

EMANCIPATION OF THE DISPOSSESSED

Slavery, Abolition and Us – a South East London angle



EMANCIPATION OF THE DISPOSSESSED

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Introduction

This teachers pack does not tell the whole story of slavery and its abolition, but by exploring the local history of Deptford and the surrounding area, much of this story is revealed. London was the focal point of the beginnings of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade, and along with Liverpool and Bristol was a major slave trading port in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Deptford's seafaring connections made it a key location for the Navy, who protected Britain's colonies; for merchant seamen who launched their voyages to the colonies from Deptford; and for merchants who financed the voyages and built large houses nearby with the profits of the trade.

Many people of African origin landed at Deptford when they came to Britain, some as wealthy visitors, but more often they were sailors, servants or slaves, and many settled here. Some people escaped slavery or bought their freedom, and many former slaves made a significant contribution to the campaign for the abolition of slavery. Many abolition campaigners visited Deptford and worked nearby, and the campaign was supported by ordinary local men and women.

This pack provides information about some of the local people who played an important role in the beginnings of the slave trade or the campaign for its abolition, which was achieved in 1807. The resources are aimed at Key Stage 3 History and Citizenship. Some sections may also be useful for Key Stage 2 local history study. The pack contains:

- ◆ Information sheets, which provide information about key people or places; links to websites (suitable for upper KS2 and KS3 pupils) and suggested questions for guided whole class or group discussion.
- ◆ Sources of evidence: images of archive documents, portraits, maps, objects and archaeological sites for use in the classroom.
- ◆ Teaching suggestions, with classroom-based ideas for using the information sheets and sources of evidence.
- ◆ A guided walk around Deptford.
- ◆ Recommended places to visit.
- ◆ A book list and useful web links.

For information on the sensitive content of this history and teaching approaches visit:

<http://www.understandingslavery.com/teachingslavetrade/>

For a timeline that traces the history of slavery in Lewisham visit:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/Libraries/Abolition200/SlaveryInLewisham/>

Emancipation of the Dispossessed

This pack is the legacy of **Emancipation of the Dispossessed**, a local community project that commemorated the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007. Community groups and Students from Lewisham College worked with theatre educators to research and develop **Blood Sugar**, a promenade performance through the Queen's House, Greenwich. **Blood Sugar** tells the story of slavery and the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade from a local angle. The script is built around first hand and eyewitness accounts, campaign pamphlets and reports to parliament. Extracts of the script are included throughout this pack, and further extracts can be found on the Emancipation of the Dispossessed website:

<http://www.emancipationofthedispossessed.com>

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British Library

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Curriculum Links

Key Stage 2 History

Local history study

7) A study investigating how an aspect in the local area has changed over a long period of time, or how the locality was affected by a significant national or local event or development or by the work of a significant individual.

Key Stage 3 History (current curriculum)

Britain 1750-1900

- 2) Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past
- 4) Historical enquiry

QCA Scheme of work: Unit 15 Black peoples of America from slavery to equality?

Key Stage 3 History (new curriculum)

1.2 Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity

1.4 Cause and consequence

1.5 Significance

2.1 Historical enquiry

2.2 Using evidence

3h) British history: The development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology, the British Empire

Explanatory note:

The development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology, the British Empire: This includes studying how the development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology affected the UK. . . The study of the slave trade should include resistance, the abolition of slavery and the work of people such as Olaudah Equiano and William Wilberforce.

Key Stage 3 Citizenship (new curriculum)

2) Developing skills of enquiry and communication

3a) political, legal and human rights, and responsibilities of citizens

3c) key features of parliamentary democracy and government in the constituent parts of the UK and at local level, including voting and elections

3e) actions that individuals, groups and organisations can take to influence decisions affecting communities and the environment

3j) migration to, from and within the UK and the reasons for this

PART 2 - INFORMATION SHEET Deptford and the dockyards



Deptford Dockyard by Joseph Farington

“Greenwich: traditionally the hunting ground of kings. From here Henry VIII had looked across at Deptford, seen its excellence as a ship yard and made plans for a navy.”

Lady in Waiting, *Blood Sugar*, scene 1.

Sources of evidence:

- ◆ An exact survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, with the country near ten miles round.
- ◆ Deptford Dockyard by Joseph Farington
- ◆ A Map of Deptford, 1623.
- ◆ View of London from Greenwich park 1796
- ◆ Map of the Atlantic World
- ◆ Photographs of archaeologists working on the remains of Royal Dockyard at Deptford.

The Royal Naval Dockyards

Records show that people have been building boats on Deptford Strand on the south bank of the river Thames since the middle of the fifteenth century. At the end of the fifteenth century Deptford was a fishing village, and was used as a repair yard for Henry VII's ships. In the sixteenth century Henry VIII chose Deptford as the new base for his Royal Navy as it was on the river, close to his Palace at Greenwich and to his Armouries at the Tower of London. He founded his Royal Naval Dockyard there in 1513. Plans show it had workshops, a storehouse for naval supplies, two docks and three slipways (ramps used to get ships in and out of the river).

After the Royal Naval Dockyard was built, Deptford became an important seafaring and trading centre. Ships were built, fitted out and stocked with provisions here before being launched on voyages around the world, and were repaired here when they returned. Royal Navy ships sailing from Deptford protected Britain's growing empire and trade routes. Traders and explorers also sailed from the dockyards. People interested in sea voyaging came to Deptford, hoping for support from the king or financial backing from rich London merchants.

Many sea captains owned or stayed in houses close to the dockyard. Captain John Hawkins lived at the Treasurer's House at the dockyard. He was the first English slave trader. He made his first slave trading voyage from Deptford and between 1564 and 1569 he made four slave trading voyages to Sierra Leone. Elizabeth I supported these voyages by lending him Royal Navy ships and giving him provisions. Like Henry VIII she was interested in building the British Empire and opportunities to trade overseas.

The growth of Deptford and the dockyards

The dockyards became a major centre of industry as the British Empire grew. In 2000 archaeologists digging at Convoy's Wharf uncovered the Tudor remains of the Royal Dockyard. Other archaeological evidence they discovered showed that the dockyard grew as more buildings were built in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. The dockyards created many jobs in shipbuilding and trades like sail making and chain making. The Pett family were master shipbuilders in Deptford for several generations and built many of the ships that were involved in the Atlantic trade. The timber for shipbuilding came from their estate near Chiselhurst (now called Petts Woods).

People working at the dockyards needed homes, and maps and other records show that the town of Deptford also grew during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Shipwrights, sailors and craftsmen lived in wooden cottages. Sea captains, foremen and officials lived in brick built houses that lined the main streets. In 1703, John Evelyn wrote about the rapidly increasing population of Deptford *"...the Town is in 80 yeares become neere as big as Bristoll"*.

During the seventeenth century merchants and other wealthy people became increasingly interested in trade with Africa. Many of these merchants had houses nearby in Deptford Green, Lee or Blackheath. Hoping to make big profits, they invested money in ships that sailed to Africa to trade for exotic goods and captured African people, who were made to work as slaves on plantations in British colonies in the Caribbean. The ships returned to Deptford where the sugar, tobacco and other crops produced by these plantations were unpacked and stored before being sold. This became known as the Triangular Trade.

Deptford was a place of arrivals and departures. Many British people who owned or ran plantations and went to live in the Caribbean set sail from Deptford. Many people of African origin who came to Britain landed at Deptford. Some were sailors and some were brought to work in Britain as slaves or servants. Some, like Ignatius Sancho, were later able to buy their freedom.

The decline of the dockyards

Eventually Liverpool and Bristol became the main slave-trading ports. Deptford and other London docks became less important, and less busy. London was still an important part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, because the banks and insurance companies that put up the money for voyages and insured the ships were based here.

In the eighteenth century a campaign for the abolition of the slave trade started to build across the country. Abolition campaigners held public meetings on Deptford High Street. Many famous abolitionists met at Hatcham House in nearby New Cross Gate. Famous African campaigners, such as Olaudah Equiano, had landed at Deptford when they arrived in Britain, and had lived or worked nearby. Their campaign work helped to bring about the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807 and in 1833 an act to abolish slavery was passed by Parliament.

By the 19th century, the Deptford dockyards were in decline. Other dockyards such as Chatham and Plymouth took over most of the shipbuilding work. The Royal dockyards closed in 1869. The yard was converted into a cattle market in 1871, which closed in 1913. Since then it has been used as a storage depot. In 1984 it became Convoy's Wharf, which is now being redeveloped.

Discussion question

What evidence is there today to show Deptford, Lewisham and Greenwich's links to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the movement for the abolition of slavery? Think about the names of local streets, shops, pubs and housing estates; old buildings; plaques and statues.

Deptford: Useful links

The Royal Dockyards of Deptford and Woolwich
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.163>

Deptford – a history in pictures
<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/lewishamheritage>

Ideal Homes: Deptford
<http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/lewisham/main/deptford.htm>

Information about the Royal Dockyards on the Portcities website
<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.52/Deptford-and-Woolwich-Londons-Royal-Dockyards.html>

Information about Deptford on St Paul's Church website
http://paulsdeptford.org.uk/SPD_ver2/Deptford.htm

Zoomable map of Deptford printed in the eighteenth century.
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/explore/chartzoom.cfm/imageID/K0933/x/6307/y/764/zoomlevel/4/#content>

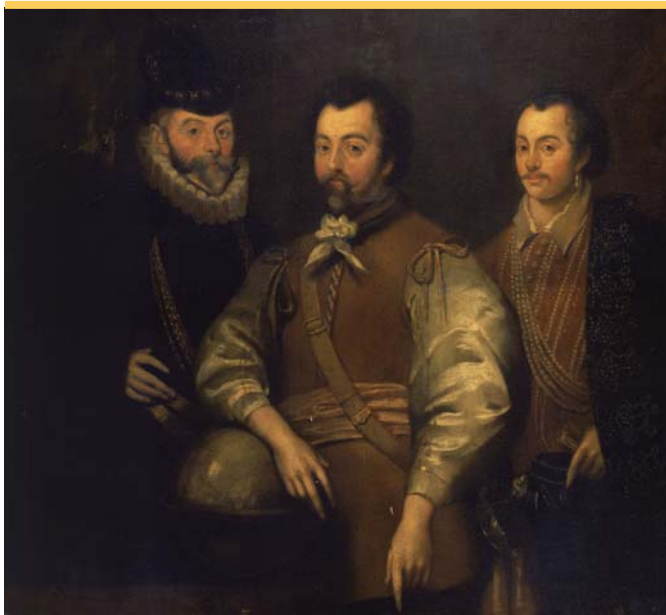
Plans and drawings of Deptford in the British Library
<http://www.collectbritain.co.uk/collections/deptford/>

Sources and information about shipbuilding in London
http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/story/story_intro.asp?story_uid=33

HMS Buckingham on the Stocks at Deptford, 1751
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/searchbin/searchs.pl?exhibit=it3151z&taxis=1201185827&flash=true&dev=>

HMS Royal George at Deptford Showing the Launch of HMS Cambridge, 1757
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/searchbin/searchs.pl?exhibit=it3152z&taxis=1201185827&flash=true&dev=>

PART 3 - INFORMATION SHEETS John Hawkins and Francis Drake



Thomas Cavendish, Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins.

Captain John Hawkins was Treasurer of the Royal Navy and lived at the Treasurer's House at Deptford dockyards. He was the first English slave trader and historian Joan Anim-Addo describes him as "the English father of the Atlantic Slave Trade". On this first voyage he captured 300 Africans and took them to the Caribbean. He sold them to the Spanish settlers there in exchange for animal skins, ginger, sugar and pearls. He brought these exotic goods back to England and sold them to London merchants. This was the beginning of the triangular trade across the Atlantic. With support from Queen Elizabeth I, he made four slave trading voyages to Sierra Leone, sailing from Deptford, between 1564 and 1569.

On his third voyage in 1567 John Hawkins wrote in his diary:

"Now we had obtained between four and five hundred Negroes, wherewith we thought it somewhat reasonable to seek the coast of the West Indies; and there for our Negroes, and our other merchandise, we hoped to obtain wherof to diligence, furnished our watering, took fuel and departed the coast of Guinea the third of february."

This voyage was made up of six ships. Two were owned by Elizabeth I, and one included John Hawkins' cousin Francis Drake among its crew. A Spanish fleet captured some of the ships, and only the ships captained by John Hawkins and Francis Drake managed to escape.

After joining John Hawkins on slave trading voyages, Francis Drake became famous for circumnavigating

"First Hawkins then Queen Elizabeth. The very important persons doing very important things theory of history. . . . We'll have Francis Drake next!"

Director, *Blood Sugar*, Scene 2

Sources of evidence:

- ◆ John Hawkins' Coat of Arms
- ◆ Thomas Cavendish, Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins.

Local places

- ◆ Deptford Strand
- ◆ St Nicholas' church, Deptford
- ◆ Deptford Town Hall

the globe aboard the ship the Pelican (later renamed the Golden Hind). In 1581 Francis Drake was knighted by Elizabeth I at Deptford on the deck of the Golden Hind. There is a stone carving of him on the wall of Deptford Town hall, which was built in 1905.

When John Hawkins was knighted by the Queen he had a crest of arms drawn up that included a picture of an African bound with ropes, acknowledging the money he made from captured Africans. He died on a voyage to the Caribbean with Sir Francis Drake in 1595.

John Hawkins' brother-in-law Edward Fenton also traded for slaves in Sierra Leone. He was buried at St Nicholas' church in Deptford, which is named after the patron saint of sailors. In the church there is also a statue of William Hawkins who was another slave trader and brother of Sir John Hawkins.

Discussion questions

Deptford Town Hall is now part of Goldsmiths University, and you can still see the statues that celebrate Francis Drake and other seafarers. Do you think the university should acknowledge the links the statues have to Deptford's part in the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade? And if they should, how could the university do this?

In his diary entry, why does John Hawkins refer to the African people (he uses the word 'Negro') as merchandise?

How does it make you feel when you read John Hawkins' diary entry?

John Hawkins and Francis Drake: Useful links

Sir John Hawkins

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/LocalHistoryAndHeritage/People/HawkinsSirJohn.htm>

Adventurers and Slavers

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/early_times/adventurers.htm

The Elizabethan slave trade

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server.php?show=ConNarrative.103&chapterId=2247>

Samuel Pepys



Samuel Pepys by John Hayls

"Ships stocked up with goods from the Red House Stores where the Pepys Estate, named for some reason after the secretary to the Admiralty, now stands."

Benbow, *Blood Sugar*, scene 2

Sources of evidence

- ◆ Samuel Pepys by John Hayls

Local places

- ◆ Pepys Estate, Deptford

Samuel Pepys, who was born in London in 1633, is famous for his diary, which records the details of his life, from 1660 until 1669. His diary shows us that he visited Deptford dockyard frequently because he worked for the Royal Navy. In 1673 he was made Secretary to the Admiralty. Naval ships were sent by the Admiralty

to protect British colonies, particularly in the West Indies where Britain had profitable sugar plantations. Instructions to the naval ships' captains were usually signed by Samuel Pepys.

Samuel Pepys was a shareholder in a company called the Royal Adventurers into Africa, which was set up by London merchants. The company traded with West Africa and transported enslaved Africans in company ships to work on plantations in the West Indies. For those involved, trading people for goods and forcing them to work as slaves on plantations was simply seen as another part of business.

The Pepys Estate in Deptford is named after Samuel Pepys. From 1665 to 1673 he was Surveyor-General of the Victualling. Where the Pepys Estate now stands was the site of the Red House stores, where ships were victualled (stocked with food and other provisions). Records show that the Red House warehouses were also used to store tobacco grown and cut by African slaves, which had been shipped to Deptford from plantations in Jamaica.

In 1742 the Red House stores were rebuilt as the Admiralty Victualling Yard, which supplied the Royal Navy with provisions. Ships biscuits, mustard and chocolate were made here, clothes and rum were stored here and there was a slaughterhouse, where cattle were killed to provide meat for voyages. The yard was rebuilt again after a fire in the 1780s. The gateway to the yard and some of the warehouses and officers' quarters are still standing on the edge of the Pepys Estate. In the nineteenth century the yard was renamed Royal Victoria Victualling Yard, and it finally closed in 1961. The Pepys Estate was opened in 1966.

Discussion questions

When Samuel Pepys invested in the Royal Adventurers into Africa do you think he knew he would be making a profit from slavery?

How did merchants involved in the trade justify making money from enslaved people?

Samuel Pepys: Useful links

The Diary of Samuel Pepys

<http://www.pepysdiary.com/>

The gateway to the former Royal Victoria Victualling Yard, Deptford.

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/conMediaFile.5125/Thethe-gateway-to-the-former-Royal-VictoriaVictualling-Yard-Deptford.html>

A geometrical plan & north east elevation Of His Majesty's Dock-Yard at Deptford

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConMediaFile.674/A-geometrical-plan-amp-north-east-elevation-Of-His-Majestys-DockYard-at-Deptford-with-part-of-the-town.html>

John Evelyn



John Evelyn by Hendrick Van der Borcht

“Vice Admiral John Benbow naval commander. Property owner Hughes Fields Deptford. Lived for a time at John Evelyn’s manor house. Sayes Court. Lost a leg at Port Royal in the battle for Jamaica.”

Benbow, *Blood Sugar*, scene 2

Sources of evidence

- ◆ John Evelyn by Hendrick Van der Borcht
- ◆ John Benbow after Sir Godfrey Kneller

Local places

- ◆ Sayes Court park, Deptford
- ◆ Statue of Peter the Great, Deptford
- ◆ Benbow Street, Deptford
- ◆ Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich

John Evelyn lived in Deptford from 1652 to 1694 in a house called Sayes Court. Like Samuel Pepys he was a famous diarist. He wrote about many different subjects, drew maps of Deptford, and kept plans of his fabulous gardens. The house and grounds were knocked down and built over long ago, but part of the gardens now lies within Sayes Court park.

John Evelyn was an advisor to the king, and in 1671 he joined the Council for Foreign Plantations which was set up to advise King Charles II on how to govern his new colonies (where slaves worked on the plantations). He was also treasurer of the Royal Hospital for Seamen in Greenwich, which is now the Old Royal Naval College and was not far from Sayes Court.

John Evelyn’s wife’s family had been naval administrators for many generations and their home, Sayes Court, was sandwiched between the dockyard and the victualling yards. Because of its convenient location many seafarers stayed at Sayes Court.

John Benbow

Sayes Court was leased to Vice Admiral John Benbow in 1694, although he had his own house in Hughes Fields nearby. (Maps show that Hughes Fields was probably close to where Benbow Street is now). He was a naval officer who fought to defend British colonies in the West Indies. He died in 1702 from a wound

received in battle with the French and was buried in Jamaica. The colonies he was defending were already becoming very profitable for British merchants. They had introduced factory-like sugar plantations to the West Indies, where the labour-intensive work of growing, harvesting and processing sugar cane was done by enslaved Africans.

Tzar Peter I

Also known as Peter the Great, the Tzar of Russia was keen to modernise his country and travelled to Europe in 1697 to study new developments in technology. He visited the Royal Dockyard to learn the latest shipbuilding techniques that were being used there. He stayed Sayes Court during his visit and is reported to have caused a lot of damage by throwing drunken parties there. The statue of Peter the Great near Deptford Creek commemorates his visit to Deptford.

Useful links

Who was John Evelyn?

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/evelynnotes.html>

Sayes Court

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/lewishamheritage/DeptfordAHistoryInPictures/photo#5101944567178477442>

Plan of Sayes Court House and Garden

<http://www.collectbritain.co.uk/personalisation/object.cfm?UID=008AD00078628AU00000000>

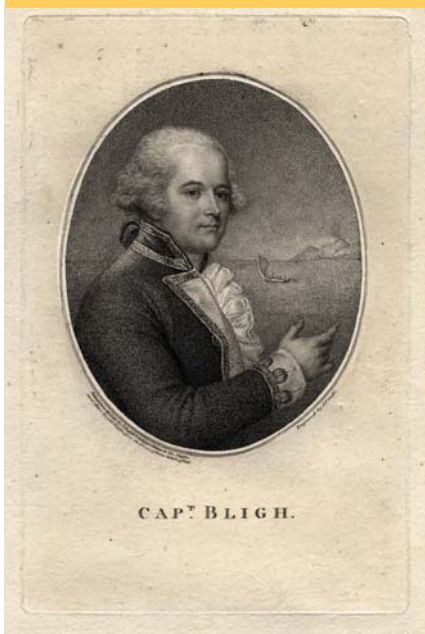
The Royal Hospital for Seamen, Greenwich: ‘A Refuge for All’

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.148/The-Royal-Hospital-for-Seamen-Greenwich-A-Refuge-for-All.html>

Peter the Great

<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.158>

Captain William Bligh



William Bligh by John Condé

"May I submit my diary entry 16th August 1787: 'The King having been graciously pleased to comply with a request from the planters interested in his Majesty's West India possessions, that the bread fruit tree might be introduced into those islands, a vessel proper for the undertaking, was brought, and taken into dock at Deptford, to be provided with the necessary fixtures and preparations for executing the object of the voyage...The ship was named the Bounty: I was appointed to command her on the 16th August 1787'"

Captain Bligh, *Blood Sugar*, scene 2.

Sources of evidence

- ◆ William Bligh by John Condé

Local places

- ◆ Deptford Strand
- ◆ Deptford Creek
- ◆ Lambeth Road, London SE1

Captain William Bligh lived in south London, on what is now Lambeth Road. He went on many botanical voyages – plant-collecting journeys around the world. His first botanical trip is infamous for having come to an unsuccessful end, known as the mutiny on the *Bounty*. But after the mutiny Bligh carried on. In 1791 he set out from Deptford for the South Seas to collect breadfruit trees from Tahiti. He landed 347 trees at Port Royal, Jamaica, in 1793.

At the time David Nelson, the gardener Bligh chose to come on the voyage, wrote in his notes about the pots the crew took to transport the breadfruit plants:

"The pots had been made extra deep for drainage by "Mr. Dalton, potter," near Deptford Creek"

At one time there were many potteries alongside Deptford Creek. Archaeological work at the Art in Perpetuity Trust gallery on Creekside uncovered the remains of a pottery. Although the pieces of pot found during the excavation were made in the nineteenth century, artists at the gallery believe this may have been Dalton's pottery.

Bligh's plan was to grow breadfruits on the plantations in the Caribbean as cheap food for slaves. The breadfruit grew well and became essential part of the diet of the enslaved Africans, along with yam and plantain. By giving slaves food that was cheap to grow, the plantation owners could make a bigger profit. What the enslaved Africans preferred to eat was not taken into consideration. John Stewart recorded in 1808:

"The Negro . . . prefers the cultivation of his more productive and substantial plantain, and his more palatable and nutritive yam."

Discussion question

Do you think slaves refusing to eat breadfruit could have been a successful method of resisting slavery? Why, or why not?

Bligh: Useful links

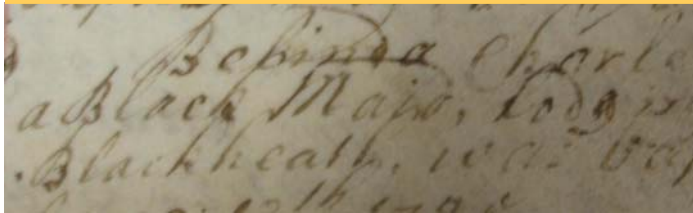
Bounty: a case of preposterous optimism

www.bountyexhibition.org

Resistance to oppression

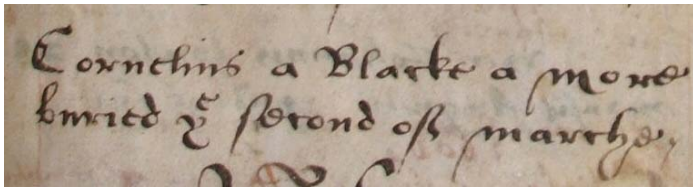
<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/freedom/viewTheme.cfm/theme/resistance>

Black people who lived in South London



Sources of evidence

- ◆ Belinda Charlton's baptism, recorded in the parish register 13th June 1725.
- ◆ Entry in the parish records for 1593 recording the burial of 'Cornelius a Blackamoore'



(Above) Belinda Charlton's baptism, recorded in the parish register 13th June 1725. (Below) Entry in the parish records for 1593 recording the burial of 'Cornelius a Blackamoore'

Local places

- ◆ Royal Naval Collage, Greenwich
- ◆ St Nicholas' church, Deptford
- ◆ St Alfege's Church, Greenwich
- ◆ St Paul's Church, Deptford.

Cornelius

In the sixteenth century, the borough we now call Lewisham was part of an area known as Kentish London. The earliest known record of a black person living there is a record in the parish register of the burial in 1593 of 'Cornelius a Blackamoore' on 2nd March at St Margaret's church in Lee. Black people were often referred to as "Negroes" and "blackamoors" at this time. Unfortunately there is no information in the record about Cornelius's age, his job or his family.

There are no records to show how many black people lived in London in Cornelius's lifetime. The total number of people living in London then is also unknown. Many historians agree that during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the number of black people living in London increased. Historian Steve I Martin has estimated that by the end of the eighteenth century London was home to 10,000 to 15,000 people of African origin, among a total of 800,000 residents.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

From the evidence provided by parish registers we know that many black people lived in and around Deptford in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These records, now held in local archives, show that increasing numbers of black people were baptised or buried at St Nicholas' church and St Paul's church in Deptford; St Margaret's Church in Lee and St Alfege's Church in Greenwich.

In the seventeenth century many black people landed at Deptford when they arrived in Britain. Some may have been brought from the Caribbean to work in London as slaves. British plantation-owners, merchants and naval officers often brought their slaves with them when they returned to from their plantations. For some rich people in London, owning black people as slaves was a way of showing off their wealth, particularly if they had made their money through slavery.

Samuel Pepys, the famous London diarist, wrote in his diary in April 1669: "for a cookmaid, we have... used a blackmoore of Mr. Batelier's, Doll, who dresses our meat mighty well." We do not know any more of Doll's story, but perhaps when she came to London she arrived at Deptford.

Living and working in Deptford

Not all black people who came to London were slaves. Many were free people and some decided to settle in or near Deptford, where the ships they arrived in had landed. Most people of African origin who lived in London had jobs and lived as ordinary members of the working class. Only a few, like Olaudah Equiano, were members of the middle and upper classes. Many black people in London, like many white people, lived in poverty, and there are very few detailed records of their lives. There are very few details of the lives of poor people living in London at this time as most could not write, and so were unable to write diaries, letters or books about their lives.

Belinda Charlton was baptised at St Margaret's church, Lee on 13th June 1725. Her baptism record shows that she was born in 1705, and she was described as a 'black maid lodging at Blackheath'. She was not described as 'servant of' or 'belonging to' someone, which might have been written in the record if she was a slave. In the eighteenth century it was thought that people who were baptized could not be made slaves, and baptism became a sign of being free. So Belinda Charlton may have been a free woman, perhaps working in one of

the large houses owned by wealthy merchants in Lee and Blackheath. From the record in the parish register we do not know Belinda's age, place of origin or when she died.

It is likely that some of the black people living in south London in the eighteenth century had been soldiers. Thousands of Black people who had fought on the side of the British in the American War of Independence in 1776 came to Britain. Slaves who had fought in the war were promised their freedom and a pension. The British government never gave them their pensions, so many were forced to become beggars.

Deptford and Greenwich were home to a lot of people who worked at the dockyards or on board ships. It is likely that many were of African origin. Archaeological excavations at the burial ground at the old Greenwich naval hospital (now the Royal Naval College) showed that two sailors buried there were African. Parish registers show that black mariners were buried at St Paul's church in Deptford. Other archive records show that a black seaman who lived in Deptford led a mutiny on the ship the Zant in 1721, because "*we had too many Officers, and that the work was too hard.*"

As opposition to the slave trade began to grow in the eighteenth century, black people living or working in south London added their voices to the call for abolition.

Discussion questions

Do you think there was one united black community in south London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

Think about the black people in the working and upper classes; the countries black people had lived in before they arrived in London; the black people working as servants or slaves in the houses of wealthy people on Blackheath. Did everyone have the opportunity to meet other black people? Did everyone have things in common?

Useful links

Black and Asian Londoners

http://www.corpoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/lma_learning/schoolmate/Bal/sm_bal.asp

Lewisham Local History: People

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/LocalHistoryAndHeritage/People/>

Merchants and traders in Blackheath



Double portrait of golfer and his caddy on a golf course at Blackheath.

“A slave was as much part of the cargo as the sugar or the rum that they gave their lives for. The sugar was unloaded at Deptford docks for the coffee and tea drinking that had become so popular with the chattering classes. . . British imports from Jamaica alone were worth five times more than those from the American Colonies. Imports from Grenada were worth eight times more than those from Canada.”

Water Slave, Blood Sugar, Scene 3.

Sources of evidence

- ◆ Double portrait of golfer and his caddy on a golf course at Blackheath.
- ◆ An exact survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, with the country near ten miles round.

Local places

- ◆ The Royal Blackheath Golf Club
- ◆ St Alfege’s Church, Greenwich
- ◆ Woodlands House, Greenwich
- ◆ The Manor House, Lee

In the eighteenth century many wealthy businessmen had their London homes in Blackheath. Many were members of The Royal Blackheath Golf Club, thought to be the oldest golf club in Great Britain, and many were closely involved with the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Local historians think the golf course became an ideal place for merchants involved in the slave trade to share ideas and make trading agreements.

Members of the golf club included:

Thomas King, of the largest London-based slave trading firm Camden Calvert and King, who lived in Greenwich. It is said that at one time the company owned one in every five slave ships that sailed from London to Africa

Francis Baring, who in 1796 bought the Manor House, Lee, and is said to have made his first money from dealing in slaves when he was 16. He later founded Barings bank.

Ambrose Crowley, an iron merchant who manufactured iron manacles, shackles and collars used on slave ships. These were used to stop enslaved Africans from fighting back, and to stop them committing suicide by throwing themselves overboard, which some Africans chose to do to escape a life of slavery.

John Julius Angerstein was another Blackheath merchant. He set up Lloyd’s of London to insure slave ships and co-owned plantations in Grenada. He was also a Churchwarden at St Alfege’s church in Greenwich. Inside the church, near the west door there is a memorial stone to him. Woodlands House, on Mycenae Road in Greenwich was built for John Julius Angerstein. It was a large house with grounds, to show off that it was the house of a man made wealthy by slavery.

Discussion question

Why did so many businessmen who were involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade have homes on, or near, Blackheath? Use a map to help you decide.

Merchants and traders: Useful links

Greenwich slavery trail

www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConImageMap.6/Greenwich-slavery-trail.html

Virtual tour of the Black and Asian presence in Greenwich.

https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/journeys/virtual_tour_html/london/greenwich.htm

Manor House, Old Road, Lee

<http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/lewisham/lee/manor-house.htm>

Woodlands, Mycenae Road, Blackheath

<http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/lewisham/blackheath/woodlands.htm>

Ignatius Sancho



“I was bought as a slave for three sisters who lived in Greenwich...They were reading Don Quixote at the time. They called me Sancho, after his slave. And for a Christian name, a name which might have been that of a Roman Senator, I was called Ignatius, Ignatius Sancho. I persuaded them to let me serve as a butler to Lord Montagu at Montagu House in Greenwich Park. It was there I learned to read and write.”

Sancho, *Blood Sugar* Scene 2

Sources of evidence

- ◆ Ignatius Sancho by Francesco Bartolozzi
- ◆ Tobacco-papers for (Ignatius) Sancho’s Best Trinidado
- ◆ A view of Blackheath, depicting Montagu House

Local places

- ◆ Greenwich Park

Ignatius Sancho by Francesco Bartolozzi

Ignatius Sancho was born on board a slave ship to Grenada in 1729. His mother died soon after he was born. Ignatius Sancho was probably two years old when he was brought to England. He was given as a gift to three sisters who lived in Greenwich, who kept him like a pet. Eventually he ran away from his owner’s home, like many slaves did at that time. London’s newspapers were full of adverts for the return of runaway slaves and many runaway slaves were helped by ordinary people living in London.

By chance Ignatius Sancho met the Duke of Montagu, and went to live and work as a butler in his home, Montagu House. Montagu House was knocked down in 1815, but there is a plaque to Ignatius Sancho on the remaining wall of the house on the edge of Greenwich Park, next to the Ranger’s House. The Duke and Duchess of Montagu encouraged Ignatius Sancho to be independent and get an education. While he lived at Montagu House he taught himself to read and write. We know about his life because he was able to write, unlike many people living in England in the eighteenth century.

In 1773 he opened a grocery shop in Westminster with money from the Duke and Duchess. His business was successful, and, because he was wealthy and owned property, he had the right to vote (which few men and no women had). He is the first known African man to vote in England.

Ignatius Sancho also composed music and wrote letters. He exchanged letters with many famous Londoners, including Dr Samuel Johnson. He died in 1780 and a book *The Letters of Ignatius Sancho, An African* was

published in 1782. It was an instant hit and became a best seller. Ignatius Sancho did not have a large role in the abolition movement, in fact his shop sold sugar and tobacco produced by slaves. But his writing was used as evidence to support the campaign to end slavery. His best-selling books, like the books written by other black writers at the time, helped to change British peoples ideas about African people and raised awareness of the terrible treatment of enslaved people.

Historical geographer Caroline Bressey believes that Ignatius Sancho was an important person for those who campaigned for the abolition of slavery because he was an inspiring example of what could be achieved with a free life. Ignatius Sancho’s book *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho*, an African is still printed today.

You can read extracts from books written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by black men and women who had been slaves, including Olaudah Equiano, Mary Prince and Harriet Jacobs, in *Unheard Voices* by Malorie Blackman.

Discussion questions

Do you think Ignatius Sancho played a significant role in the movement for the abolition of slavery? What do you think his aims were, as a writer and as a businessman?

Sancho: Useful links

Ignatius Sancho: An African man of letters

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConFactFile.37/Ignatius-Sancho.html>

Ignatius Sancho

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/SLAsancho.htm>

Growing opposition to the Slave Trade: Ignatius Sancho

http://www.npg.org.uk/live/abo_tr_23.asp

Young runaway slaves

http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/whats_on/exhibitions/young_runaway_slaves/index.html

Olaudah Equiano



Olaudah Equiano, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

I was about to be set free in Deptford. I heard the ship weigh anchor just as the tide turned . . . we came alongside of a ship which was going away the next tide for the West Indies; her name was the Charming Sally, Captain James Doran; and my master went on board and agreed with him for me.”

Equiano, *Blood Sugar*, scene 3.

Sources of evidence

- ◆ Frontispiece The Interesting Narrative of the Life of O. Equiano

Local places

- ◆ Deptford Strand
- ◆ Maze Hill, Greenwich

Olaudah Equiano was a black abolition campaigner who lived in London in the eighteenth century. His book of his life story tells us that he was an Igbo from West Africa, captured by slavers and taken to Barbados when he was about twelve. His book tells us that he worked as a slave on Royal Navy ships, and on plantations in the Caribbean. He described arriving at Deptford on his master's ship: He thought he would be free, but he was sold to another captain. His master took his only coat, and Olaudah Equiano hid his money before his master could take that too. Although his shipmates said they would return for him, his master and the crew went back to the ship and sailed away without him. In his book he wrote:

“When they were out of sight I threw myself on the deck, with a heart ready to burst with sorrow and anguish”

Equiano worked as a trader for a plantation owner in the Caribbean. He was able to do a little extra trading and make some money for himself, eventually buying his freedom. When he returned to London a free man, he began to campaign for the abolition of slavery. Records show that in 1755 and 1770 Olaudah Equiano stayed at the home of the Guerin sisters, in Maze Hill, Greenwich. It is thought that they helped him learn to read and write.

Equiano wrote his life story in 1789. It described his kidnapping, the terrible conditions on slave ships and his work as a slave. Some historians now think that the book is not accurate. (There are many arguments about whether he was born in Africa or America. You can read about this on Brycchan Carey's website). But at the time the book came out, people believed it was accurate and thousands of copies were sold. He toured the country to promote the book and it became important evidence in the campaign to abolish slavery.

With at least ten other former slaves, Equiano formed the “Sons of Africa.” Ottobah Cugoana, another African writer who had once been a slave, was a member. They visited parliament and

campaigns for abolition through public speaking and letter-writing campaigns. They supported other abolition campaigners such as Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp, who Equiano knew well. It was Olaudah Equiano who brought the story of the Liverpool slave ship the Zong to Granville Sharp's attention. You can read more about the Zong massacre on the Understanding Slavery website.

In 1786 he was employed as a commissioner in a government project that was supported by Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson. The aim of the project was to send poor black people from London to settle in Sierra Leone. Around 400 people boarded ships at Deptford to start a new life in West Africa. But Olaudah Equiano found out that the shipping agent was taking supplies intended for the settlers and spoke out against this. He left before the expedition set sail and the project was a disaster. You can find out more about the Sierra Leone settlement on the LMA website.

Olaudah Equiano died in 1801, six years before the Transatlantic Slave Trade was abolished.

Discussion questions

Do you think Olaudah Equiano played a significant role in achieving the abolition of slavery? Why or why not?

Do you think it matters if his book was not accurate?

Equiano: Useful links

The Equiano Project

www.equiano.org

Equiano's account of being sold (sound file)

<http://www.understandingslavery.com/learningresources/results/?id=1827>

Brycchan Carey's website about Olaudah Equiano

www.brycchancarey.com/equiano

Portcities: Olaudah Equiano (1745 - 1797)

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConFactFile.38>

Understanding Slavery: The Case of the Zong

<http://www.understandingslavery.com/learningresources/results/?id=1846>

LMA: The “Black Poor” and the Sierra Leone Colony

http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/corporation/lma_learning/schoolmate/Bal/sm_bal_timeline_detail.asp?ID=15

Joseph Hardcastle



Thomas Clarkson
by Carl Frederik von Breda

“Africa, that much injured country . . . it has been visited by Europeans, not for the friendly purpose of a communication of benefits, but to carry on a commerce which invariably inflicts on its inhabitants the wounds of slavery and death.”

Joseph Hardcastle – a quote from his memoir. *Blood Sugar*, scene 4.

Sources of evidence

- ◆ Granville Sharp
- ◆ Thomas Clarkson by Carl Frederik von Breda

Local places

- ◆ Sainsbury’s, New Cross Gate

Joseph Hardcastle was a merchant, born in 1752, died in 1819. He owned Hatcham House, a large manor house and park near Deptford. In 1869 Hatcham House was demolished, and Sainsbury’s, New Cross Gate now stands on the site of the house.

Joseph Hardcastle campaigned for the abolition of slavery, and was friends with many abolition campaigners. He exchanged letters with William Wilberforce over many years about issues such as the treatment of slaves in the West Indies. He put handcuffs, shackles, and thumbscrews used on African slave ships on display in Hatcham House, and the house became a meeting place for abolitionists. Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson were often guests at Hatcham House. Thomas Clarkson wrote some of his book *The History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* while staying there.

Like many abolition campaigners, Thomas Clarkson was a Quaker. (The Quakers, or the Society of Friends, is a religious organisation that is not part of the Church of England. Quakers believe all people are equal before God). In 1787 he set up the **Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade** with Granville Sharp and several other Quakers. They asked William Wilberforce, MP for Hull, to become the group’s representative in Parliament. Clarkson worked hard to raise awareness of the Committee. He travelled around England’s ports, including Deptford, to promote the cause and find out about the workings of the slave trade.

Granville Sharp, a founding member of the Abolition Committee, is also said to have been a regular visitor at Hatcham House. Granville Sharp has been described as a “pamphleteer, pioneer, anti slavery campaigner, musician and eccentric.” In 1783 Olaudah Equiano brought him the news of the slave ship *Zong*. More than a hundred African slaves had been thrown overboard from this ship in an effort to claim insurance money. Granville Sharp tried to have those responsible put on trial for murder. He failed but he raised awareness of the scandal and generated public outrage. It was not until 1796 that an English court ruled that enslaved

Africans could no longer be treated as nothing but merchandise - goods to be bought and sold.

You can read essays, pamphlets and books written by Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp on AntiSlavery International’s Recovered Histories website. Some of them may have been written while they were staying at Hatcham House.

Discussion question

Joseph Hardcastle is not as well known today as many of the people he campaigned against slavery with. Why do you think some campaigners became more famous than others?

Hardcastle, Sharp and Clarkson: Useful links

Hatcham House

<http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/lewisham/new-cross/hatcham-house-1842-01.htm>

Recovered Histories

www.recoveredhistories.org

Britain and the Slave Trade, Granville Sharp

http://www.npg.org.uk/live/abo_tr_20.asp

Historic figures: Granville Sharp

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/sharp_granville.shtml

Granville Sharp

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/REsharp.htm

Growing opposition to the Slave Trade: Thomas Clarkson

http://www.npg.org.uk/live/abo_tr_27.asp

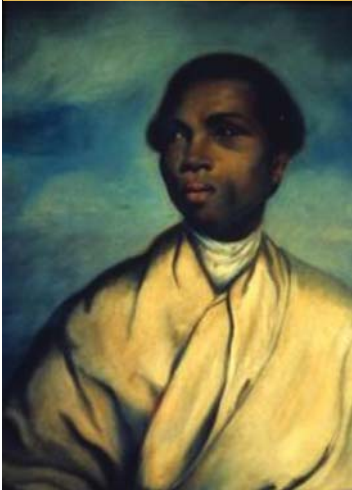
Thomas Clarkson’s African Box

http://slavetrade.parliament.uk/slavetrade/assetviews/objects/thomas_clarksonsafricanbox.html

Wilberforce and Pitt

<http://www.bromley.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1B27750C-F8CD-407F-AF16-D5798FECE9B7/0/MuseumEducationPackHiddenHistory.pdf>

Francis Barber



Sources of evidence

- ◆ Portrait of a Man, said to be Francis Barber

Local places:

- ◆ Deptford Strand

Francis Barber was born a slave in Jamaica in 1745 (although this date is not certain). He was brought to England by Richard Bathurst, who had him baptized and gave him the name we know him by. Richard Bathurst paid for Francis Barber to go to school, which many people living in England could not afford. It was very rare for enslaved people to be given an education. When Richard Bathurst died, Francis Barber was freed. In 1752 he went to Holborn to work as a servant to Dr Samuel Johnson, who is famous for writing the first English Dictionary.

Francis Barber ran away to Deptford to join the navy on 7 July 1758, but later he returned. He became Dr Johnson's trusted servant and secretary. Some said he was more like a son to Dr Johnson than a servant. One story is that Dr Johnson would not let Francis Barber go out to buy food for the cat, as he felt that "it was not good to employ human beings in the service of animals."

Dr Johnson hated slavery. He admired the slaves in the Caribbean who rebelled against the plantation owners. At a dinner party he once made a toast to "the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies."

When he died, Dr Johnson left most of his estate to Francis Barber in his will, to be paid as a steady income of £70 per year (a lot of money in those days). At least 13 different newspapers and magazines reported this story. Francis Barber was married to an English woman and the inheritance allowed Francis Barber to move his family to Lichfield in Staffordshire. He died there in 1801.

Discussion question

Why do you think Francis Barber chose to stay in England after Samuel Johnson died?

Why do you think the news of Francis Barber's inheritance from Dr Johnson was reported in the papers?

Francis Barber: Useful links

Black roots: Francis Barber

http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/immig_emig/england/stoke_staffs/article_1.shtml

A Virtual Tour of the Black and Asian Presence, 1500 - 1850

http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/journeys/virtual_tour_html/london/holborn.htm

Dr Johnson's House

<http://www.drjohnsonshouse.org/history.htm>

Women in South London who campaigned for abolition

“The sugar boycott was the idea of groups of women making their first foray into politics who would have no truck with mere abolition of the trade. Women’s groups demanded emancipation.”

Quaker woman, *Blood Sugar*, scene 4.

Sources of evidence

- ◆ The Lee Petition 1814
- ◆ Reasons For Using East India Sugar
- ◆ Blue glass sugar bowl
- ◆ Antislavery wool work picture
- ◆ Pin cushion

Local places

- ◆ Lee

In 1814 Lady Palliser and Lydia, daughter of Lord Edgcumbe, were among the forty people who lived in Lee who signed the Lee Petition. The petition was part of a campaign organized by a group of Quakers, the Friends of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, to make France abolish their slave trade. (The British slave trade, though not slavery itself, had been abolished in 1807).

It is likely that there were more women who had strong feelings about the Transatlantic Slave Trade living in Kentish London (which is what the area we now call the borough of Lewisham was then called). The abolition campaign was the first political campaign in which women played a leading role, even though they did not have the right to vote. Although at the time people thought women should not get involved in politics, women across the county set up a network of women’s abolitionist societies and associations. They campaigned for the end not only of the trade in enslaved people, but for slavery to be ended immediately and all slaves to be freed (emancipated).

One woman abolition campaigner wrote: *“Men may propose only gradually to abolish the worst of crimes and only mitigate the most cruel bondage, but why should we countenance such enormities? We must not talk of gradually abolishing murder, licentiousness, cruelty, tyranny...I trust no Ladies Association will ever be found with such words attached to it”.*

By the early 1830s there were seventy-three women’s organisations across Britain, campaigning against slavery. This included women’s anti-slavery associations in Camberwell, Peckham and Southwark. In 1828 the Peckham Ladies African and Anti Slavery Association printed an article setting out Reasons for using East India Sugar. The article encouraged readers to boycott West Indian sugar, which was produced by enslaved people, and buy instead sugar from India that had not been produced by slave labour.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was usually women who controlled household budgets and ran the family home. Although they could not vote, they were able to take the decision not to buy sugar



Antislavery wool work picture

produced by slaves. In the eighteenth century sugar was Britain’s biggest import, used to sweeten tea, coffee, chocolate, puddings and jam. Historian Adams Hochschild has estimated that during the sugar boycotts over half a million people in Britain stopped buying sugar and grocers recorded huge drops in sales. The boycotts helped to raise awareness and increase the momentum of the abolition campaign, giving women, children and men who were not wealthy enough to have the vote the opportunity to take political action.

Discussion questions

Can you think of any present day examples of boycotts, or people using consumer power to make a political point? Do you think it works? Why or why not?

There are no records of a women’s anti-slavery organisation in Deptford. Why do you think this might be?

Why do you think people who were not allowed to be part of political life became the most fervent campaigners for the abolition of slavery?

Women’s campaigns: Useful links

Understanding slavery: women and campaigning

<http://www.understandingslavery.com/citizen/explore/activism/topics/?id=1022>

Women’s Anti-Slavery Associations

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/REslaveryW.htm>

The Sugar Boycott: a dramatisation (sound file)

<http://slavetrade.parliament.uk/slavetrade/assetviews/sounds/thesugarboycott.html;jsessionid=E7E8B40BC53D5B42A994100A931ED8E8>

Sugar, tea and coffee - staples of English life

<http://slavetrade.parliament.uk/slavetrade/history/parliamentsugarandtheslavetrade2/sugarandtheslavetrade.html>