



The Slave Trade and Abolition

Steps of Memory

ENGLISH HERITAGE



What happened near where I live?



Abolitionists

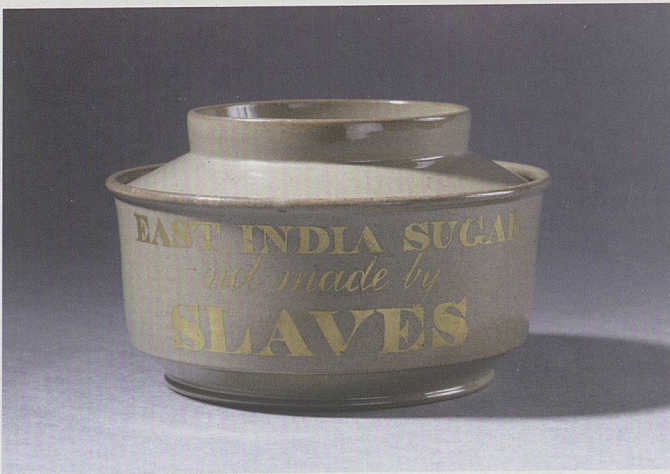


Photo: Museum and Antiquary Science

In 1787 twelve men met in a printing shop at 2 George Yard, London EC3, where a modern high rise now stands, to set up **The Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade**. Voices raised against the slave trade were rare in Europe and America at this time but, on both sides of the Atlantic, there had been discussion of the issue for several years and small groups of both black and white activists had formed in London to challenge the legality of the trade. The Committee became a campaigning society and was to grow over the next twenty years into one of Britain's **biggest ever mass political movements** and single-issue parliamentary lobbying campaigns. Those supporting Abolition boycotted slave-grown produce, invented new ways to publicise their views such as badges and iconic images, and delivered enormous petitions to the House of Commons – tactics which have been re-used many times since by other political campaigns.

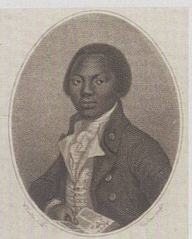
Although the purchase of slaves directly from Africa was made illegal under the **Abolition Act** of March 1807, the condition of slavery remained legal in the British Caribbean. It was not until 1833 that the **Slavery Abolition Act** passed through Parliament, coming into effect a year later. Even then, adult slaves were not automatically free but had to become 'apprentices'. Notionally, the 4-6 year apprenticeship would prepare former slaves for independent living, but many abolitionists saw these conditions as "but another name for slavery" because the apprentices received very low or no wages and were still subject to the excesses of plantation discipline. Public pressure led to the early **abolition of apprenticeships** on 1st August 1838.

An end to slavery in British Caribbean territories was not however a complete end to the involvement of British business in human trafficking that was carried out by other European powers throughout the Americas.



National Portrait Gallery, London

Abolitionist and author **Granville Sharp** (1735-1813), often called "the father of the Cause" by contemporaries, has a memorial in the churchyard at **All Saints, Church Gate, Fulham, London SW6** where he is buried and another in Poets Corner in **Westminster Abbey**. His interest in the plight of Africans in England began with his encounter in 1765 with **Jonathan Strong**. Strong was a slave from Barbados, beaten and abandoned in London by his master who later attempted to kidnap him and send him back to the Caribbean. Sharp successfully defended Strong's rights and those of other Africans as well. Granville Sharp helped bring the case of **James Somerset** before Lord Mansfield in 1772 and was one of the founder members of the **Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade**.



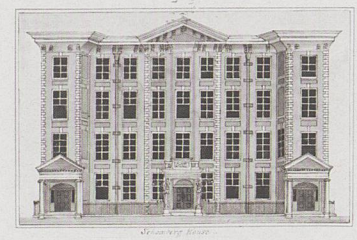
National Portrait Gallery, London

Olaudah Equiano (about 1745-1797) wrote in his autobiography that he was enslaved as a child and bought by an English naval captain who named him Gustavus Vassa after a famous Swedish king. He was baptised at **St Margaret's Church, St Margaret Street, Westminster SW1** www.touruk.co.uk/london_churches/stmargaretswestminster_church1.htm in 1759 when his master brought him to Britain.

Equiano later fought in the Seven Years War as an able seaman in the British Navy, worked for a Montserrat-based Quaker travelling throughout the Caribbean, bought his freedom and worked as a hairdresser in London. He became the defender of black interests, trying to prevent people from being kidnapped and sold into slavery and sometimes working with other black Londoners known as "The Sons of Africa". He was appointed commissary in the scheme to send hundreds of London's black poor to Sierra Leone, but left after exposing official corruption and ill-treatment of the migrants.

His autobiography, *The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, told the story of enslavement from the point of view of the enslaved. It was a best-seller which helped strengthen the abolitionist campaign. Equiano spent the rest of his life travelling the country, promoting his book and speaking out against slavery. When his book was published in 1789, Equiano was living at a house on the site of **73 Riding House Street, Westminster, London W1** currently marked with a **green plaque** by Westminster Council.

Equiano married Susanna Cullen at **St Andrew's Church, Soham, Cambridgeshire** in 1792 and had two daughters. Anna Maria Vassa died when she was four, possibly from a measles epidemic, four months after her father, and is buried at **St Andrew's Church, Chesterton, Cambridgeshire**. A commemorative plaque is found on the side of the church. Joanna Vassa is buried in **Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington High Street, London**.



The Congregational Church, London

Ottobah Cugoana (about 1757 - unknown) was a friend of Equiano and one of the first African Britons actively engaged in the campaign for the abolition of slavery. His book, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, published in 1787, rejected all arguments that supported African enslavement. From at least 1784 Cugoana had been employed as a servant by the fashionable painters Richard and Maria Cosway at their home, now **Schomberg House, 81 Pall Mall, London SW1** which can be seen from the street. Cugoana was baptised in the name of **John Stuart** in 1773 at **St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1** and used that name. Nothing is known of his life after 1791.

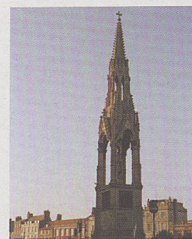


Image: Boris Bagg, English Heritage



National Portrait Gallery, London

Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) was a leading abolitionist who, as founder and main researcher for the **Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade**, travelled the country investigating the conditions on slave ships and interviewing sailors and ship's surgeons, often at personal risk. A monument at **High Cross Hill, Thundridge, East Herts** marks the spot where, in 1785, Clarkson resolved to devote his life to bringing about the abolition of the slave trade. Clarkson visited the main trading ports in England – at one point boarding 317 ships in London, Portsmouth and Plymouth in a single three-week period. A Bristol City Council plaque at **The Seven Stars pub, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol** marks where Clarkson stayed in 1787 while gathering evidence. He made friends with Thompson the landlord, who passed on much valuable information from the seamen employed on slaving ships in Bristol.

Clarkson wrote many books and pamphlets on the slave trade as well as travelling all over the country to promote the campaign through boycotts and petitions. He travelled to France in 1789 and tried to persuade the revolutionaries to abolish the slave trade. After the slave trade was outlawed in 1807, he continued to campaign for the abolition of slavery, forming a new organisation with Thomas Fowell Buxton and organising an anti-slavery convention in 1830.

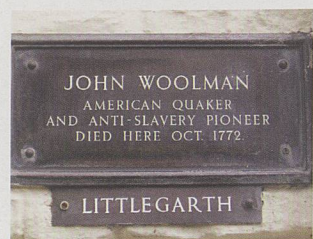
Clarkson came from **Wisbech** in Cambridgeshire where there is a **memorial erected in 1880** to his memory. There is an obelisk outside and memorial inside St Mary's Church, Playford, Suffolk where he is buried.



National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780) was born into slavery on a ship bound from Africa to the Americas. Brought to London as a young boy, he worked as a child slave for two sisters at Greenwich. He was named Sancho by them after Don Quixote's squire. The sisters did not believe in educating slaves but Sancho taught himself to read and write. He eventually encountered the 2nd Duke of Montagu (1690-1749) who lived nearby at Blackheath. The duke took an interest in him, gave Sancho books and encouraged his mistresses to let him be educated. They continued to refuse, so Sancho ran away to the Montagus around 1749 where he eventually became butler to the duchess. When she died in 1751, leaving Sancho £70 and an annuity in her will, Sancho left the Montagus and developed a large circle of friends in the world of the theatre. He appeared on stage and was a musician and composer. His life is recorded in the large number of letters he wrote. Sancho counted Samuel Johnson, Laurence Sterne, David Garrick and Thomas Gainsborough amongst his friends and correspondents.

Ignatius Sancho went back to the Montagus in 1758, acting as valet to the 3rd Duke and married Anne Osborne that year. He published a letter to Sterne in 1766 and Gainsborough painted his portrait in 1768, when Sancho's reputation as a man of letters was growing. Sancho retired from service in 1773 and established himself as a grocer in what is now **King Charles Street, Westminster**, a site currently occupied by government buildings. He died in 1780 and his collected letters, which were influential in championing abolition and condemning the slave trade, were published. Sancho was buried at the former St Margaret's Church in Broadway, Westminster. The small park on the **Broadway, Westminster, London SW1** offers some information about him on a plaque.



Not known

Travelling Quaker speaker **John Woolman** (1720-1772), was one of the earliest objectors to slave ownership and came to England from New Jersey in 1772 to gain support from English Quakers. After receiving this in London he set off for York. Woolman refused to use any slave plantation produce, including fabric dyes such as indigo, and so wore completely white clothes. He also opposed cruelty to animals and, as he believed coach horses were driven too hard, he travelled to York on foot. A memorial plaque can be seen from the street at Little Garth, **Marygate Lane, York** where he stayed and later died of smallpox.

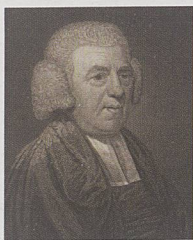


National Portrait Gallery, London

Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) had been a bookkeeper on a Jamaican plantation and became very involved in the campaign to abolish the slave trade. Macaulay was a leading member of the "Clapham Sect", a group of Evangelical Anglicans, including William Wilberforce, who campaigned for social reforms such as the abolition of the slave trade. His home at **5 The Pavement, Clapham Common, SW4** is marked with a London County Council plaque.

In 1790 Macaulay went to Sierra Leone, to help emancipated slaves from Britain's former American colonies who had gone to create a new settlement there, and came home on a slave ship to gather facts about conditions for the abolitionist campaign. He brought 21 boys and 4 girls back from Sierra Leone to be educated by the Clapham Sect in their African Academy. Sadly, many of the children were to die from measles once in London. One of the buildings occupied by the African Academy between 1799 and 1805 can be seen at **The Rectory Centre, Rectory Lane, Clapham Old Town SW4 OEL**.

Elected to the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade in 1804, he was a leading figure in the parliamentary campaign to ban the trade. In 1823 he helped organise the Anti-Slavery Society. Macaulay is buried at **St George's Gardens, off Handel Street, Camden, London WC1**. www.friendsofstgeorgesgardens.org.uk/gallery.htm



National Portrait Gallery, London



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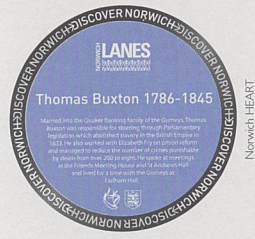
Most famous as the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace", **John Newton** (1725-1807) captained two Liverpool slave ships in his youth. He embraced religion during this time and in 1755 gave up the sea for the church. He later developed deep regrets over his involvement in the slave trade and supported William Wilberforce in his abolition campaign. He gave evidence to the Privy Council hearings on the trade and wrote a tract supporting abolition, *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* (1787). He was curate at the **Church of Saints Peter and Paul, Church Street, Olney, Bucks** and from 1780-1807 Rector at **St Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, London EC3** where there is a memorial to him inside the church.



© Wilberforce House Project Hull Museum

Hull MP **William Wilberforce** (1759-1833) was the leader of the parliamentary campaign to abolish the slave trade. While others, notably Clarkson, worked on gathering evidence and mobilizing public opinion through the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, Wilberforce complemented their work in the House of Commons. His house in Hull, at **36 High Street, Hull** is now the **Wilberforce House museum** [www.hullcc.gov.uk/portal/page?_pageid=221,91395&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.](http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/portal/page?_pageid=221,91395&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Wilberforce was a member of the "Clapham Sect" of Evangelical Anglicans and often worshipped at **Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common North Side, London** htc.churchinsight.com/ where a Greater London Council plaque commemorates their campaigning work against slavery. Wilberforce had already begun to collect evidence about the slave trade before, in May 1787, his friend the Prime Minister William Pitt urged him to make the campaign his own, under the shade of what came to be called the "Wilberforce Oak" near Holwood House in Kent www.keston.com/kestontour.htm. A London County Council plaque marks the site of Wilberforce's London base throughout his campaign against the slave trade, **Broomfield House, 111 Broomwood Road, London SW11**, which can be seen from the street. At first, Wilberforce fought only to abolish the slave trade, but later supported the complete abolition of slavery, dying three days after Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833. There is a monument to him in **Westminster Abbey**.



National Portrait Gallery, London

Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845), MP for Weymouth and social reformer, was asked by William Wilberforce to continue the campaign against slavery in Parliament when Wilberforce retired. He founded, with Wilberforce, the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery in 1823. He became vice-president of the Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1839 he established the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilisation of Africa. He is commemorated along with his fellow campaigners by the **Buxton Memorial Fountain**, put up by his son, which now stands in **Victoria Tower Gardens, London W1**. A memorial statue of Fowell Buxton was put up by public subscription in **Westminster Abbey**. A plaque on the **Friends' Meeting House, Upper Goat Lane, Norwich** commemorates his life.



National Portrait Gallery, London

Joseph Sturge (1793-1859), a Quaker abolitionist, co-founded the **Agency Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society** in 1831, which pressed for immediate and entire emancipation. Between 1836 and 1837, he travelled throughout the West Indies, gathering evidence to prove that the apprenticeship system was no different from slavery. In 1840 he organised the World Anti-Slavery Convention. A statue commemorating him and his achievements stands in front of the Marriott Hotel, **Five Ways, Birmingham**. His sister, **Sophia Sturge** (1795-1845) was a co-founder of the Birmingham Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves.



Image: Boris Bagg, English Heritage

Described as "Liverpool's greatest citizen", **William Roscoe** (1753-1831) was MP for the city in 1806-7. He founded the Liverpool branch of the Anti-Slavery Society, helped to establish the African Institute and campaigned in parliament to ban the slave trade, despite violent protests against him. A statue to him stands in **St George's Hall, Lime Street, Liverpool O151 233 2457**, and there is a memorial in the **Roscoe Memorial Gardens, off Mount Pleasant, Liverpool**.



© ANPCGality

Britain's oldest memorial to the abolition of slavery, the **Anti-Slavery Arch, Farmhill Road, Paganhill, Stroud, Gloucestershire**, was erected in 1834 by Henry Wyatt (1793-1847) to celebrate the passing of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. A supporter of the Stroud Anti-Slavery Society, Wyatt built the arch as an entrance to the carriage drive of his country house, www.wanti-slaveryarch.com.

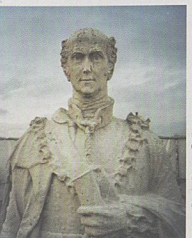


Image: Boris Bagg, English Heritage

As Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons, **Charles Grey, (Earl Grey)** (1764-1845) was responsible for seeing the act abolishing the African slave trade through parliament. In 1833, as Prime Minister, Earl Grey led the government in enacting the law that was to end slavery in the Caribbean. Earl Grey was MP for Northumberland and a memorial to him was erected in the very centre of **Newcastle, on Grey Street**, in 1838.

To learn more about the slave trade and abolition, including a resource list and web links, go to the **English Heritage website at english-heritage.org.uk**.

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Timeline

1555: A group of Africans (from present day Ghana) are brought to England by **John Lok**, a London merchant, to learn English so that they can act as interpreters in their homelands. They are to help the English break the monopoly that the Portuguese have over the African trade in gold, ivory and pepper. A written account speaks of "taule and strong men", who "coulede well agree with our meates and drynkes."

1562-9: **John Hawkins** becomes the first Englishman definitely known to have traded in Africans, making three voyages to Sierra Leone and transporting a total of 1,200 inhabitants to Hispaniola and St Domingo (Dominican Republic and Haiti). He sells them to the Spanish in exchange for pearls, hides, sugar and ginger.

1618: **King James I** creates *The Company of Adventurers of London Trading into the Parts of Africa*.

1672: **The Royal African Company** is formed in order to regulate the English slave trade, with a legal monopoly over the 2,500 miles of African coast from the Sahara to the Cape of Good Hope. The company is financed by royal, aristocratic and commercial capital.

1698: The Royal African Company monopoly ends, opening the trade to private traders from Bristol and Liverpool.

1713: Under the *Treaty of Utrecht* following the War of the Spanish Succession, **Britain is awarded the "Asiento"** or sole right to import an unlimited number of enslaved people to the Spanish Caribbean colonies for 30 years.

1730: First Maroon War in the British colony of Jamaica. Groups of escaped slaves in the mountains repel British forces and a treaty in 1739 confirms their free status.

1760: Slave revolts in Jamaica last for several months and claim many lives.

1765: **Granville Sharp** begins legal challenges to the British slave trade with the case of Jonathan Strong.

1772: **John Woolman**, an American Quaker and early anti-slavery campaigner comes to England to gather support from English Quakers.

1772: **James Somerset** case in London. Chief Justice Lord Mansfield rules that enslaved people in England cannot be forced to return to the West Indies.

1782: *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho* are published.

1783: 133 Africans are thrown overboard alive from the slave ship Zong so that the owners can claim compensation money from their insurance company.

1783: British Quakers form a committee against slavery and the slave trade.

1786: **Thomas Clarkson's** *An Essay on Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* is published.

1787: *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* by **Ottobah Cugoana** is published. **The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade** is founded in London.

1789: *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* or *Gustavus Vassa the African* is published.

1790: Wilberforce's first **Abolition Bill** is rejected by Parliament.

1791: A slave uprising in St Domingue triggers the **Haitian Revolution**, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture.

1795: **Second Maroon War** in Jamaica; Fedon's Rebellion in Grenada.

1802: **West India Dock opens** in the Port of London, initially dealing solely with the produce from the West Indies.

1804: St Domingue declared the **Republic of Haiti**, the first independent black state outside of Africa.

1807: **The Act to Abolish the Transatlantic Slave Trade** is passed in Parliament.

1833: **Slavery Abolition Act** is passed in Parliament, taking effect in 1834. This act gives all slaves in the Caribbean their freedom although some other British territories have to wait longer. However, ex-slaves in the Caribbean are forced to undertake a period of 'apprenticeship' (working for former masters for a low wage) which means that slavery is not fully abolished in practice until 1838.

Introduction

When the stories behind our local streets and landmarks are told they can give us a glimpse into the history on our doorstep.The late 16th to early 19th centuries – the period of Britain’s most active involvement in the transatlantic slave trade – have left a wealth of evidence in records and the historic environment that today tells the story of anti-slavery campaigners from all backgrounds, of those who grew wealthy on the trade in human lives and also of those who were themselves slaves in England but nevertheless left their mark on history.

This leaflet cannot include all the sites that are linked to that story, but a fuller version is available on www.english-heritage.org.uk which will be added to as new information becomes available.

All the sites identified in this leaflet can be seen from public spaces. Not all are open to the public. Contact details are given where possible. Please check access details before visiting.

When you visit a site, please be respectful of the people and places you are visiting. Please do not touch anything, and do not take any photographs or videos. Please do not feed any animals, and do not litter. Please do not drink alcohol, and do not smoke. Please do not use any mobile phones, and do not use any social media. Please do not use any drones, and do not use any fireworks. Please do not use any weapons, and do not use any explosives. Please do not use any flammable liquids, and do not use any flammable solids. Please do not use any flammable gases, and do not use any flammable dusts. Please do not use any flammable powders, and do not use any flammable pastes. Please do not use any flammable gels, and do not use any flammable foams. Please do not use any flammable aerosols, and do not use any flammable sprays. Please do not use any flammable liquids, and do not use any flammable solids. Please do not use any flammable gases, and do not use any flammable dusts. Please do not use any flammable powders, and do not use any flammable pastes. Please do not use any flammable gels, and do not use any flammable foams. Please do not use any flammable aerosols, and do not use any flammable sprays.

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The Slave Trade and Plantation Wealth

Sir John Hawkins (1532-1595) from Plymouth, was the first Englishman to trade in Africans, making three voyages to Sierra Leone and taking 1200 inhabitants to Hispaniola and St Domingue (present day Dominican Republic and Haiti) from 1562.

London

London held a central position in the development and continuation of transatlantic slavery from John Hawkins’ first voyage to Sierra Leone in 1562 to the opening of the West India Docks in 1802. Until 1698 London enjoyed a monopoly over the trade by royal charter.



Between 1660 and 1690 15 Lord Mayors of London, 25 sheriffs and 38 aldermen of the City of London, who met at the **Guildhall, Gresham Street, London EC2** 020 7606 3030 ext. 1463, were shareholders in the Royal Africa Company which ran the transatlantic slave trade. These connections to the slave trade increased during the 18th century. **The Zong Case** (1783) was tried here. This incident, in which 133 slaves on a ship to Jamaica were thrown overboard alive in order that the owners could claim the insurance on them under British law, shocked the public and was seen as a turning-point in the abolitionist campaign. A statue to **William Beckford Sr** (1709-1770) stands at the east end of the south wall in Guildhall – the only Lord Mayor to receive this honour. Beckford was known as the “uncrowned king of Jamaica”. His fortune came from 20,022 acres of plantations on the island. He was twice **Lord Mayor of London** and was also MP for the City of London.

Lord Chief Justice Lord Mansfield heard many cases in **Westminster Hall, Palace of Westminster, London W1**, 020 7219 3000, www.parliament.uk/slavetrade when it was a Court of Law. He presided over the case of **James Somerset** in 1772. Somerset was a slave from America who escaped while his owner was visiting London, was re-captured and put aboard a ship to Jamaica. Mansfield ruled that “*no master ever was allowed to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted from his service*”. Mansfield’s home was Kenwood House, Hampstead Lane, London NW3.



A commemorative statue to **Robert Milligan**, chairman of the West India Dock Company stands on the **West India Quay, Canary Wharf, London E14**. Milligan, together with other West India planters and merchants, built the docks for the safe importation of sugar, rum and coffee from the Caribbean plantations. It was described on its opening in 1802 as “*the largest feat of civil engineering since the building of the pyramids*”. Behind the statue, The Museum in Docklands, 0870 444 3851, www.museumindocklands.org.ukEnglish occupies one of the two surviving warehouses built at this time.

Bristol area



The Georgian House Museum, 7 Great George Street, Bristol BS1 5RR 0117 921 1362. www.bristol.gov.uk was built by **John Pinney** (1740-1818), who earned his fortune from his sugar plantations in Nevis. He became even richer through the company he set up with his friend, the anti-abolitionist pamphleteer **James Tobin**. They owned ships, loaned money to plantation owners and took over both the plantations and slaves of those who could not pay their debts. **Pero** (1753-1798) was Pinney’s personal servant, sold to Pinney when he was 12 along with his two sisters, possibly in Nevis. Pero was living here by 1791 and would have seen the kitchens very much as they are shown here.



Edward Colston (1636-1721) made his fortune as a sugar merchant and member of the Royal African Company with interests in St Kitts but was also famous for his charity and philanthropy in Bristol, where he was born. He founded almshouses at St Michael’s Hill and supported local schools. A **statue** of him was erected in **Colston Avenue, Bristol** in the 19th century.



Queen Square, Bristol (built 1699-1727) was home to wealthy merchants with interests in the West Indies. Henry Bright (1715-1777), Mayor of Bristol and a prominent Bristol merchant and slave trader, lived with his black servant called Bristol at **number 29**, currently leased to the South West regional office of **English Heritage**. At numbers 33 to 35 lived Captain Woodes Rogers (1679-1732), a famous privateer who made a voyage around the world in 1708 to 1711, trading in slaves on the way. He also invested in a ship carrying slaves from Africa to Jamaica.



Blaise Castle, Henbury Road, Henbury, Bristol, 0117 353 2268, www.forestofavon.org.uk/blaisecastle.html is a quirky gothic folly built on the top of Blaise Hill in 1766 by Thomas Farr. Farr had large investments in the slave trade and it is said that he spent the equivalent of about £150,000 today building the folly, so that he could climb it to watch his ships sailing back up the River Avon to Bristol.

William Beckford’s (1760-1844) huge inheritance allowed him to enjoy an extravagant lifestyle, be a writer, collector and patron of the arts, and to build the gothic Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire and **Beckford’s Tower, 1 Royal Crescent, Bath** 01225 460705, www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/museums/beckford in 1827. William was the son of **William Beckford Snr**, plantation owner and twice Lord Mayor of London. His grandfather Peter Beckford (1643-1710) founded the greatest sugar fortune in the West Indies.

Liverpool



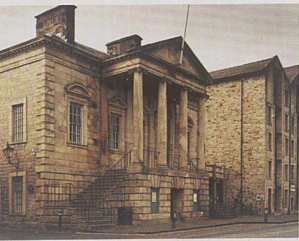
Like London’s Guildhall, Liverpool Town Hall, 0151 225 5530, was at the centre of the city’s trading activity. All of the city’s mayors between 1787 and 1807 were involved in the slave trade. Built in 1754, the building’s frieze shows African faces, elephants, crocodiles and lions representing Liverpool’s African trading links. Though one of Britain’s busiest trading ports, little remains of the Liverpool docks of this time, but the Canning Graving Docks, which remain, were used for fitting out and repairing slave ships in the late 18th century.

North West merchant houses

Grand properties were built by successful plantation owners far away from Liverpool where their fortunes were made. **Whenside Manor**, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria 01539 625213, is currently a hotel but was the country home of the **Sill** family from Liverpool whose wealth came from Jamaican plantations. **Speke Hall, The Walk, Liverpool** (National Trust 0151 427 7231) was the home of **Richard Watt**, a Liverpool merchant who had made his fortune from sugar plantations in Jamaica. He bought the house and its 2400 acre estate for £73,500 in 1795. **Storrs Hall, Windermere, Cumbria** 015394 471111, now also a hotel, was acquired in 1806 by **John Bolton**, a Cumbrian who made his fortune as a Liverpool slave trader, with plantations in St Vincent and St Lucia.



A question mark hangs over the **wreck of the “Douro”**, a Liverpool ship wrecked and sunk beneath the seas at Round Rock, **Isles of Scilly** in 1843, 36 years after British ships were banned from the slave trade. Said to be heading to Portugal when it went down with a cargo of textiles and munitions, divers have found large numbers of glass beads and manillas, bronze bracelet-shaped trading tokens, on the wreck. These had a long history as currency used to trade for slaves in West Africa. **Was the Douro involved in illegal slaving** or carrying supplies for the banned trade? The market for slaves did not disappear with abolition in Britain, and so traders continued to meet demand in places like Brazil and Cuba. To combat illegal slave trading the British Navy organised **anti-slavery patrols** off the West African coast between 1815 and 1865 when they seized many vessels.



In the course of the 18th century, **Lancaster** and **Whitehaven** slave ships carried in excess of **29,000** and **14,000 slaves**, respectively out of Africa. Though overshadowed by Liverpool, London and Bristol, these statistics put them at the forefront of smaller operators. Between 1750 and 1775 ships made 100 voyages to the African coast from **St Georges Quay, Lancaster** where Kevin Dalton Johnson’s *Captured Africans Sculpture*, unveiled in 2005, is now a memorial to this history. Whitehaven ships accounted for nearly 60 further slaving voyages.



Henry Lascelles (1690-1753) was a banker and sugar importer who held shares in 21 ships involved in the slave trade between Barbados and Africa. He bought land in **Yorkshire** with the fortune he had amassed and in 1759 his son Edwin Lascelles, Baron Harewood (1712-95), laid the foundation stone of **Harewood House, Harewood, Leeds LS17** 0113 218 1010. www.harewood.org.

The Fitzherbert family, owners of **Tissington Hall, Tissington, Ashbourne, Derbyshire** 01335 352200, www.tissington-hall.com/hall/hall_history.html since the 17th century, married into the Perrin family, who owned four plantations in Jamaica, producing sugar and coffee from the second half of the 18th century. These came to be owned and managed from Tissington Hall. At the same time, reflecting the growing divisions on the slavery issue, **John Alleyne**, one of the barristers supporting the case of escaped slave **James Somerset**, was also related to the Fitzherberts by marriage. Alleyne had turned against his own family’s business in Barbados and worked with **Granville Sharpe** in the abolition cause.

Black Lives in England

People of African origin have been part of English history since Roman times. In the last quarter of the 18th century England was home to a black population of between 10-15,000 people – mostly in major ports but also in market towns and villages across the country. Many worked as domestic servants both paid and unpaid – and it was often unclear whether they were free or not.The habit of giving slaves Roman names accounts for the large number of Scipios, Plinys and Caesars buried in churchyards across the country. Anglicised names are rare and African names rarer still. Notices for runaway slaves were a common feature of local newspapers during this period.

Not all were slaves or servants. Black people worked as sailors, tradespeople of all kinds and in some cases as businessmen or musicians. Black writers played a role in the anti-slavery movement in England and famous activists like Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoana were pivotal to the movement in speaking and writing from their personal experience of the horrors of the trade. We can still find evidence of some of these lives in the historic environment around us, as these examples show.



Joseph Emidy (1775-1835) was born in West Africa, sold to the Portuguese and sent into slavery in Brazil. It is unclear where he learned to play the violin but he returned to Europe and played in the orchestra at Lisbon Opera House. In 1795 Emidy was “pressed” by a British Navy ship and forced into service as a musician. Discharged in Falmouth in 1799, he became a music teacher, teaching violin, piano, cello and flute. His memorial stone is in the churchyard of Kenwyn Church,Truro, www.emidy.com.



Beethoven dedicated a sonata to the virtuoso violinist **George Polgreen Bridgetower** (1780-1860). A child prodigy, he made his musical debut in 1789 at **The Assembly Rooms, Bennet Street, Bath** (National Trust 01225 477789). Bridgetower’s father claimed to be the son of an African prince and sometimes also said that he came from Barbados. He was possibly an escaped slave. For 14 years, George Bridgetower held the post of first violinist in the Prince of Wales’ (later George IV) private orchestra.



Cesar Picton (about 1755-1836) became a successful businessman, who owned a wharf and a malt house, despite starting life as a slave. Brought from Goree Island when only six years old, he worked as a servant before using bequests from his employers to set up as a coal merchant. He lived at **52 High Street, Kingston upon Thames** from 1790, now marked by a Kingston local history plaque, and bought the grand **Picton House, 56 High Street, Thames Ditton** in 1816. Both houses can still be seen from the street.



Dido Elizabeth Belle grew up at **Kenwood House, Hampstead, London NW3** (now an English Heritage property 0208 348 1286). She was the great-niece of William Murray, Lord Mansfield, who as Lord Chief Justice presided over some of the most of the historic cases that affected enslaved Africans. Dido was the illegitimate daughter of Lord Mansfield’s nephew, Sir John Lindsay, a British Navy captain, and an enslaved woman whom Sir John encountered while his ship was in the Caribbean. Sir John acknowledged Dido as his child and, from the 1760s, Dido was brought up in aristocratic surroundings at Kenwood House by the childless Lord and Lady Mansfield, along with her cousin, Lady Elizabeth Murray, whose mother had died.

Dido lived at Kenwood for 30 years. Her status in the household was commented on by several visitors. One said that her great-uncle “*called upon (her) ... every minute for this and that, and shewed the greatest attention to everything she said*”. However, her position in the household may have been that of a loved but poor relation and she did not always dine with guests. She received an allowance and helped Lord Mansfield with his legal correspondence as well as supervising the care of the Kenwood dairy and poultry. We also know that Dido was provided with pretty furniture, birthday and Christmas gifts and ass’s milk when she was ill.

When Lord Mansfield died, he carefully recorded in his will that Dido was a free woman. She received legacies from her father, her great-uncle and other Mansfield relatives. In 1794 she became Mrs Dido Elizabeth Davinier and left Kenwood for married life. After this her story fades from the Kenwood records.

Find out more about Dido at the special exhibition **Mansfield, Slavery and Justice: A public and private legacy** at Kenwood House 24 May – 2 September 2007. See www.english-heritage.org.uk for details and for visitor times for this free site.



George Africanus (1763-1834) became Nottingham’s first recorded black entrepreneur, starting an employment agency called the *Africanus Register of Servants*. Brought to England as a slave at three years old, he was given as a present to wealthy Wolverhampton businessman Benjamin Molineux. After an apprenticeship as a brass founder in one of Molineux’ foundries, George moved to Nottingham, married a local woman and, in 1829, became a freeholder, owning his own home as well as his business premises. He died aged 71 and was buried in **St Mary’s Churchyard, Nottingham Lace Market** where a City of Nottingham plaque commemorates him. www.wolverhamptonhistory.org.uk/people/migration/slavery/george.

Servants in Great Houses

Black domestic servants in great houses were seen as a conspicuous sign of wealth in the 18th century. Some were paid wages and could leave their employers, while others were treated as property. Portraits and archives record many such lives. Examples include:

Boughton House, Kettering, Northamptonshire, 01536 515731, www.boughtonhouse.org.uk. The young black man included in a portrait of Lady Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu painted in the 1720s, attributed to Enoch Seeman, was called **Charles**. He worked as a servant at Boughton House and is identified in the family cash books as ‘*ye Black of her Grace*’. Records show he was educated, expensively dressed in livery and paid servant’s wages.



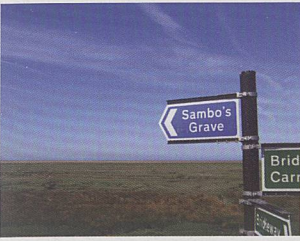
Althorp House, Althorp, Northampton, 01604 770107, www.althorp.com **Caesar Shaw** was the name of an African slave to the Spencer family in the 18th century. He is featured in two portraits in Althorp House.



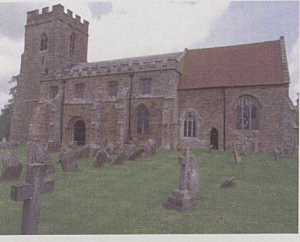
Many people from West Africa, the Caribbean and America settled in Liverpool. **St James Church, Toxteth, Liverpool** was built between 1774-5 and many of these settlers were baptised here. The records and monuments of St James are evidence of the many reasons for this transatlantic migration, including Liverpool’s involvement in the slave trade. Access is by appointment only but more information is available from the Churches Conservation Trust 020 7213 0660 www.visitchurches.org.uk.

Grave sites

Little evidence survives of the lives of some enslaved people in England beyond their burial place. These are not only found in ports associated with the slave trade. Some examples are given here:



‘Samboo’ Grave, at Sunderland Point, near Lancaster www.timetravel-britain.com/05/July/sunderland.shtml: ‘Samboo’ is thought to have been a young African servant to a sea captain or merchant. Local stories say that he caught a fever and died soon after arriving on shore in 1736. The plaque on his grave was added 60 years later and the site has gained poignancy in representing other unknown slaves. Today, visitors to the grave often leave flowers and coloured stones as a tribute.



The grave of **Myrtila** in the churchyard at **St Lawrence, Oxhill, Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire** is one of the earliest we have identified. The inscribed headstone is unusual in commemorating a woman: “*Here lyeth the body of Myrtila, negro slave to Mr.Thos Beauchamp of Nevis. Bapt. Oct. ye 20th. Buried Jan ye 6th, 1705*”. Beauchamp is believed to have been a sugar planter, but when or why he came to Oxhill is not known. The parish records note Myrtila’s baptism and death, but the details of her life were never documented. www.oxhill.org.uk/StLawrenceChurch/SlaveGrave.htm.

Scipio Africanus was servant to Charles William Howard, 7th Earl of Suffolk and is thought to have lived on the Blaise Estate, part of Henbury Manor. Scipio died in 1720 aged 18. We don’t know anything else about his life, but the elaborateness of his headstone and footstone in **St Mary’s Churchyard, Church Close, Henbury, Bristol BS10** suggests that he was well thought of.

A gravestone commemorating **Philip Scipio** can be found on the northwest exterior wall of **St Martin’s Church, Werrington, Cornwall**. Philip was a servant to the Duke of Wharton and later to Lady Lucy Morice. It is believed that Philip died in 1784 aged about 18 years old. The full inscription can be found at www.blacknetworkinggroup.co.uk/local_black_history/htm

A gravestone to **I.D.an unknown African** in the churchyard of the **Church of St John the Baptist, Bishop’s Castle, Shropshire**. reads: “*Here lies the Body of I.D a native of Africa who died in this Town April 19th, 1801*.” The text carved on the gravestone is one sometimes quoted by Abolitionists and suggests that the stone was erected by those sympathetic to the movement: “*He hath made of one blood all nations of men*” (*Acts 17:26*)

At the east end of **St Martin’s Church, Bowness on Windermere, Cumbria**, in the churchyard, there is a headstone with the following inscription: “*In memory of Rasselas Belfield a Native of Abyssinia who died on the 16th Day of January 1822 Aged 32 years*”. It also reads:

*“A Slave by birth I left my native land,
And found my Freedom on Britannia’s Strand.
Blest Isle! Thou Glory of the Wise and Free,
Thy Touch alone unbinds the Chains of Slavery”*.