

Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act 1807-2007

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the passing of an Act of Parliament which outlawed the transportation of slaves but which did not end slavery itself in the British colonies. It did however mark the point at which Britain transformed itself into an international campaigner against the trade. A long campaign led by abolitionists including William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson met with success with the Emancipation Act of 1833 when slavery was finally abolished.



Locally Joseph Priestley was prominent in the anti-slavery movement both in Britain and the Americas whilst Richard Oastler campaigned against "Yorkshire Slavery" – the term used to describe working conditions in mills and factories across the region.

Commemorations and celebrations are taking place at regional and national scale where many communities are taking the opportunity to address inequalities and tackle discrimination in Britain.

Black History month in October will provide further opportunities to celebrate the vibrant culture of local African and Caribbean culture in Kirklees. Visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/blackhistorymonth for details.

There is historical evidence which shows the existence of both anti-slavery campaigners and advocates of the slave trade in Kirklees.



In support of the Anti-Slavery Campaign

Olaudah Equiano

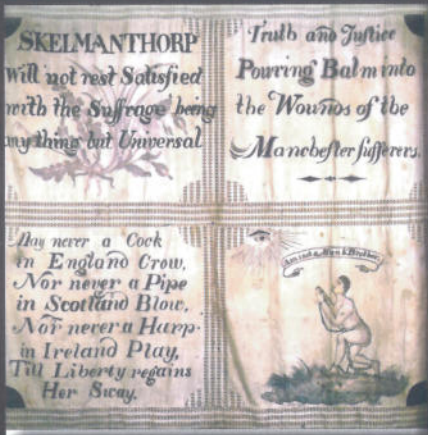
Susannah Atkinson, whose family owned Bradley Mills in Huddersfield, and who lived in Dalton wrote a letter to Gustavus Vassa on 29 March 1791 apologising for some of the treatment he had received in the area. Vassa, also known as Olaudah Equiano, was a prominent Black figure in the abolition movement and a much respected figure in England. He wrote a letter to the Leeds Mercury in April 1791 thanking the Atkinson family and others for purchasing copies of his autobiography and giving support to him.

Huddersfield Parish Church

Henry Venn, vicar of Huddersfield parish church from 1759 to 1771, was a prolific writer and many people travelled to hear him speak. He was also a great friend of John Wesley, another person very much opposed to slavery, and it was Venn who invited Wesley to preach at the parish church at a time when Wesley was meeting a lot of opposition to his preaching.

Anti-slavery campaigner – Thomas Jeffery

Thomas Jeffrey made the 5000 mile voyage to the West Indies to preach and to fight for the rights of those still kept in slavery after the trade was abolished. He then returned to Britain, moving to the Heavy Woollen area in 1862 where he served as a Methodist minister in Birstall and Batley. Thomas Jeffery is buried in Batley Cemetery.



The Skelmanthorpe Flag

A banner believed to have been made in Radcliffe Street Skelmanthorpe was donated to Huddersfield's Tolson Museum in 1924. Found in an abandoned mill in 1884 the Skelmanthorpe Flag may well have been a reaction to Manchester's Peterloo Massacre in 1819.

One panel of the banner shows what had become the logo of the Abolition movement - a kneeling man in chains with his hands raised in prayer accompanied by the words, "Am I not a Man and Brother". However here the man is depicted as a white European.

Local connections with Slavery

The Mills in Batley

The Kirklees connection with slavery seems to have extended beyond the people who lived in the big houses. On a tour of the Yorkshire textile districts in 1849 Angus Bethune Reach observed: "In Batley I went over two shoddy [cloth made from woollen waste] establishments - the Bridge Mill and the Albion Mill. In both of these rags were not only ground, but the shoddy was worked up into coarse bad cloth, a great proportion of which is sent to America for slave clothing."

Extract from a booklet called The Yorkshire Textile District in 1849 ed. C Aspin 1974.

The Batts of Oakwell Hall

In the late 1630s, several members of the Batt family of Oakwell Hall in Birstall went to seek their fortunes in the 'New World'. Settling in Virginia, they undertook many business ventures, some becoming plantation owners.

Transcripts from the wills of members of the Batt family record several references to slaves.

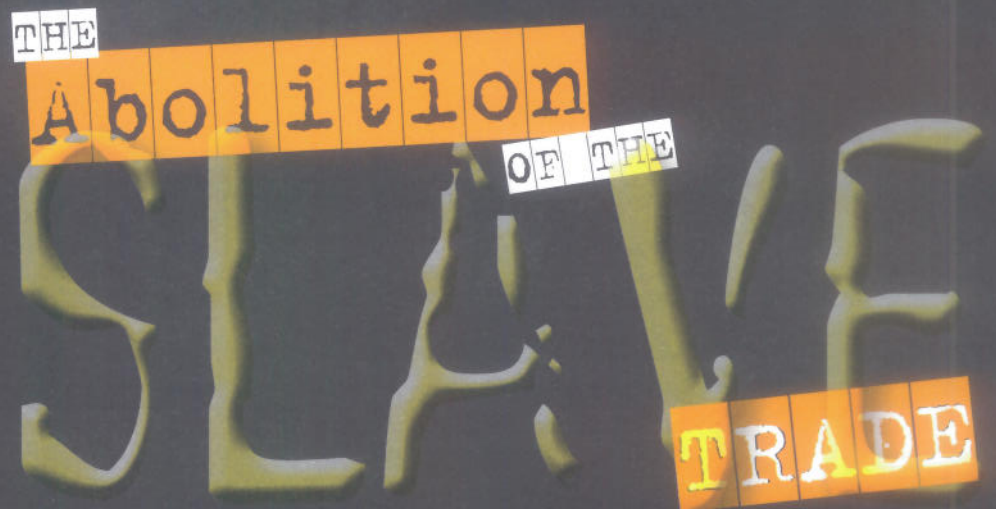
- 'Jack', the Negro slave of Thomas Batt was given his freedom at Christmas in a will dated March 1684.

- The will of Henry Batt dated 1727 states "My loving Mother, Mary Batt, to have the use of my two negro men Roger and Tom for her life", whilst his brother, William Batt was to receive "all my lands and negroes and all the remaining part of my estate in Virginia and England."

Baptism at Kirkheaton

On November 2nd 1782 Richard Henry Beaumont's Ethiopian servant from the west coast of Guinea was baptised Daniel Whitley at Kirkheaton.

Links between Yorkshire and Jamaica are the focus of some research currently being undertaken by Kirklees Council. During the period 1822 - 1832 the 33rd Regiment of Foot, recruited from West Yorkshire, was stationed in Jamaica. At the end of the tour 142 men chose to remain in Jamaica in a town now called Huddersfield. Some of these men may have originated from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, and given the town its name. The regiment later became known as 'The 33rd (or The Duke of Wellington's) Regiment' - soldiers from this area are still being recruited to the regiment.



PROFILING
BLACK CULTURE

Title	Date/Time	Cost	Contact	Details
Procession around Deighton Centre Campus	Saturday 30 th June 12.30 – 7pm	Free	Howard Belafonte Tel: 07748459505 howardbelafonte@btconnect.com	The traditional Carnival procession around the Deighton Ward. This family orientated event brings the whole of the Deighton Ward and surrounding areas together to celebrate the diversity of the area.
Kirklees Official Commemoration Bicentenary of Abolition of The Slave Trade - Kirklees Civic Sunday	1 st July 2007 at 3pm - Huddersfield Parish Church	Free	Mayor's Office Tel: 01484 221905	Kirklees Civic Sunday will take the shape of a service with a presentation by historic characters with local connections known for their work in the campaign to abolish the slave trade; including Equiano, Mrs Susannah Atkinson, Richard Oastler and John Newton.
Huddersfield Carnival King and Queen Show	13 th July 2007 8pm Huddersfield Town Hall	£6.00	Liz Thomas 01484-226384 elizabeth.thomas@kirklees.gov.uk www.huddersfieldcarnival.com	A carnival mass costume showcase/competition to elect The Annual Junior and Senior King and Queen Costumes.
Huddersfield Carnival Procession	Saturday 14 July 1pm-8pm	Free	Liz Thomas 01484 226384 www.huddersfieldcarnival.com	Starts at the Hudawi Centre, and weaves through the town centre in a wash of colour, sound and community fulfilment to Greenhead Park where the entertainment lasts from 12noon-8pm
Huddersfield Carnival Last Lap Dance	14/15 July 10pm-4am	£10 in advance	Liz Thomas 01484 226384 www.huddersfieldcarnival.com	The highlight of the carnival with main attraction artist Ajamu.
Emancipation Day Discussion	1 st August 2007 7pm Hudawi Cultural Centre	Free	George Matheson 01484-412494 george.matheson@kirklees.gov.uk www.kirklees.gov.uk	Four local presentations on what Emancipation Day means to the speakers personally and what it means to the future of the black community locally.
Jamaica National Independence Cultural Festival Church Service	Sunday 5 th August 10am - 12.30 pm Great Northern Street New Testament Church of God	Free	Mrs. Flowers 01484-427211	The Jamaica National Independence Annual Church Service, which will focus on Slavery to Emancipation. There will be a keynote address by a high profile minister, along with local choirs.
Jamaica National Independence Cultural Festival Procession	Sunday 5 th August 1pm	Free	Mrs. Flowers 01484-427211	The parade leaves the Hudawi Cultural Centre and makes its way to Pavilion Park in Fartown. Last year's parade involved over 2000 people of different nationalities and this year could be even bigger.
Jamaica National Independence Cultural Festival in the Park	Sunday 5 th August 2pm Fartown Pavilion Park	Free	Mrs. Flowers 01484-427211	The Jamaica National Independence Cultural Festival is a memorable cultural diverse community festival/community celebrations.
Where did I come from? Tracing slave ancestry - an audience with Paul Crooks.	Saturday 13 October Light Reading Room at Huddersfield Library 10.30 - 12.30pm and 1 - 3.30pm.	Free No group bookings.	Local Studies Library 01484 221965 www.kirklees.gov.uk/blackhistorymonth	Hear the fascinating story of how author Paul Crooks discovered his ancestral links to the slave trade. Paul will speak about his book 'Ancestors' and will be available to offer advice for people wishing to undertake similar research.

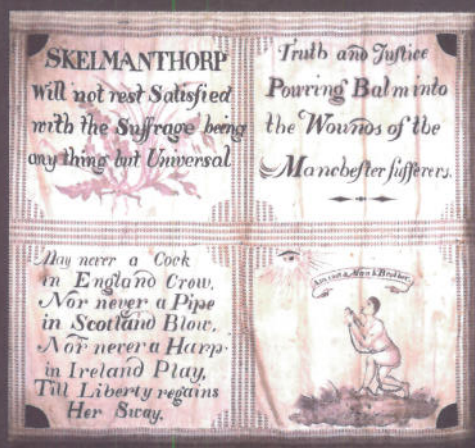
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Celebrating the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade gives us the opportunity to reflect on the past and celebrate the richness of the diverse population in Kirklees.

The presence of black people in Kirklees can be traced back through the centuries. This year, there will be a series of events which celebrate African and Caribbean culture as well as commemorating the abolition of the slave trade.