

# Celebrating Black Lives and Black Brilliance in Brent Learning Resource

Brent Museum and Archives offer a wide range of resources including workshops, handling sessions, loans boxes, YouTube videos and PDFs to support you and your learners in a range of topics. Check out our <u>schools pages</u> and our <u>online learning resources page</u> for more of our resources. Join our schools mailing list here. You can visit our <u>website</u> and explore our <u>online catalogue</u> for details for exhibitions, events and to search for material relating to your local area.

The images in this pack support our <u>Celebrating Black Lives and Black Brilliance in Brent video</u>



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# Introduction

#### Aims of the video and resource

- To explore the experiences of black people in Brent in the past
- To help learners explore different ways to learn about black lives in the past including archival records, photographs, books and interviews
- To celebrate the achievements of members of the black community in Brent
- To mark the coming together of Brent council leaders with members of the black community in Brent to listen to concerns, ideas and to create a plan to improve the lives of black people in Brent
- To mark the death of George Floyd and to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter campaign

#### Learning outcomes for the video and resource

- Learners will understand how we can use living memory to understand how black people lived in the past and some of the issues that they face including racism
- Learners will be able to describe some of the different ways that we can learn about the experiences of black people in the past
- Learners will be able to give examples of people of black heritage with a link to Brent and their achievements and contributions to Brent.

# Transcript of Celebrating Black Lives and Black Brilliance in Brent video

Welcome to this video celebrating Black lives and Black brilliance in Brent.

By learning about your own and other people's heritage, including music, beliefs, food and art, we can enjoy all the different experiences and ideas that there are in Brent and the wider world. There is so much to find out. We all have our contributions to make and to celebrate.

So when we say Black history, what do you think we mean?

Well Black history is the experiences of people of African and African-Caribbean heritage in the past.

Can you see where the continent of Africa is on this map?

And on this map, can you see where the Caribbean is? The Caribbean is the Caribbean Sea, the islands there and the coasts near it. It is east of Central America.

So we live in Brent. Brent is an area of London. It is one of the boroughs in North West London. Can you see it coloured in red on this map?

Brent Museum and Archives look after lots of old special paper objects - they include things like diaries and lists of things that happened at churches in Brent.

Nearly three hundred years ago, there was a little girl and her name was Sarah Ecco and she was christened at St Mary's Church Willesden and we know this because there was a written record of her christening in the church records. here we have a photograph of some of the writing that was done in that book. Can you see her name about half way down? It says C that's for christening and then Sarah Daughter of Tobias Ecco, a black and the date is 15th September 1723. In the Christian church, christening is the time when you are given your first name and baptism is a special ceremony when you join the Christian church. It normally happens when you're a baby. This is the earliest record of a black person living in Brent. From other records at the church, we know that she had younger brothers called Tobias, John, Edward and William, although really sadly William died before he grew up. We don't know when Sarah's parents arrived in Willesden or where they came from.

We can also look at photographs to learn about black history in Brent. This group photograph was taken outside a building at Neasden Stud Farm. a stud farm is a place where horses are bred. And we think it is from the 1890s so it is about 130 years ago. It is the oldest known photograph of a person who may have been black or mixed race in Brent. unfortunately we don't know the names of anybody in the photograph but we can look at the photograph and we can have our ideas about how we think they were connected. What do you think?

This photograph was taken in Kilburn in the 1950s or 60s, so about 60 or 70 years ago. These people would be around 65 or 75 years old now. We don't know their names – we just have this photograph. What do you think they are doing?

I'm reading Mary Seacole's book about her own experiences, called "Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands" that she wrote in 1857, when she was 52 years old. She is such a good writer, that it feels as though I am in the same room as her, hearing her speak. She loved travelling and helping people and using her medical skills. You might know already that she was born in Jamaica. And that she faced unfairness and discrimination as a black woman when she tried to volunteer as a nurse during the Crimean War. When the British turned down her offer of help, she decided to go to the Crimea by herself. She set up a British Hotel near the frontline to provide comfort and supplies to the army. She rode nearly every day to the battle front to give out medicines and nurse the injured and dying. She was really well known when she returned to England. In 2004 she was voted number one in a poll of Great Black Britons. When she died in 1881, she was buried at Kensal Green cemetery in Brent. This is a photograph of her grave.

The Reverend Norman Watson Mitchell MBE arrived in Britain in 1955 when he was 35 years old. In 1980 Mr Mitchell set up the West Indian Senior Citizens Organisation, because he was concerned that people were lonely and he wanted to give them an opportunity to come together and do social activities. He was thinking about the older members of the Caribbean community. in 2014 he got an award the Member of the Order of the British Empire (or MBE for short). And that's an award that people get for making a really positive impact in their line of work or as recognition for community work and service.

Allyson Williams MBE arrived in Britain 1969 when she was 21 years old. She flew to Britain from Trinidad to train to be a Nurse. In 2002 Allyson Williams was given an MBE for her outstanding contribution to the development of midwifery services in London. Now Midwives help women give birth as safely and easily as possible.

Cyrille Regis MBE – now he was one of the first black footballers in England. He was born in 1958 in Maripasoula, in French Guyana. He moved to Queens Park when he was 8 and lived in Brent until he was 19. He used to play football at the Welsh Harp. He used to go to Wembley Market and play in the cup finals at Wembley Stadium. He went to school at Kensal Rise Primary School and he also went to Cardinal Hinsley High School. He played as a forward. His professional playing career spanned 19 years, and he made 614 league appearances and scored 158 league goals, Cyrille Regis also won five caps with the England national team. He overcame a huge amount of racism and inspired so many young black players.

This is a photo of Rhoda Ibrahim who\_runs the Somali Advice and Forum of Information community group in Brent. Her studies brought her to London but then the war in Somalia stopped her being able to back. She worked with the United Nations and community groups to help Somali people in lots of different countries in Africa and Yemen until around 2002, and then she started working with Somalis in Brent and helping us learn more about traditional Somali crafts. She inspires me because she is always keen to help and she is so generous with her time.

This year, we saw people coming together across the world to protest injustice towards people of black heritage as part of the Black Lives Matter campaign following the death of

George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. Brent council leaders and community leaders came together to show their solidarity with the campaign. The Civic Centre was lit up with purple lights and the Council's Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive met with leaders and young people from Black communities across Brent to listen to their concerns and ideas about what could be done to make lives better for local residents. They have agreed a plan to support the Black community.

You can visit Brent Museum at The Library at Willesden Green to find out more about Brent's history including where Bob Marley lived in Neasden in 1972.

On our website there are lots of information sheets about Brent's past including one about Arthur Wint. He was the Jamaican team captain at the 1948 Olympics at Wembley. He was an amazing person. He wasn't only an athlete, but he was also a pilot, a doctor and a diplomat. He won Jamaica's first Olympic gold medal in the 400m.

Below this video on YouTube, there is a link to a learning resource pack with photos, information and useful links including a link to interviews with Windrush Generation elders that were carried out in 2020.

Can I suggest that you now follow the first link under this video on YouTube, which shows <u>the</u> <u>moment in 2016 that St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra from Brent won Best Band on</u> the Road Category at Notting Hill Carnival with 'I will Survive'



### Map including the upper part of the continent of Africa



Map showing the location of the Caribbean

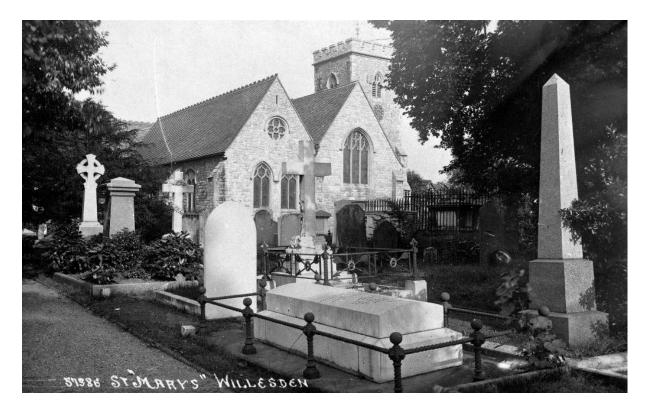


# Map of London: the borough of Brent is coloured in red

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# Extract from St Mary's, Willesden church parish records

These records are held at London Metropolitan Archives and they show details of Sarah Ecco's christening in 1723. Willesden in the 1720s was a rural area, which was considered to be well outside London. There weren't many places to find a job around Willesden at the time. Tobias and his wife probably worked at one of the few large houses in the area.



# St Mary's Church, Willesden

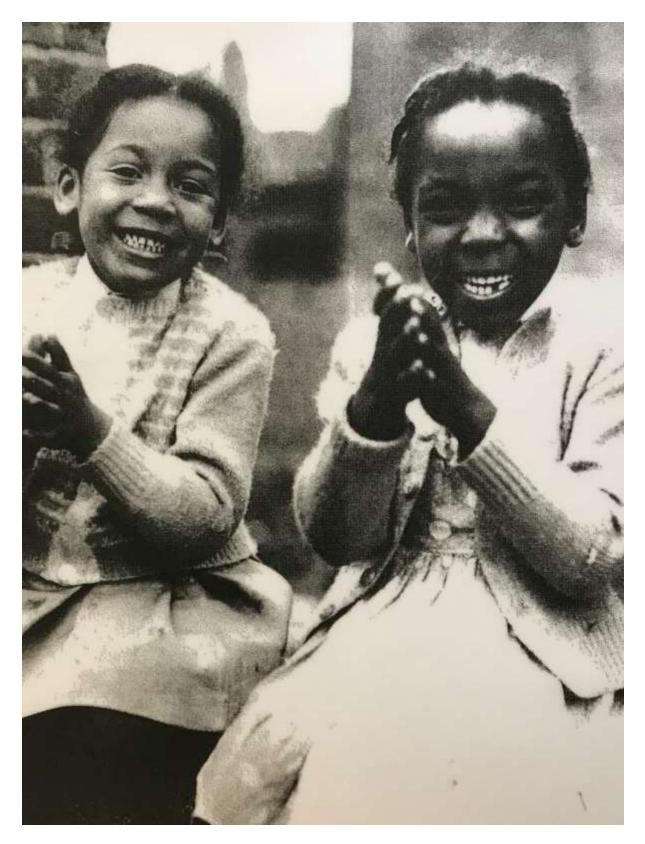
There has been a church here since 938AD (more than 1080 years)



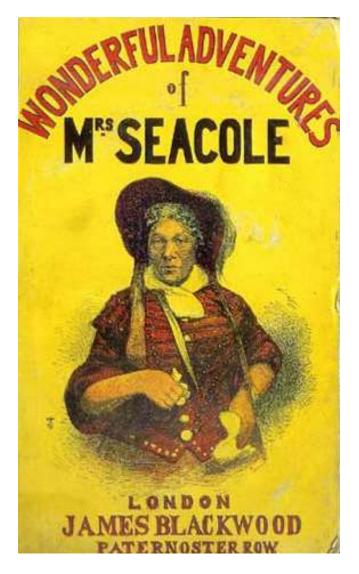
St Mary's Church Willesden, before 1807 in watercolour and ink



Photo of Neasden Stud Farm, 1890s



Two girls sitting on a wall in a bomb site in Kilburn, 1950s or 1960s



### Mary Seacole

1805 – 14 May 1881 - Her father was a Scottish soldier, and her mother was a black woman who ran a boarding house for injured soldiers. When she was young, Mary travelled twice to England with her family, and visited Cuba, Haiti and the Bahamas. During the cholera epidemic of 1850, when more than 31,000 people died, she worked with the doctors and learned much about medicine, although there was no organised system of education in nursing. She then travelled to Cruces in Panama, to visit her brother, and a cholera epidemic broke out there. No doctor was present, and many of the victims were reluctant to be treated by a black woman, but she worked night and day and saved many lives. In 1854, when the Crimean War broke out, she went to London and applied to be a hospital nurse, but was rejected by every organisation she contacted, so she bought a stock of food and medicine, travelled to the Crimea at her own expense, and opened a store and boarding house about two miles from Balaclava, which she called the British Hotel. She worked in the boarding house by day and as a nurse by night. After the fall of Sebastapol, she obtained a pass, which enabled her to be the first woman to enter the town, so that she could pass out refreshments and tend to the injured. Although she was revered by the soldiers, who called her "the Black Nightingale," she received no official recognition; and, when the war ended abruptly, she was left with a huge amount of medicine and stores, which she was unable to sell at a fair price, so that, shortly after her return to England, she

was forced to declare herself bankrupt. A fund, which had the backing of Queen Victoria, was established to pay back her debts. Useful <u>resources</u> and <u>information</u> about Mary Seacole.



Photo of Kensal Green Cemetery



Mary Seacole's grave stone at Kensal Green Cemetery



### Portrait of Mr Rev Norman Watson Mitchell MBE Look at this website to find out what MBE stands for

Mr Rev. Norman Watson Mitchell MBE arrived in Britain in 1955 aged 35. His occupation was as a Glass Quality Control Inspector. When Mr. Mitchell arrived in Britain, he lived in Forest Hill where he shared a home with 15 other Caribbean migrants. After 2 years, he elected to move to Harlesden, Brent where his wife and 3 children came to join him. Mr Mitchell chose to live in Brent as he described the people as 'social' which reminded him of Jamaica. In 1980, Mr Mitchell established the West Indian Senior Citizens Organisation, to provide support, care and social activities for older members of the Caribbean community; in 2014, he received an MBE as recognition for community work and service.



### Portrait of Allyson Williams MBE

Allyson Williams MBE arrived in Britain in 1969 aged 21 years old. Her occupation was midwife. Ms. Williams wanted to study and to travel; she flew to Britain from Trinidad to train to be a Nurse. She chose Britain as the qualification offered here was recognised internationally. Ms. Williams had studied English History and Literature while at school and was excited to see the famous sites and grand buildings pictured during these lessons. Of the 32 young people training at Whittington Hospital, Highgate with Allyson, 16 were from Trinidad, these friends helped each other to adjust to the 'shocking and ugly' city. In 2002, Allyson Williams was recognised with an MBE for her Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Midwifery Service in London, when she retired from University College Hospital, London where she was Deputy Head of Midwifery.

#### Watch these video about the Windrush including interviews with Windrush Generation elders

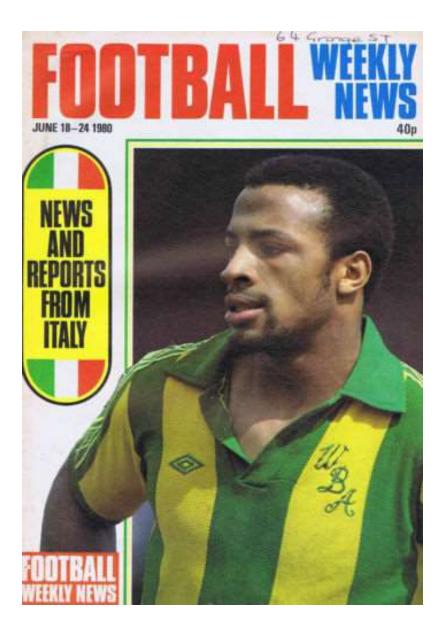
Our <u>Windrush Generation Learning Resource</u> on our <u>Online Learning Resources page</u> includes portraits, activities, information and lots more for you to use with your learners

With the outbreak of war, a lot more Black people came to Britain to assist in the War effort. In the late 1940s, people from the West Indies were actively recruited by the British Government to assist in the rebuilding programme after the War.

It was during the forties, fifties and sixties that the present Black community of Brent was established. The first people to arrive in the Brent area were often men who came here in search of work. All through the late forties and 1950s, Black people arrived to the borough of Willesden, with many settling in the Harlesden area. Women began to arrive in larger numbers in the mid and late 1950s. Both men and women worked in manufacturing industries in the area, in service industries, on the public transport network, the hospitals and in many other areas.

Accommodation was often very difficult to find. Many black people suffered racist abuse from local white people who resented their presence in the area. Black people fought back against this racism with groups such as the Unity club in Willesden. Following lobbying of Willesden Borough an International Fellowship Council was established in 1959, one of the first such initiatives in the country. This Committee continued in existence under the Borough of Brent and finally became the Community Relations Council, which was still in existence in the 1990s.

Throughout these years, the community continued to develop and expand. Family, social, and community networks emerged to give support to Black people in the area. Black clubs like the Considine Centre in Willesden were established, churches were set up and it gradually became easier to buy Caribbean food locally. By the mid-1960s, Black people had established themselves as a major community within the Borough of Brent.



# Cyrille Regis MBE

Cyrille Regis was born in Maripasoula, French Guiana which is an overseas region and overseas department of France on the northern Atlantic coast of South America, in the Guianas. It borders Brazil to the east and south and Suriname to the west. Cyrille Regis was one of the first black footballers in England. He was born in 1958. He moved to Queens Park when he was 8 and lived in Brent until he was 19. He used to play football at the Welsh Harp. He used to go to Wembley Market and play in the cup finals at Wembley Stadium. He went to school at Kensal Rise Primary School and he went to Cardinal Hinsley High School. He played as a forward. His professional playing career spanned 19 years, and he made 614 league appearances and scored 158 league goals, Cyrille Regis also won five caps with the England national team. He overcame a huge amount of racism and inspired many young black players.



### Portrait of Rhoda Ibrahim.

Rhoda Ibrahim runs the Somali Advice and Forum of Information (SAAFI) community group in Brent. Her studies brought her to London and the war prevented her from returning. She worked with the United Nations and Non-Government Organisations to help Somali people in various countries in Africa and Yemen until 2002, when she began working with Somalis in Brent while bringing up her family.

<u>Somali Advice and Forum of Information (SAAFI)</u> is a community based organisation initiated and led by Somali-British mothers from refugee background in Brent to help each other and their families and to support others in need.

Explore our Somali culture and community in Brent Learning Resource on our online learning resources page



### **Black Lives Matter**

**Photo of a mural in Berlin featuring an image of George Floyd.** George Floyd died on 25 May 2020 aged 46 at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer.

Reading for Children and Teens - Explore these titles celebrating black authors, stories and characters

Reading for adults

Access digital books about Africa using your Brent library card



Brent Civic Centre



Taking the knee Brent Council Black Lives Matter action plan

# Reggae in Brent

<u>The No Bass Like Home</u> project explores how during the 1970s the reggae music scene exploded in Brent: the first festival of Caribbean music took place at Wembley, Bob Marley lived in a house in Neasden, Janet Kay became the first British-born black female artist to score a UK number one, and the Willesden music label Trojan Records introduced the world to reggae. <u>Interviews with pioneering</u> <u>artists</u>

#### Trojan Records

Starting out as an imprint of Island Records in 1968, Trojan Records has been influential in driving the advancement of reggae music in the United Kingdom. Alongside its sub genres of ska, lovers' rock and revival, reggae has played an important role in bringing life to the Borough of Brent. As the unofficial capital of reggae, (outside of Jamaica) Brent's reggae roots have seen great artists like Janet Kay, Ken Boothe, Marcia Griffiths and Bob Marley enjoy great success - with Marley once playing a spontaneous gig at a club in Dollis Hill.



- 1. Bob Marley and the Wailers lived at <u>13 The Circle, Neasden</u> in 1972. Click on the plus sign in the bottom right hand corner to zoom in until you can see the blue plaque honouring them <u>Find out</u> how Bob Marley's Neasden home has been honoured.
- Listen to this <u>Spotify playlist of classic Trojan releases</u> and these releases from 1969: <u>Return of the</u> <u>Django by The Upsetters</u> and <u>Liquidator by Harry J Allstars</u>. The Liquidator is used as the run-out music by the Premier League football teams Wolverhampton Wanderers and Chelsea.
- 3. Janet Kay from Harlesden had a Number 1 hit with <u>'Silly Games'</u>. It is the most commercially successful example of a form of London music known as 'Lovers Rock', which blended 1960s pop ballads with reggae rhythms and was sung by predominantly female vocalists.

### Steel pan music

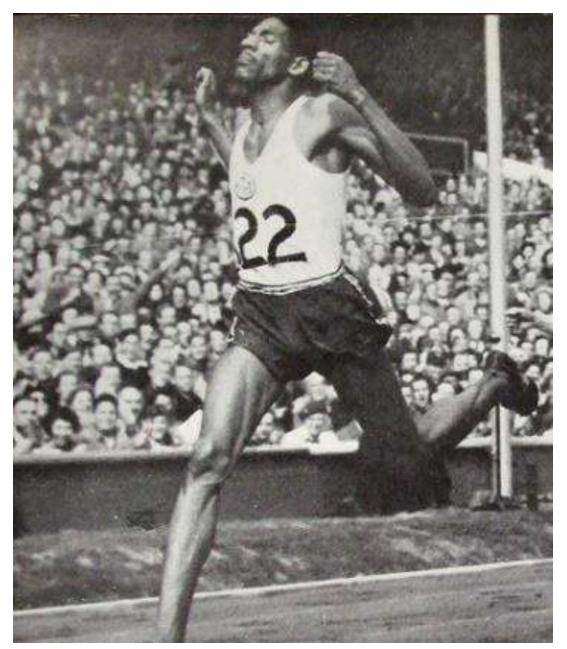
Present throughout Notting Hill Carnival's history, steel bands are an integral part of the Carnival tradition. Steel pans or drums were created on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. They were shaped and refined by the Africans who were brought to the island in the 18th Century. These enslaved people brought with them elements of their African culture including the playing of hand drums. These drums became the main instruments played in the annual Trinidadian carnival festivities. In

1877, the ruling British government banned the playing of drums in an effort to suppress aspects of Carnival, which were considered offensive.

To overcome this, alternatives including Bamboo stamping tubes were used along with nontraditional instruments such as metal containers, graters and dustbins. By the 1930s, these metal instruments with their rustic combination of metallic containers and kitchen utensils struck with hands, fists and sticks dominated the bands.

Through experimentation and ingenuity, the metal pan bands evolved into the steel pan family of instruments.

Enjoy the moment that St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra won Best Band on the Road at Notting Hill Carnival in 2016 with "I will Survive"



Arthur Wint, Jamaica's first great Olympian

#### Further interesting articles on our website

- <u>The West Indies at Wembley</u>
- Sierra Leone at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924
- When Nigeria came to Wembley
- Belo Akure a Nigerian first world war hero at Wembley

### Further inspiring people in Brent

Watch this interview with Dame Elizabeth Anionwu (KS3+) Nurse, campaigner and cofounder of the first UK Sickle Cell society, in Brent (Harlesden) in 1979, Dame Elizabeth Anionwu's determination and dedication to the Sickle Cell community earned her the Pride of Britain 2019 Lifetime Achievement award. "The memories I've got of those early days in Brent, in terms of Sickle Cell, were just fantastic memories I have to say. Becoming the first Sickle Cell nurse in Britain based in Brent was so.. it's one of my best memories." (KS3+)

Jason Roberts is a local man who runs the <u>Jason Roberts Foundation</u> with his brother in Harlesden. The Foundation runs sports activities together with mentoring, life skills, education and training projects to support young people at risk of offending, those excluded from school or struggling in the school curriculum, and young people with physical and learning difficulties.

The Mixed Museum and Warren Reilly have co-curated an <u>online exhibition</u> exploring Brent's mixed race and multicultural history and includes further research about Neasden Stud Farm which features in this resource.

### Roman London

People have been coming to Britain from parts of the world for thousands of years.

There was a Black presence in Britain long before the arrival of the English. The word 'English' comes from the word Angle (as in the Angles of the Anglo-Saxons) The Anglo-Saxon age in Britain was from around AD410 to 1066. They were a mix of tribes from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. The three biggest were the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. The land they settled in was 'Angle-land', or England. <u>Find out more here</u>

It is recorded that there was "a division of Moores"- Black soldiers in the Roman Army - defending Hadrian's Wall in the third century AD.

We know that soldiers in the Roman army came from all over the Roman Empire, which included Africa. We have evidence of Roman activity in Brent – for example, the Edgware Road is the oldest road in Brent and was built around two thousand years ago!

Watch this video to find out about the skeleton of a 14-year-old girl who grew up in North Africa but had spent 3-4 years in London before she died.

Learn about the <u>African Roman Emperor, Septimius Severus</u>, who ruled large parts of Europe, the Middle East and Africa. When he came to Hadrian's Wall in Britain in 208AD, there were black soldiers already stationed there, they had travelled right across the Empire. He was born in Libya and spent his last three years in Britain before he died in York in 211AD.

KS2/KS3: <u>Further information about diverse Roman remains found in London</u> including information about a man who died when he was more than 46 years old and had Black African ancestry. His burial had been damaged during the 19th and 20th century by builders doing construction work in the ground. His skeleton has been what archaeologists call 'truncated', meaning that only part of his skull, spine and pelvis remained. No grave-goods were found. We were fortunate enough to be able to investigate his mitochondrial DNA and some aspects of his identity, which revealed that he had brown eyes and dark brown/brown hair, and his maternal haplotype is found in populations across Europe and North Africa, but the stable isotope evidence showed that he had grown up in London. Londinium was a vibrant and diverse settlement, and from its start, was home to people from across the Roman Empire. Their funerals and their choice of grave-goods reflect the coming-together of these different communities, and when combined with bioarchaeology, show that ancestry and region of birth are not always the same.

From the Middle Ages onwards there were significant numbers of Black people in London involved in many different trades and professions.

#### English Heritage – Celebrating London's Black history

#### 15 things you may not know about black people in London before 1948

- 1. Earliest known record of a Black person living in London is of 'Cornelius a Blackamoor' whose burial on 2 March 1593 was recorded in the parish register at St Margaret's Church in Lee.
- 2. <u>BBC programme KS3+ about Olaudah Equiano</u> (1745-1797) He was one of the most prominent Africans involved in the British movement towards the abolition of the enslavement of Africans. He was a prominent member of the 'Sons of Africa', a group of 12 Black men who campaigned for abolition. In 1789 he wrote his autobiography 'The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African' which depicted the horrors of slavery and helped influence British lawmakers to abolish transatlantic enslavement through the Slave Trade Act of 1807. However, no enslaved people were freed by the Act, so the struggle continued.
- 3. Ignatius Sancho (c.1729-1780), the composer, actor, writer and businessman was the first Black person known to have voted in Britain in 1774 and 1780. Sancho was also the first African prose writer whose work was published in Britain.
- 4. William Cuffay (1788-1870) was a Black tailor who lived in London. He was one of the leaders and martyrs of the Chartist movement, the first mass political movement of the

British working class.

- 5. In 1773, Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) is the first African-American woman to have her book published 'Poems on various subjects, religious and moral'. The book was published in London with the help of the Countess of Huntingdon.
- 6. Mary Prince (1788 c.1833) was the first Black woman to write and publish an autobiography 'The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave,' an account of the horrors of life on the plantations enslavement, published in Britain c.1831. Mary Prince was also the first woman to present an anti-slavery petition to Parliament.
- 7. J.S Celestine Edwards (1858-1894) was the first Black man to edit a White-owned newspaper Lux (1892-1895), the weekly Christian Evidence Newspaper. He was also the editor of its monthly journal 'Fraternity (1893-1897)' which reached a circulation of more than 7000.
- 8. The 'Africa Times and Orient Review' is the first political journal produced by and for Black people ever published in Britain. Duse Mohamed Ali, an Egyptian Nationalist and Pan Africanist Journalist founded The African Times and Orient Review in London in July 1912. It was printed in Fleet Street in London. Marcus Garvey was a staff writer at the newspaper.
- 9. In 1931, Dr Harold Moody (1882-1947) founded the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP) in 1931, the first Black pressure group and the largest British Pan-African organisation in the 1930s and 1940s. <u>Film about Dr Harold Moody</u>
- 10. Una Marson (1905-1965) was the first Black female broadcaster at the BBC from 1939 to 1946. Una Marson, born in Jamaica in 1905, was a poet, publisher and activist for racial and sexual equality. She was a secretary to the League of Coloured Peoples as well as many other organisations including the Women's International League for Peace.
- 11. Henry Sylvester Williams (1869-1911) helped to found the African-Association, which lobbied for human rights in the colonies and was instrumental in holding the first Pan-African Conference in London (1900).
- 12. John Richard Archer (1863-1932) became London's first Black Mayor on 10th November 1913 aged fifty years old when he was elected mayor of Battersea.
- 13. Amy Ashwood Garvey (1897- 1969) was a playwright, lecturer and Pan-Africanist who founded the Nigerian Progress Union in London in 1924. She became an important figure in the anti-racist movement in England. In 1959, she chaired an enquiry into race relations following the racially motivated murder of Kelso Cochrane in London. In the wake of the Notting Hill riots in 1958, she co-founded the Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. <u>Film about Amy Ashwood Garvey</u>
- 14. The West African Student Union (WASU) was one of the most important political organisations in Britain from the 1920s until the 1960s. Members included Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Joseph Appiah who played an important role agitating for an end to colonial rule in Britain's West African colonies. <u>Film</u>

about WASU.

15. Elisabeth Welch (1904-2003) was one of the first Black people to have her own BBC radio series in 1935, Soft Lights and Sweet Music, which made her a household name in Britain.

Cooking Learn about Congolese cooking

Another Congolese cooking site

Ethiopian cooking