond area like his patron George Brudenell, first Duke of Montagu, the Duke of Queensbury, Horace Walpole and Mr Kisbee who had worked with him at the Montagus.

His letters and other writings show him to be a cultured man of wide interests — theatre, literature, art and music. Sancho's letters are articulate and amusing. He writes about his personal life, but also deals with current and important events. He shows a great understanding of the Britain which he inhabited.

He was also conscious of his unique role as a black person in British society and in his letters criticised the enslavement of his fellow Africans. In the letter to Laurence Sterne, Sancho asks him to deal with the subject of slavery in one of his novels:

July 21 1766

Reverend Sir —

*Consider slavery — what it is — how bitter a draught — and how many millions are made to drink it. — Of all my favourite authors not one has drawn a tear in favour of my miserable black brethren — excepting yourself, and [another author]. That subject handled in your striking manner, would ease the yoke (perhaps) of many....*

*...Your most humble and Obedient Servant*

IGNATIUS SANCHO <sup>17</sup>

He was the first known black person to vote in a Parliamentary election since, as a Westminster householder, he voted in the parliamentary elections of 1774 and 1780. He was also the first African to be given an obituary in the British Press.

## 5. THE ROAD TO ABOLITION

In 1673 the Puritan, Richard Baxter, wrote

*How cursed a crime is it to equal men to beasts.... do you not buy them and use them merely as you do horses to labour for your commodity.* <sup>18</sup>

By 1776, the Society of Friends (the Quakers) had instructed their members to release all slaves in their possession.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 331

<sup>18</sup> Richard Baxter, *Chapters from a Christian Dictionary or a Sum of Practical Theology and Cases of Conscience*, selected by Jeanette Tawney, 1925, p. 32.

## SO WHY DID ABOLITION OF THE TRADE TAKE SO LONG?

The Slave Trade lasted for over 150 years and was subject to changing attitudes and pressures.

### Some early eighteenth century attitudes

Even liberal-minded people like Daniel Defoe felt that to keep slaves was acceptable if one treated them kindly, and he reflected the views of many when he warned about the economic consequences of the abolition of the trade:

*The case is plain as cause and consequence: mark the climax. No African trade, no negroes, no sugars, gingers, indigos etc, no sugars etc, no islands: no islands no continent: no continent no trade.* <sup>19</sup>

James Boswell saw slavery as 'a status which in all ages God has sanctioned'. <sup>20</sup>

Later in the century, a number of factors created a climate where it became more fashionable to be in favour of abolition than against it (see p. 20). Here George III, Queen Charlotte and their daughters, who lived at Kew Palace, are seen giving up sugar in their tea in support of the Abolition Movement. However, Gillray, the satirist, interprets the real reason as the King's meanness.

ANTHONY VAN NELLE, 'The King, Queen Charlotte and their Daughters Giving up Sugar', 1792. Original in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Anti-Saccharrites, or John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar** by Gillray, 1792 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Defoe 'Review of the State of Britain' (1713) in Jack Lindsay, *The Monster City: Defoe's London 1688–1730* (1978) p. 189

<sup>20</sup> Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. Augustine Birrell (1904) IV, p.202



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE 1807

CHANGING ATTITUDES

The Enlightenment  
Feelings about liberty and freedom expressed by philosophers, authors and poets

"She natural  
is to be free"  
John Locke,  
1689

French and American  
Revolutions  
Examples of fight in the cause of freedom



Demand for political and social  
reform in Britain  
The slavery campaign became part of this



In 1807 Parliament passed the Act abolishing the Slave Trade and the transport of slaves in British ships. It was not until 1833 that Slavery was abolished in Britain and her colonies.

ECONOMIC

Slaves healthier and living longer, so no need to increase numbers  
Manufacturing industries becoming a more attractive investment

FASHION



Josiah Wedgwood creates 'slave medallion', taken up as a fashion item; earrings and brooches

PROTEST & PRESS COVERAGE

Court Cases. Rights of black people championed by Granville Sharp. Slave Ship Zong Case 1782 - evidence of slaves thrown overboard horrifies the public

Protest by black people  
Writers eg Olaudah Equiano. Successful slave revolt in Haiti led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, 1791

Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade 1787. Thomas Clarkson & Granville Sharp, raise public awareness

Fight for abolition brought to Parliament William Wilberforce, encouraged by Pitt. - essential to ultimate success.

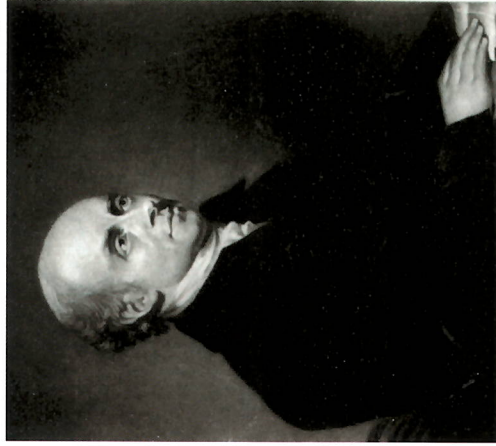


Neither should one underestimate the courage and determination of those who became enslaved. Over time they created their own communities with their own social customs and music which gave them an identity and independence and eased the hardships of slavery. Some of this culture has become a vibrant part of British culture as a result of members of the Commonwealth from the West Indies settling and working in Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

THE RICHMOND CONNECTION

GILBERT WAKEFIELD (1756-1801)

Gilbert Wakefield spent his youth in Richmond where his father, George Wakefield, was vicar. They lived at what is now 34 Sheen Road next to Marshgate House. He was a redoubtable scholar and student of the Bible and took holy orders. He became disillusioned with the established church, but remained committed to the teachings of Jesus Christ, particularly the charges to love one another, to serve the poor and to respect individual liberty. He was a pacifist and he spoke out against capital punishment. He fearlessly took up the cause of the abolition of the slave trade in Liverpool, a city whose prosperity depended on it.



Portrait of Gilbert Wakefield

mezzotint by William Say after William Artau, 1804 (©National Portrait Gallery, London)



Detail from 'New Morality', by Gillray, 1798 (©National Portrait Gallery, London)

Wakefield can be seen wearing the cap of a French revolutionary.

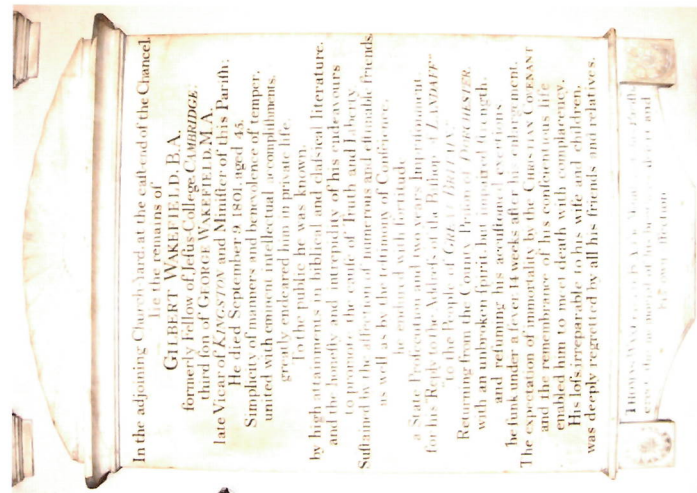


His outspokenness about Anglican doctrine and the American War of Independence made him open to ridicule and he was the subject of cartoons by Gillray.

His memoirs, published in 1804, indicate his strong feelings about the Slave Trade.

Letter to the Rev. Mr Gregory, 1783:

*I am glad that you are going to write upon the Slave-Trade; as I am persuaded that we shall never prosper as a nation until that execrable traffic be abolished which is conducted with circumstances of barbarity to be sought in vain among the records of pagan abominations.*<sup>21</sup>



body was carried with great ceremony from Hackney, where he lived, through the streets of London to Richmond where his brother, Thomas, had succeeded his father as vicar of St Mary's. His brother had an impressive memorial tablet erected in his memory.

<sup>21</sup> *The Letters of Gilbert Wakefield MA (1804)* p. 500

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 198

## 6. THE AFRICAN LEGACY — THE SLAVE FORTS ON THE GHANA COAST

Travelling in Ghana in 2006, the slave forts, or castles, of Cape Coast and nearby Elmina were a thought-provoking experience.

Cape Coast Castle in Ghana (then the Gold Coast) was the headquarters in Africa of the entire British involvement in the transatlantic slave trade from 1664 to 1807. It remained in British hands until Ghana became independent in 1957.

The castle began as a fort where garrisons protected the gold being transported from the Gold Coast, but it became a holding fort for the slaves, who came to be an important part of the West Indian and American plantation economy and valuable commodities themselves.

It was here that Henry Lascelles set up his 'floating factory' and also provisioned the garrison stationed at the castle.

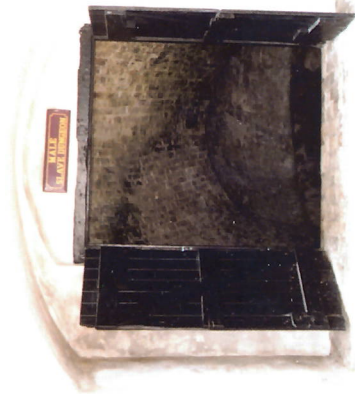
### From contemporary records —

26<sup>th</sup> October 1777, from the diary of the governor of Cape Coast Castle

*At 8 this morning came into the Castle, Ammoonoy Coomah, the Cudo Pynims [family heads and judges] ... and Caboceeds [local political leaders] ... to talk to me respecting the price of slaves.*<sup>23</sup>

In September 1775, Captain Thomas Gullan of the *Roebuck*, anchored off Cape Coast, wrote

*I have returned one of the men and given Mr Miles Credit for three Men and two Women. There is only one prime Slave amongst the others, the rest are but barely passable.*<sup>24</sup>



In the twentieth century, under British Colonial rule, Elmina Castle became a prison. By contrast, in 1972, both Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle became world heritage sites and are now museums. Today one can visit the vaulted

<sup>23</sup> From William St Clair, *The Grand Slave Emporium* (2006) p. 205

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222



slave dungeons and see the door through which slaves passed to the waiting ships, to be transported on the dreadful Middle Passage.

The colonial buildings of the town around Elmina Castle are being restored with the help of the Dutch, who owned it before the British took it over in 1872. Tourism will be encouraged and may help the economy.

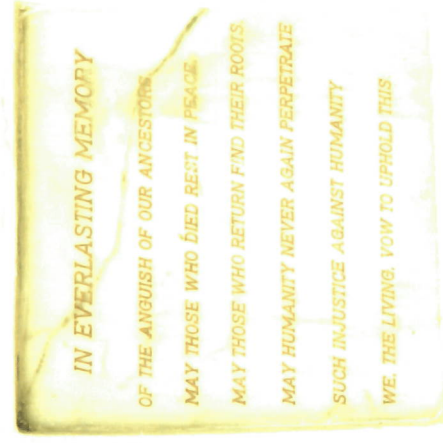
#### How do Ghanaians react to the castles today?

- Some blame their own people, the chiefs and middlemen who bartered them for goods, as well as the European traders.
- Some find the forts irrelevant, apart from bringing valuable tourist money into a poor country.
- Some talk about the slavery which still exists in the world today.
- Some feel the emotional resonance created by the forts:

*... after all these centuries, and some serious attempts to deodorise, one lasting characteristic of a place like Elmina Castle is the heavy odour of human misery that seems to pervade all its rooms, corridors and courtyards.*<sup>25</sup>

Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang, a poet, who grew up within sight of Cape Coast Castle says

*There are too many sad stories  
Carved in indifferent stones*



#### Memorial plaque, Elmina Castle

Though no words can adequately express the horrors of the slave trade, this inscription set into the wall of Elmina Castle wisely asks us to reflect on the past, consider the present and look to the future.

## 7. RICHMOND VOICES

### The legacy of the eighteenth century

Of the black people who came to Britain as a result of the Slave Trade there is little visible trace. Since 80% were male, it was inevitable that, unlike Ignatius Sancho, most would marry white women.

We may have them as our ancestors; some of us may be able to prove it, many will not.

### Richmond residents in the twenty-first century

In 2001 1.5% of the residents of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames were recorded as of African or Afro Caribbean origin, but others work in the Borough.

Some of these people spoke about their ancestry, their backgrounds, their life and work in Richmond and their feelings about the Slave Trade. It was good to hear their points of view – thoughtful, sometimes sad, but often very positive perspectives on the Slave Trade, slavery and its legacy. Below are extracts from their testimonies.

*Although the Slave Trade has been illegal for such a long time, I sometimes feel that it is not brought to the public consciousness as much as other equally dark periods in our history, such as the holocaust.*

*My human response is an emotional heartache, not only about the Slave Trade itself, but also its legacy. Two hundred years after Abolition black people still carry the emotional scars of slavery.*

*Like many things in the world, both in the past and today, the trade was driven by greed and the desire for wealth. However, we should not dwell on the past, but use the knowledge of it to look to the future.*

*Though racism exists in England today, I think there is equality of opportunity to succeed. I mix with people of all races and my friends and the people I work with come from many cultures.*

*In one way, remembering the slave trade can cause problems, because it can make people resentful and angry. On the other hand, knowing history is one of the best educations you can get.*

*There is racism in Britain and it probably has its roots in the Slave Trade when blacks were seen as very low. However, I feel we can be treated as equal as long as we portray ourselves positively.*

<sup>25</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, *Anowa: Of Forts, Castles and Silences* (1970)



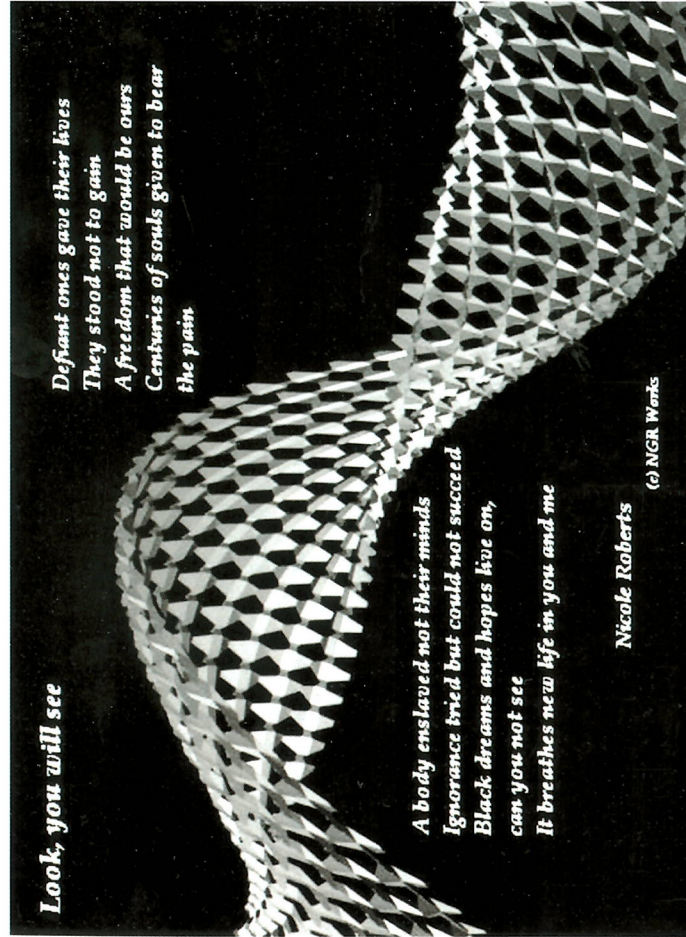
*The present problems we are having involve black versus black and this is related to hunger for money and creating a sub-culture. Equality is progressing, but we all have to work at it.*

*I see myself as British Caribbean and I do not think about being African. I do not see any point in going back so far to look for my roots. You can't change the past, but you can control the future.*

*The problem is that today every problem tends to be put down to colour. We must also remember that there is racism within coloured communities.*

*By portraying slavery mostly as evil visited on black people by whites, we run the risk of ignoring the greater evils that have existed in Africa since well before the European Slave Trade and which still persist today*

*The focus on slavery in 2007 is an opportunity not just to right the wrongs of the past but, more importantly, to stop the continuing abuses today.*



**Look, you will see**

**Defiant ones gave their lives  
They stood not to gain  
A freedom that would be ours  
Centuries of souls given to bear  
the pain**

**A body enslaved not their minds  
Ignorance tried but could not succeed  
Black dreams and hopes live on,  
can you not see  
It breathes new life in you and me**

**Nicole Roberts**

© NGR Words

#### **Contributions from**

Nana-Aba Andah  
Rob Brown  
René Harvey  
Jay Ingleton  
Solange Jondoh  
Ben Ogunseye  
Nana-Efua Otoo  
Nicole Roberts

## **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **Contemporary Sources**

The parish registers of Richmond, Surrey, St Anne's Kew and St Peter's Petersham Wills (The National Archives)  
PROB 11/787, Mary, Duchess of Montagu PROB 11/804, Henry Lascelles  
PROB 11/1193, George, First Duke of Montagu PROB 11/808, Jennet Lascelles  
PROB 51/78, Gilbert Wakefield PROB 11/969, Francis Holburne

M. Craton, J. Walvin & D. Wright (eds), *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Black Slaves in the British Empire: a thematic documentary* (1976)

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vasa*

Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London*, vol. 1: *The County of Surrey* (1802)

Owen Manning and William Bray, *Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (1804)

Ignatius Sancho, *Letters of the late Ignatius Sancho, an African, in two volumes to which are prefixed memoirs of his Life by J. Nicholls* (1782). Edited and with an introduction and notes by Vincent Carretta (Penguin edition, 1998)

*The Letters of Gilbert Wakefield* MA (1804)

### **Books and articles**

Joan Anim-Addo, *Sugar, Spices and Human Cargo: an early Black history of Greenwich* (1996)

Ato Ashun, *Elmina Castle and the Slave Trade* (2004)

Violet Biddulph, *Kitty, Duchess of Queensbury* (1935)

Phillip Briggs, *Ghana: The Brandt Travel Guide* (3rd edn, 2004)

John Cloake, *Richmond Past* (1991)

John Cloake, *Cottages and Common Fields of Richmond and Kew* (2001)

John Cloake, 'A View of Richmond Hill in the 1740s', *Richmond History, The Journal of the Richmond Local History Society*, no. 25 (2004) pp. 16–24

Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1966)

Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: the British struggle to abolish slavery* (2005)

R. King, S. Sandhu, J. Walvin & J. Girldham, *Ignatius Sancho: an African Man of Letters* (1997)

J. Lindsay, *The Monster City: Defoe's London 1688–1730* (1978)

- P. J. Marshall (ed), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: the Eighteenth Century* (1998)
- S. I. Martin, *Incomparable World* (1997)
- F. Mattingly, *Edward Colston 1636–1721* (Barnes and Mortlake History Society, 1971)
- Oxford DNB online [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)
- C. Phillips (ed), *Ignatius Sancho, an African Man of Letters* (1997)
- Charlotte and Denis Plimmer, *Slavery: the Anglo-American involvement* (1973)
- James Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of the Fathers* (1967)
- William St Clair, *The Grand Slave Emporium: Cape Coast Castle and the British Slave Trade* (2006)
- F. Shyllon, *Black People in Britain 1555–1833* (1977)
- S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: the world of the Lascelles, 1648–1834* (2006)
- Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade* (1997)
- James Walvin, *Slavery and the Slave Trade: a short illustrated history* (1983)
- James Walvin, *Black Ivory: a history of British slavery* (1992)
- James Walvin, *The Quakers: money and morals* (1997)
- Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: the story of immigration to Britain* (2004)

## Cover images

### Main picture:

*The Thames at Richmond*, by Joseph Nickolls c 1744  
1749, photograph, courtesy of Richard Green, London  
Slave auction handbill, Charleston, South Carolina, 1769  
*The Duchess of Queensbury and Julius Southise*,

### Small images

engraving by William Austin, 1773. The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Political cartoon (1) 10  
*Portrait of Ignatius Sancho*, by Thomas Gainsborough, 1768, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.  
*The Terrace, Richmond Hill*, by Augustin Heckel, 1749, courtesy of Sotheby's  
Memorial plaque Elmina Castle, Ghana  
Slave coffle – detail

### Images on Montagu Family Tree p. 15

<sup>6</sup>National Portrait Gallery, London

### Images on Factors chart p. 20

*Granville Sharp* by George Dance, <sup>6</sup>National Portrait Gallery, London  
*Olandath Equiano* – frontispiece from his biography, engraved by D. Orme  
*Thomas Clarkson* after Samuel Lane, <sup>6</sup>National Portrait Gallery, London  
*William Wilberforce* by Sir Thomas Lawrence, <sup>6</sup>National Portrait Gallery, London

Wedgwood Slavery Medallion, <sup>6</sup>The trustees of the British Museum

*Fall of the Bastille*, Jean-Pierre-Louis-Laurent-Haue

*A Freeborn Englishman*, George Cruikshank

Photograph of Cape Coast Castle dungeon on p. 23 by 'Sam'



To accompany the exhibition to commemorate  
the TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY of the  
abolition of the Slave Trade

**MUSEUM OF RICHMOND**  
**March 21 – July 29 2007**

- What was the Slave Trade and what was Britain's involvement in it?
- What role did Richmond people play in the Trade and its abolition?
- What evidence is there of black people living in Richmond as a result of the Trade?
- Why did it take so long to achieve abolition?
- What lasting effects does the Trade have on life in the 21st century?
- How are the Slave Forts on the coast of Ghana interpreted today?
- What do Richmond people of African and Afro-Caribbean origin today feel about the Slave Trade?
- How can we best remember and learn from the Slave Trade?

£4.95



**MUSEUM of  
RICHMOND**

