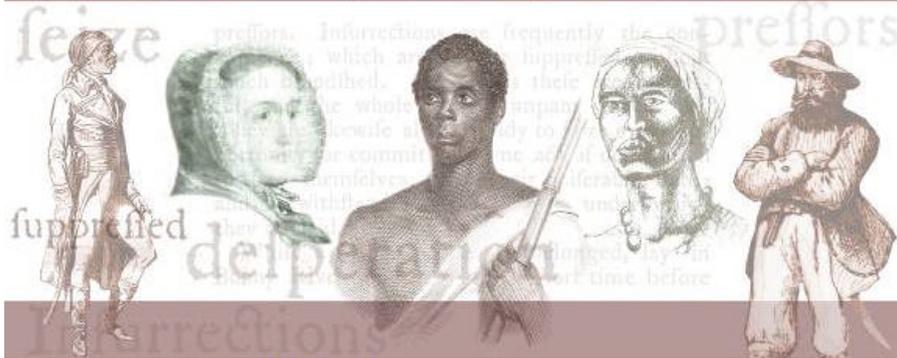




**Recovered Histories:** Reawakening the narratives of enslavement, resistance and the fight for freedom.



[www.recoveredhistories.org](http://www.recoveredhistories.org)

Free resources on the  
Transatlantic Slave Trade



**Recovered Histories: reawakening the  
narratives of enslavement, resistance and  
the fight for freedom –  
a digitisation and outreach project**

**final report**

**Author Angelina Osborne, Outreach Officer, Recovered Histories, Anti-Slavery International  
26<sup>th</sup> September 2008.**

**Edited Jeff Howarth, Project Manger, Recovered Histories, Anti-Slavery International  
April 2009.**

Anti-Slavery International would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding this project.



## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2007 Anti-Slavery International secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to pursue a project to digitise its collection of literature on transatlantic enslavement, in order to bring this unique documentary record to a wider audience. To achieve this, the digitisation process itself was supported by an eighteen month outreach programme. This was the first time a collection of this type would be made available for free to an international audience on the internet. It was hoped the project will facilitate the study of the Transatlantic Slave Trade or Maafa and the campaigns and resistance against it, and encourage the better understanding of a terrible period in history that is often neglected.

The Recovered Histories project complemented the Breaking the Silence educational website ([www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence](http://www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence)) that Anti-Slavery International set up as the UK coordinator of UNESCO's project of the same name which it currently hosts on its website. In association with the information on this site, it was intended to provide not simply new data for historians and other academics, but also to the public at large, and to open up access to their own history and identities.

It is hoped that this project will facilitate research not just into the Transatlantic Slave Trade, but into what was probably the first human rights campaign, and the first fair trade campaign; and into the development of racism and racial stereotypes, the understanding of diaspora cultures, the position of the church on the issue of slavery in Europe and the Americas, gender and slavery, and the development of colonialism.

Further by making this literature available, both abolitionist and pro-slavery, the project will facilitate the study of the images and language that depict slaves' lives; including their work, their relationships (and destruction), customs, punishment etc. all of which reflect the period's politics and social anthropology.

It is also hoped that by closely associating the collection with the work that Anti-Slavery International pursues on contemporary slavery a new audience will learn about slavery today and feel compelled to join the contemporary struggle, just as people did two centuries ago.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Anti-Slavery International maintains an archive that includes a collection of literature on the transatlantic enslavement, this comprises over 800 original pamphlets, tracts and books from the mid 18th to late 19th Centuries. The collection contains both the abolitionist and the pro-slavery literature. As well as providing a wealth of information about the chattel enslavement of Africans as part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade these documents contain testimonies from Africans subjected to slavery, those participating in the enslavement of Africans, and those who fought against that enslavement.

They include first hand narratives by well-known individuals, but also the experiences of unknown people including enslaved and free Africans whose histories rarely reach a public audience. As such they are an important part of our national heritage and the world's heritage.

These materials are potentially of great value to communities today; and are invaluable in helping people to understand more about the historical realities of slavery and the legacies that impact on our world today; enabling them to explore the individual stories and experiences which make up the bigger picture.

The aim was to digitise the collection and make it available for study on the internet through a searchable database. The collection, often used by academics, writers and researchers, is infrequently used by the general public, who are less accustomed to traditional research activity. The aim was therefore to create a website based resource, concentrating on individual testimonies that collectively link the three points of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Africa, Europe and the Americas. The resources feature some of the most relevant texts and help to set a context for audiences, and interactive components to help engage their interest, whilst providing pointers and links to the more detailed archive and encouraging deeper research.

Hard copy exhibitions were produced to support a comprehensive outreach programme targeted at community groups, schools and the general public; utilising and building upon the increase in interest that emerged during the 2007 bicentenary of the passing of the parliamentary Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

The hardcopy exhibitions were used at public meetings, awareness-raising seminars, school conferences, community group events and as part of static displays in museums, libraries, campuses and other public spaces in the nine English regions: London, East of England, East Midlands, South East, North East, North West, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire & Humberside; plus Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The Recovered Histories Outreach Project supported Anti Slavery International's 1807-2007 campaign to raise awareness about historical and contemporary slavery. One of the key aspects of the campaign was to a call for measures to enable individuals, governments and the public to understand transatlantic enslavement, redress its legacies and eradicate modern slavery. In 2007, the government stated that teaching transatlantic enslavement at Key Stage 3 would be compulsory from September 2008.

In light of the curriculum campaign and its success, it was seen as essential that the project support and promote the resources to a scholastic audience; to coincide with the entry of the new curriculum. Consequently an education pack for Key Stage 3 History and Citizenship was produced and a complementary educational outreach programme pursued which included INSET training and a national conference for education practitioners, held at the Museum in Docklands on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To promote the Recovered Histories online resources
- To promote a portable exhibition based on the narratives researched from the pamphlets
- To establish a network of mainstream and grassroots organisations to encourage information exchange and future collaboration on projects
- To facilitate continuing dialogue on issues raised during the bicentenary
- To facilitate talks and workshops as requested by schools, faith groups, local authorities etc. on transatlantic and contemporary enslavement
- To promote an education pack based on the narratives for the subjects of History and Citizenship at Key Stage 3

## OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Throughout 2007 and 2008 talks and presentations were facilitated by the outreach officer and education officer for a range of organisations.

The talks focused on an overview of the Recovered Histories project itself but also highlighted some of the key reference points:

- *Recovered Histories*: looking at key pamphlets within the collection and what they tell us about slavery and abolition and the emancipation movement
- *Unsung heroes and heroines of abolition* – the men and women from Africa, the Caribbean and Britain who are often overlooked at the expense of individuals when looking at the history of enslavement and abolition
- *Forms of resistance in Caribbean slavery* – the different forms of resistance that enslaved Africans employed, from marronage to full blown rebellion
- *Britain: from the slave trade to abolition* – an overview of Britain's involvement in the trafficking of Africans and the development of the abolition campaign.

Throughout the project it was important to demonstrate the impact of this history on the British economy and landscape, as represented by buildings and statues in Britain, such as City Hall in Liverpool, and geographical features including the Atlantic as a graveyard, and towns such as Accompong in Jamaica established by Maroon rebels.

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Anti-Slavery International aimed to build a network of partnerships across the country including institutions and grassroots organisations who would facilitate ongoing work regarding transatlantic enslavement. Partners would also take responsibility for distributing a free portable lightweight exhibition within their designated region.

Requirements:

- Partners would become the regional hub for the Recovered Histories outreach project.
- A commitment to being the care-taker of regional exhibition and ensuring that it tours the region or is accessible for all within the regions.
- Maintain a network of interested associations, including community groups, faith groups, women's groups, schools, universities, museums, libraries, DEC etc., and where there is interest facilitate and foster a regular platform for discussion of issues related to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its legacy.
- Provide an update of how the work is going.
- Participation in the Recovered Histories support network.
- A key contact/ project manager.
- Encourage partners to investigate local history related to the project, and identify and map relevant local resources including archives, museums, and private collections.
- Organise an event for the 23 August 2008 commemoration.

## **REGIONAL SEMINARS**

At the core of the outreach programme were five regional seminars held in order to bring together organisations to discuss what they accomplished during the bicentenary, what they want to do in the future and what strategies they could employ to retain interest in slavery issues beyond the bicentenary.

The objectives of the seminars were:

- To raise awareness about the Recovered Histories project and resources, and of Anti Slavery International's remit
- To facilitate a networking event for attending organisations and Anti Slavery International which would allow for information sharing and possible future collaboration between organisations for future projects
- To provide the opportunity to discuss lessons learned in terms of community engagement and what the public understands by the term 'transatlantic slave trade'
- To provide mechanisms to sustain interest in transatlantic enslavement and its legacies

## **The Seminars**

- To achieve the seminar objectives, Anti Slavery International worked with its partner Rendezvous of Victory (RoV), an African led organisation that works closely with grassroots and mainstream organisations on a range of projects. They have extensive experience with these issues; between 2005 and 2007 they facilitated a series of cross community forums to ascertain how organisations planned to commemorate the bicentenary, the feelings and perspectives of those who attended, and to create a space for people to express their feelings on Britain's involvement in the trafficking of Africans and the legacies of those acts.

The Recovered Histories team met with RoV on a weekly basis to establish the aims and possible outcomes of the seminars, and how to organise them.

- An invitation letter was drafted and sent out to Anti Slavery and RoV contacts
- The regions were organised as:
  - South East (seminar held at Museum in Docklands, London 25.04.08)
  - South West (seminar held at Council house, Bristol 29.04.08)
  - Yorkshire and North East (seminar held at Leeds Metropolitan University 17.05.08)
  - Northwest (seminar held at the University of Manchester 18.04.08)
  - Scotland (seminar held at Friend's House, Edinburgh 13.05.08)
- It was agreed that each seminar would begin with a presentation/talk from a person of that region who had knowledge and experience of what had taken place in terms of activities around the bicentenary and be able to talk about what happened on a local level and make suggestions for ways forward locally, and to make links with the national. The following people were invited to speak:
  - Kofi Mawuli Klu, Rendezvous of Victory, Manchester
  - Tammi Redmond, Bristol Libraries
  - Geoff Palmer OBE, grain scientist and writer, Edinburgh
  - Dr Carl Hylton, Leeds Bicentenary Transformation Project, Leeds
  - David Spence, Director, Museum in Docklands, London
- A registration form was designed and disseminated
- A series of newsletters, initially informing potential participants of the confirmed dates and venues and other related news was distributed in March 2008 and then updating subscribers of developments.
- Volunteers were brought in to identify further potential attendees in the regions. Organisations were researched and contacted by email which was followed up by a phone call.
- A PDF poster was designed and distributed to contacts
- Each participant received a seminar pack, which contained the following:
  - the schedule
  - background information on the regional partnership
  - an evaluation form
  - Anti Slavery and Recovered Histories literature

## Workshops

The seminars would be based around a series of three workshops:

- **Workshop 1: Exploring themes and perspectives in transatlantic enslavement** – the aim of this workshop was to encourage participants to reflect on the themes within transatlantic enslavement that were focused on in 2007, to discuss the perspectives that were presented behind those themes and what other themes could be explored and developed in future projects

- **Workshop 2: Effective Partnerships and Networking** – participants were encouraged to discuss the benefits and challenges of working in partnership with other organisations, what those benefits and challenges were during 2007 and to come up with a ‘toolkit’ to ensure more effective ways of working in partnership on these issues in the future

The key recommendations suggested by participants in response to these two workshop sessions are provided on the following pages.

- **Workshop 3: Recovering and using Resources** – participants were introduced to the RH resources, particularly the portable exhibition and were assigned a series of tasks aimed at looking at ways to educate people about transatlantic enslavement. See below for more details of this workshop

This session began with some background about the collection, what it consisted of and its place as a Heritage resource of universal relevance.

The introduction was followed by 2 or 3 activities (depending on time) aiming to familiarise the audience with the resources available through the project and get them to think about how they might use them to create their own resources.

The first activity asked the participants to consider the content of the panels and get them to suggest titles and ask them to put the panels in a sequence. This was aimed at familiarising the participants with the exhibition panels, the main themes, and the importance of providing a balanced and complete history.

The second activity aimed to demonstrate the importance of testimony in conveying issues and capturing history. Further we wanted participants to appreciate different perspectives of testimony, categorise people as witness, enslaver, enslaved, freedom fighter, abolitionist, and whether narratives were proslavery or antislavery.

For the final activity we asked participants to create their own resources, using sample narratives and images, such as a poem, a play for the theatre, comic, magazine, lesson plan, exhibition, and research paper. We also asked them to describe what audience they would aim the resource at.

We then concluded with some examples of how others had used the narratives to create their own resources.

## **Review of Seminars**

**University of Manchester, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

### **Organisations represented**

Children's Services Directorate, Salford

Virtual Migrants

The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester

North Manchester High School for Girls

Global Link

Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust

Families in Focus

Revealing Histories, Remembering Slavery

Black Arts Alliance

### **Key recommendations made by Manchester participants**

- Dialogue between mainstream organisations and communities must be sustained to understand more about the different perspectives
- Promotion of Manchester's role in fighting against the 'slave trade' and how that contributed to the development of trade unions and other social movements.
- Focus on community cultural cohesion and its significance
- Continue to raise awareness to links to enslavement regionally
- Don't teach the history in isolation in the curriculum – make links with other historical events in British history
- Need to explore ways to process this history and to get young people actively involved in human rights issues and politics
- Other themes related to enslavement that could be explored – economics, science, architecture i.e. looking at the built environment to locate links to enslavement and abolition
- Goals of the projects must be established during consultation with stakeholders.
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities and establish clear lines of communication within a regional network.
- Establish financial needs of a regional network and detailed schedule with overall deadlines for delivery of project
- Maintain flexibility and regular communication in the face of unforeseen changes and challenges
- Establishing partnerships takes time, so the commitment and long term projections must be present

## **Museum in Docklands, London 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

### **Organisations represented**

Black Londoners' Forum

The Batmans Mosaic (visual arts)

Redbridge Museum

Historia Theatre Company

Inner Vision (educational consultancy)

University of Exeter

Equality Challenge Unit

Museum in Docklands staff

Black Music Congress

World Development Movement

The Afiya Trust (Black Mental Health Trust)

Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London

Ileto Caribbean Peoples Network

Youth Global Concern Network

ODA-C UK

### **Key recommendations made by London Participants**

- Essential to address gap between assumptions and fact with regards to history
- More exposure on African abolitionists and perspective
- Present the history as a shared history
- Teachers need the tools to have the confidence in teaching this history
- Raise awareness that different forms of enslavement existed before the trafficking and enslavement of Africans
- There must be a more balanced understanding of African history
- Clarification of contemporary legacies of slavery on the wider community
- Important to discuss Indian Ocean slavery and its legacies
- Address the marginalisation of Caribbean communities
- Identify links between Industrial Revolution, enslavement and the underdevelopment of Africa
- How the term freedom fighter is defined
- Reparations and the Pan African agenda has to be discussed
- Redefining the concept of partnership – what does it mean to institutions?
- Networks and partnerships must have a commitment to change
- Formal networks could be fed back into the community
- Create a user led network independent of funding – a cross sector forum that meets regularly
- Archive discussions for best practice model
- Establish elders networks to capture indigenous knowledge systems

## **Bristol Council House: Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

### **Organisations represented**

University of Bristol

Bristol Fawcett Rape Crisis Centre

Bristol City Council

Helen Adjepong

Harvest Heritage Arts and Media

Rethink

UNESCO

Dr Katherine Hann

BWERANI (Multicultural and Inclusive Educational Resources Library)

Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

Bristol Libraries

Bath Racial Equality Council

### **Key recommendations made by Bristol participants**

- Explore issues of division within African communities
- Research the wider connections of the slave trade i.e. what were the links with other nations like France Portugal and Spain
- Look at people's individual experiences rather than historical events
- Explore the legacies of port cities
- Create a network with Anti-Slavery International to tackle all forms of enslavement
- Establish boundaries of a project/partnership and clearly define terms and timeframe
- Define rules of engagement and shared objectives

## **Friends House, Edinburgh: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

### **Organisations represented**

Cumbria Record Office

Culture and Sport Glasgow

Glasgow Museums

Edinburgh and Lothians Race Equality Council

Tyne and Wear Museums

City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries

### **Key recommendations made by Edinburgh participants**

- Emphasise women's involvement in abolition post 1807
- Further exploration of local connections are needed
- Establish links between Scotland and Caribbean; historically there are many but majority of Scottish people are unaware of them. There should also be some form of information exchange and sharing of skills
- Integrate local history into the curriculum
- A continuation in the development of resources

## **Leeds Metropolitan University: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

### **Organisations represented**

Leeds Bicentenary Transformation Project

Internet Archive

Chapelton 10-2 Young People's Club

Lolita Allen (independent)

West Yorkshire Archive Service

University of Bradford

Rommi Smith (poet and writer)

Kate Wingrove (student)

Simon Murray (independent)

### **Key recommendations made by Leeds participants**

- Important to acknowledge that there is no monolithic African perspective, therefore ways need to be found to engage with the variety of perspectives
- 'Slavery in a day' workshops are not conducive to understanding this history
- Need to move away from themes of victimhood and explore themes of geography, science, economics and sociology when looking at this history
- Not just about West Africa but the whole of the continent
- Young people need to be given a voice – more partnerships established with them

## RECOVERED HISTORIES PROJECT OUTCOMES

- The creation of a digital archive and online exhibition that facilitates the study and understanding of transatlantic enslavement. As of March 2009 the site had been visited by over 62,000 people, it is anticipated the site will be visited by over 480,000 visitors over the next nine years.
- The creation of 12 copies of a 14 panel portable exhibition based on the narratives 6 are on permanent loan and the remainder are available to hire free of charge. It has been displayed at many venues including:
  - Museum of Docklands
  - Friends House, Edinburgh
  - The Drum, Birmingham
  - St Peter's Church, Peckham
  - National Union of Students venues, including the NUS black Students Conference, May/June 2008
  - Council House, Bristol
  - Leeds Metropolitan University
  - Edinburgh Race Equality Council
  - University of Bradford
  - Coventry Libraries
- A programme of outreach on transatlantic enslavement was facilitated by the outreach and education officers at at least 65 events, including:
  - The Drum, Birmingham
  - Marylebone Town Hall
  - Springhill Prison, Buckinghamshire
  - Metropolitan Police HQ, Vauxhall
  - St Dunstan's College, Lewisham
  - RESPECT HQ
  - Woodhouse College
  - Alexandra Park School
  - Coventry West Indian Centre
  - Islington Library
  - Northumberland Park School
  - Southall Dominion Centre
  - Tapestry Youth Club, Hackney
  - Edware Reform Synagogue
  - EUROCLIO Conference
  - African Women's Forum, a small organisation based in Portsmouth
  - Ipswich Respect Festival
  - *SpringHill Prison* - Grendon Underwood,
  - Gateshead Sugar and Spice Festival
  - CARGO concerts during 2007
- The creation of an education pack based on the narratives covering History and Citizenship at Key Stage 3 A series of INSET days took place over September and October 2008 to introduce the resource to teachers and other practitioners, and to discuss the challenges of teaching this history.

- A national conference on 22 October 2008 entitled ***Fostering community cohesion and global citizenship through teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade***
- The key outcomes of the regional seminars:
  - The participants made numerous recommendations within the workshops which could be useful for establishing good practice when working with issues around transatlantic enslavement. These recommendations are outlined in the Review of Seminars section
  - The Recovered Histories exhibition was loaned out to a number of organisations as a result of being viewed at the seminars
  - The seminars provided a space for people to reflect on what took place during 2007 and to share those reflections with other individuals
  - The seminars gave organisations the opportunity to network with organisations and individuals that they had hitherto been unaware of
  - Raised awareness of Anti-Slavery International's work
  - To date, six partners have taken responsibility for exhibitions including Youth Global Concern Network, a London based social inclusion organisation that works with young people in Southwark established a London regional network of other grassroots organisations to develop a day of remembrance for the 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Entitled *International Day of Resistance against Enslavement*, the day consisted of presentations film and documentary screenings, discussions and spoken word. Anti-Slavery International provided financial assistance and other support, including the loan of the exhibition. Hannah Adjepong, a poet and workshop facilitator from Shropshire has engaged the Recovered Histories team to facilitate a series of workshops at the Telford College of Arts and Technology in October 2008 based on the exhibition. Luqman Onikosi, head of the Hear Afrika Society, at the University of Sussex Students' Union organised a day's event in October 2008. And Nina Giles, at the Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council, has used the exhibition at various events.
- ODA-C, a London based organisation that promotes awareness of African and Caribbean culture produced an illustrated comic consisting of stories inspired by the narratives. This comic is being disseminated to schools, youth and community organisations and other interested groups. These are free, contact Anti-Slavery International for copies at [j.howarth@antislavery.org](mailto:j.howarth@antislavery.org) or see [www.recoveredhistories.org](http://www.recoveredhistories.org) to download a PDF version.
- Rothwell Art Gallery requested permission to use pages from the Recovered Histories exhibition to use in their exhibition about Rev. John Smith, a Rothwell born missionary who was sent to Demerara (Guyana) and was accused of inciting enslaved workers there to rebel. Sentenced to death for conspiracy and rebellion, he died in prison, three days before a pardon. The exhibition opened in June 2008, and the text from the John Smith pamphlet was also used for their resource pack

## RECOVERED HISTORIES EDUCATION OUTREACH

A Recovered Histories Teacher Training Programme was devised by Anti-Slavery International in partnership with Inner Vision and the Museum in Docklands to help educators access the issues and skills needed to effectively and accurately teach about the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the new Key Stage Three History curriculum.

Four groups of ten teachers/educators were offered an INSET day at the Museum in Docklands in September/October 2008, which included a visit to the London, Sugar and Slavery Gallery; and hands-on use of Anti-Slavery International's Recovered Histories exhibition and resources.

The INSET days culminated in an all day conference on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 entitled ***Fostering community cohesion and global citizenship through teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade*** held at the Museum in Docklands. The conference aimed to bring together practitioners in a shared learning environment and further assess the Transatlantic Slave Trade with a focus of teaching in a way to foster community cohesion and actively engage students as global citizens.

See separate report for details.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Recovered Histories Outreach project was successful in achieving most of its original objectives, as documented above.

Anti-Slavery International worked with regional partners for the duration of the project, helping organise many events through funding and staff time. It also facilitated further outreach events through the provision of the project's educational resources.

The website a key legacy of this project and must continue to grow as a resource. It is intended that the website becomes a key resource for schools, supported by the education pack, both hard copy and online. The site will develop with links to similar projects and resources internationally.

The aim of the Recovered Histories Project was to continue the dialogue about Britain's role in transatlantic enslavement that had been initiated nationwide by the 2007 commemorations. However, in undertaking this project it became evident that the challenge to sustain interest in this history remains great. The people who attended the outreach and education events, including the seminars, INSET days and conference were all committed to further exploration of these issues and were aware of the challenges faced by teachers in teaching this history and the importance of finding ways of presenting this history as a shared heritage. We thank them for their contributions, which have been documented, and their time.

Undertaking this project has shown that there is a need for information and support, which Recovered histories was keen to provide. One of the key points raised at the regional seminars was that most of the bicentenary projects were finite, with no mechanism to sustain the interest raised. It is important therefore that outreach work on this issue continue as part of Anti-Slavery International's educational and public information work.