

Redbridge Museum

An exhibition about the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade and its links to Redbridge

16 October – 15 December 2007

Text panels

Much of the generic text is taken from the www.understandingslavery.com website which provide the titles for the different sections of the exhibition

Images used throughout

Framed images of objects, prints etc are taken from the National Maritime Museum's 'Freedom' KS3 resource pack

Introduction

- What is and isn't in the exhibition
- Why Anniversary is being commemorated in 2007
- How the subject is related to Redbridge
- Using Understanding Slavery website as main source

The subject of slavery has come to prominence in recent years in part due to 'history from below' approach popular since 1970s which recognises BME history, inequalities in British empire, working class history etc. Due to the diverse nature of the UK today, people from an African-Caribbean background, in particular, are demanding to know more about their heritage and the links between the UK and slavery. The government has also recently recognised the importance of highlighting these histories to support community cohesion.

2) Triangular Trade

a) Dockside scene with duckboards, ropes etc showing raw products with barrels of rum and molasses, rolls of cotton, large hessian sacks of sugar and rice etc. Display boxes with coffee, sugar, Tobacco twist (Replica Warehouse) and Cotton bols (Replica Warehouse)

b) Products sold in Africa to buy slaves – display case

C18th replica musket		RMS purchase - Battlecraft
Manilla		RMS purchase – Replica Warehouse
Manilla	Loan	Newham
Replica glass beads		RMS purchase
Cowrie shells		

Graphic panel about the Trade from Enfield Museum Service

c) C18th dining room set with wallpapered background

One barley twist high-backed (and quite ornate) chair - oak and possibly elm (original)	Loan	Newham Heritage Service
One small oak chest of drawers	Loan	As above
One small round occasional table (repro)		As above
Blue and white china tea-set (teapot, cups etc)		As above
One pair of blue and white vases		As above
Three pewter candle wall sconces		As above
Clay tobacco pipes		As above
Replica Regency lady's dress		Islington Education Artefacts Library
Sugar cone		Replica Warehouse
Sugar nippers		RMS
Sugar tongs		RMS
Candle holder		RMS
Products of slavery labelled e.g coffee, cocoa, sugar, replica cakes, rum, tobacco		RM

Reference to 'The Redbridge Connection': West India Docks – Mellish of Harts House and Alexander Stewart

3) Beginnings

West African history

West African objects

Ghanian mask		Islington Education Artefacts Library
Ghanian stool		Islington EAL
Ghanian bag		Islington EAL
Map of West Africa		RMS
Kente shirt		Nana, Central Library Security Guard from Ghana

John Ananywu, Nigerian – from BHM exhibition 06

Contacts via Redbridge CVS or Redbridge Faith Forum or LBR staff

Peter Musgrave (former CVS) has links with Ghanians at Vine Church

4) Middle Passage

Display case

Slave neck yoke		RMS purchase Replica Warehouse
Manacles		RMS purchase Replica Warehouse
Cat o' 3 tails whip		RMS purchase Replica Warehouse

Runaway slave notice

Capture of slave images

5) Slavery

Include contextual information about slavery – eg in Rome, Greece, Egypt, Africa

Large blow up photo of field of sugar cane with reproduction sugar cane

Machete in display case – EAA loan?

Negro spiritual soundtrack?

Reference to 'The Redbridge Connection'

a) the Black presence in Redbridge – Wanstead House, Woodford parish registers

b) plantation owners – Bosanquets of Leyton; Alexander Stewart; Josiah Child

Resistance and Rebellion

6) The Redbridge Connection

Alexander Stewart lived at Grove House (now called Elmhurst), South Woodford High Road from 1822 until death in 1857. According to a family story passed to Museum by Georgina Green, a Redbridge local historian, he owned plantations in Jamaica and received compensation when slavery abolished.

The Museum contacted the Jamaica Archives who recommended a local researcher, Dalea Bean. Through her research and research by the RMS Manager at the The National Archives, Kew, this was confirmed.

At London Metropolitan Archives street directories, Alexander Stewart listed as merchant living at 5 Finsbury Square in 1816, then with Isaac Westmoreland, merchants at Winchester House, [Old] Broad Street between 1823 – 1860. Also in the building were merchants, solicitor, silk brokers, a Mail Steam Packet Company [shipping], banks.

In 1861, at his address, the executors of Stewart's will are listed at 36 St Mary's at Hill, London. Winchester House, 96-104 Old Broad Street demolished in 1965.

Display

Documents showing conveyance of land from A. Stewart in Jamaica, 1854		Jamaica Archives
Documents showing slave owners compensation claim 1835		National Archives
Map of South Woodford		Local Studies
2 Prints of Grove Hall		Essex Record Office
A.Stewart will		TNA
Print of Caledonian church where buried		Islington

b) Josiah Child, lived at Wanstead House, Governor of East India Company. A document from 1670 in the Jamaica Archives appears to be related to a plantation he may have owned. Also investor in the Royal African Company created in 1672.

Display

Documents related to land in Jamaica, 1670		Jamaica Archive
Patent, Jamaica, 1670		Jamaica Archive
Will of JC		National Archives
Photo of tomb at Wanstead		RMS
Photo print of JC		RMS
Photo of drawings of Wanstead House		RMS
Photo of JC's Baronetcy		ERO

Other Royal Africa Company links with Redbridge?

c) Black servants at Wanstead House shown in John Francis Nollekins portrait '*Music Party at Wanstead House*' c.1730ish -17 48' [copy print]

Presumably showing Richard Child who inherited Wanstead House in 1704 and had it until death in 1750. RC rebuilt Wanstead House 1715 – 20.

Display

Photo of the painting		Longleat House slide
Photo of the black servant		As above
Image of Wanstead House at this time		RMS

d) Peter Mellish was the brother of William Mellish (1774-1834 - who rebuilt Harts House in 1815, became MP for Middx). Peter, a shipbuilder and victualling contractor to Royal Navy, invested £5000 in the West India Dock company who built the Docks from 1799 - 1803. This helped to increase his wealth he sold land (Georgina states this but not sure where evidence is for this) upon which part of the West India Docks were built. A few more details but nothing significant gleaned from visit by Gerard to Museum in Docklands to see records of West India Dock Company.

Display

Photo of West India Docks – scan from MoL print in the Museum		
Image of Harts House before being rebuilt in 1815 – used in Timezone display		RMS

e) Photographs of baptismal entries in **Woodford** church – *“Charles Novo, a black at Mr Lanckstons 1695 and a George Pomey, a black at Madam Bettons 1699”*. Burials include *“Mingo, a blackamore belonging to Widow Johnson buried in woollen 1679.”*

At Wanstead there is a 1698 entry for *“Onosimus, Sir Ceasar Child’s blackboy.”* [info from Woodford Historical Society newsletter Spring 2007]

Display

Photos of the above		E.R.O
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f) The **Bosanquet family** of Leyton owned a plantation called Layton [sic] in Jamaica. The National Maritime Museum own a manacle with his details listed on it. The manacle will be displayed at the NMM Museum in 2007.

Photo of this from NMM teacher’s pack

g) Redbridge Local Studies have issue of Essex Review, volume 27 (1918) page 151, which mentions a newspaper of 1711 (doesn't state which one) with an advert:

Woodford. *Tho. Smith a well set black man, lank black hair, much pock broken, about five foot a half high, about 30 years of age, born at Watford, Hertfordshire, went away from his master **Tho. Bekford of Woodford, Essex,** Cordwiner [occupation], on Friday the 17th inst and robbing him of money out of his said masters drawers. Whoever discovers the said Tho. Smith and gives notice to Tho. Bekford aforesaid, or to Mr. Welsh at the Talbot in White Chappel, so that he may be apprehended shall have 10s. reward.*

h) Mention again that the products of slavery in many Redbridge homes – cotton, sugar, rum, coffee, spices,

i) East India Company – before 1700, South Asian cloth (called 'Guinea cloth') imported by EIC. It was then sold into Africa to buy slaves. Lots of Redbridge links with EIC, although mostly mid C18th onwards.

[Also St Helena colonised by EIC and they imported West African slaves, amongst others – see article on gdrive]

However, after 1700, imports of Indian cloth were banned from Britain to protect the British silk and wool ('fustian') weavers. A British weaver trade was created, first in cottages then factories during the C18th in Lancashire and Manchester. These cities took slave cotton from US and wove into finished cloth. By 1770, 90% of cloth produced in Britain was exported. During C19th as Britain expanded into India, it flooded the country with cheap cotton cloth, so de-industrialising the Indian cloth trade by undercutting it. In 1861-4 there was a 'Cotton famine' in weaving towns as US cotton disrupted by US Civil War.

7) Abolition

Portrait of Elizabeth Fry		Newham Heritage framed print
Portrait of William Clarkson		Newham Heritage framed print
Portrait of Olaudah Equiano		Newham Heritage framed print
Penguin edition of <i>The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings</i> by Equiano Olaudah		RMS
Portrait of Luke Howard		Newham Heritage framed print

8) Emancipation

9) Legacy / After Slavery and beyond

TV - Understanding Slavery DVD

Uncle Tom Cabin slides		Newham
Uncle Tom Cabin book		Newham
Negro head clay pipe		Newham
Negro Music score		RMS
Gollywog?		Pat – Local Studies
Flag of Ghana		Nana
Ghana 50 th t shirt		Nana

- C19th and C20th racism against Black people? – postcards?
- Growth of formal British Empire during 1800s although this a political and ideological as well as economic impulse (unlike slavery)
- Later migration to UK from Caribbean and Africa in C20th – Suitcase Stories
- African and Caribbean independence from 1950s – flag of Ghana from Islington
- Cultural legacy in Afro-Caribbean life – Pan-Africanism, blues, gospel, jazz, reggae, Harlem Renaissance, Carnival – CDs, books, posters?
- Modern UK diverse culture – CDs, books, posters?
- Current problems in Africa – newspapers?
- How 200th Anniversary has been commemorated in UK in 2007 – posters, leaflets of exhibitions, newspaper articles
- Government magazine on slavery
- Anything from Melting Pot BHM fashion event?
- Kenneth Williams – painting of Equiano Olaudah and other Jamaican freedom fighter; painting of his Great Uncle
- Leaflets from Anti-Slavery international

- Newham Heritage Services - did slavery exhibition at Stratford Town Hall, Spring 2007 – cotton balls, Uncle Tom's Cabin book and lantern slides, tobacco roll, C19 clay pipes with black boy design, replica 'Runaway Slave' notices, hemp whip, iron leg shackles, Wedgewood replica china abolitionist, Gilray engraving of Jamaica, Tate and Lyle sugar nippers, sugarloaf, cane, cutless, blunderbuss, Bow porcelain with black woman design