

EAST RIDING
TREASURE HOUSE

Our
Histories
Revealed

African Stories in Hull and East Yorkshire

For more in-depth
stories, research sources
and to download
copies of this guide visit
africansinyorkshireproject.com



Clive Sullivan receiving his MBE.
Photo © Rosalyn Daniel

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OUR HISTORIES REVEALED: AFRICAN STORIES IN HULL AND EAST YORKSHIRE

African stories in Hull and East Yorkshire is a Heritage Lottery funded project which explores the histories of people with Black African descent who visited, worked or lived in this region between 1750 and 2007.

"Historical narratives have a responsibility to capture the whole story without censor. It is an unfortunate reality that some stories become invisible as they are placed on the periphery of popular narratives. The stories that are shared in this project challenge the misconception that Black presence has a brief history in the makeup of Britain and is a gateway to an honest view of history that includes all people - a history for all."

Gifty Burrows, Project Lead



Gifty Burrows
Project Lead



Dr Lauren Darwin
Lead Researcher



Thomas Burrows
Web Manager

The project's aim is to reveal and record histories which have often been overlooked and make them accessible to the public. Thus for two years, through a collection of historical research, family stories and oral testimonies, the project team have explored and brought to life Black history in Hull and East Yorkshire. Please visit the project website africansinyorkshireproject.com to view all of the fantastic stories that have been uncovered.

East Riding Museums Service and East Riding Archives have worked with the project team to deliver this exhibition. The African Stories in Hull and East Yorkshire team gratefully acknowledge the support of all of the people who have contributed to the success of this project.

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Working in partnership

ABOLITIONISTS

In the nineteenth century, several African American abolitionists travelled to Hull and East Yorkshire to speak out against the horrors of slavery.



Henry "Box" Brown

Men such as Henry "Box" Brown, Alexander Crummell, Reverend J. Sella Martin and William Craft visited establishments in Hull to enlist support from local audiences, who may have already been sympathetic to their cause because of the region's connection with William Wilberforce.

However, Moses Roper felt it was necessary to venture further into East Yorkshire to discuss the abolition of slavery.



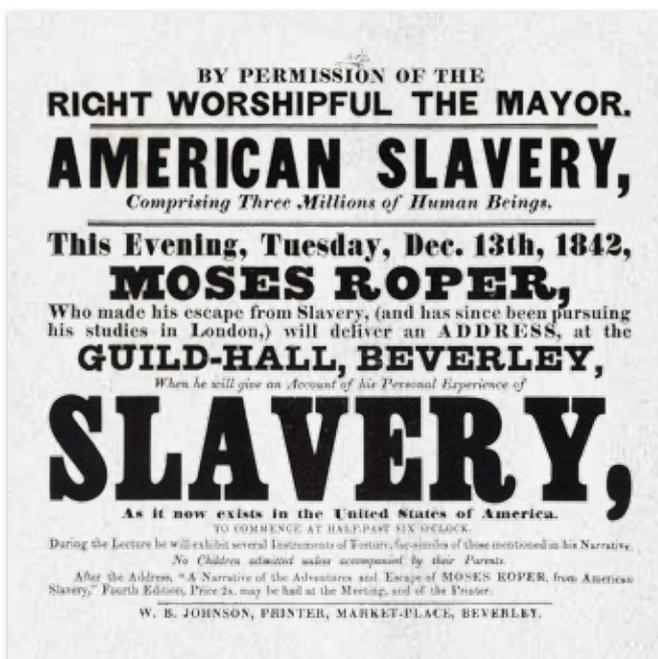
Portrait from *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper from American Slavery*, 1839. The book sold tens of thousands of copies in Britain and was one of the first slave narratives to use visual images to depict the practice.

Moses Roper was born enslaved in North Carolina around 1815. He suffered extreme acts of torture and violence, which he believed was because of his very light skin, that he inherited from his White plantation owner father.

During his time in bondage, Roper was owned by several different masters and tried to escape on at least twenty occasions which led to him being frequently whipped, forced to wear chains and in one horrifying episode of punishment having his face burned. However, through determination and bravery in 1834 Roper eventually escaped from the shackles of slavery.

Shortly after regaining his freedom, Roper came to Britain and conducted extensive lecturing tours. On 8 October 1839, he visited the Public Rooms in Jarratt Street, Hull to give a personal account of American slavery. Three years later, in December 1842, the abolitionist travelled to Beverley where he gave "the most harrowing description of slavery" at the Guildhall.

His final visit to East Yorkshire was in January 1843, when he spoke out against slavery at the Independent Chapel in Howden taking with him instruments of torture used on slaves in America.



An advertisement for a talk by Black abolitionist Moses Roper which took place at the Guildhall in Beverley in 1842
East Riding Archives DDX1942/1/410-411

DID YOU KNOW?

Between 1514 and 1866 over 12.5 million Africans were displaced by the transatlantic slave trade.

ACTIVISTS

Activists of African descent have featured prominently in Hull and East Yorkshire over the last three centuries.

During their time in this region, they have spoken out against many abuses and have enlisted local support for their campaigns for equality and better human rights in Britain and the rest of the world.

One of the most famous Black activists to have visited Hull and East Yorkshire was Dr Harold Moody (1882 – 1947). His campaign for racial equality as the founder and chairman of the League of Coloured Peoples brought him to Hull with Jamaican activist Una Marson in July 1933 for the centenary of William Wilberforce's death.



Dr Harold Moody (far right) at a reception at Hull's Guildhall in 1933, Hull Museums Collections

In an emotionally charged speech, Moody stated that he found it an honour to have been invited to speak at the event. He went on to highlight the role that Wilberforce played in the abolition of the slave trade and encouraged people to fight against the slavery that still existed in the world.

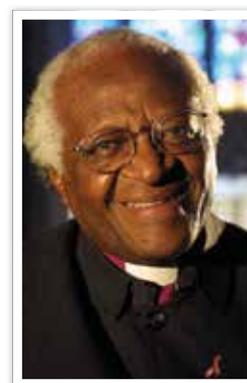
Moody returned to the region during the Second World War as the head of the London Missionary Society. He visited religious institutions in Hull and East Yorkshire including the Beverley Lairgate Congregational Church and the Cottingham Zion United Reformed Church in late November 1943.



Beverley Lairgate Congregational Church, 1977
East Riding Archives DDX865/2/3



John Kufuor on a visit to Hull in 2006,
photo courtesy of WISE



Archbishop Tutu visiting
Hull in May 2007, CC

DID YOU KNOW?

Some of the prominent Black activists who have visited this region including James Baldwin, C. L. R. James, Desmond Tutu and John Kufuor have connections with the University of Hull. Read more about their time in this region on our website.

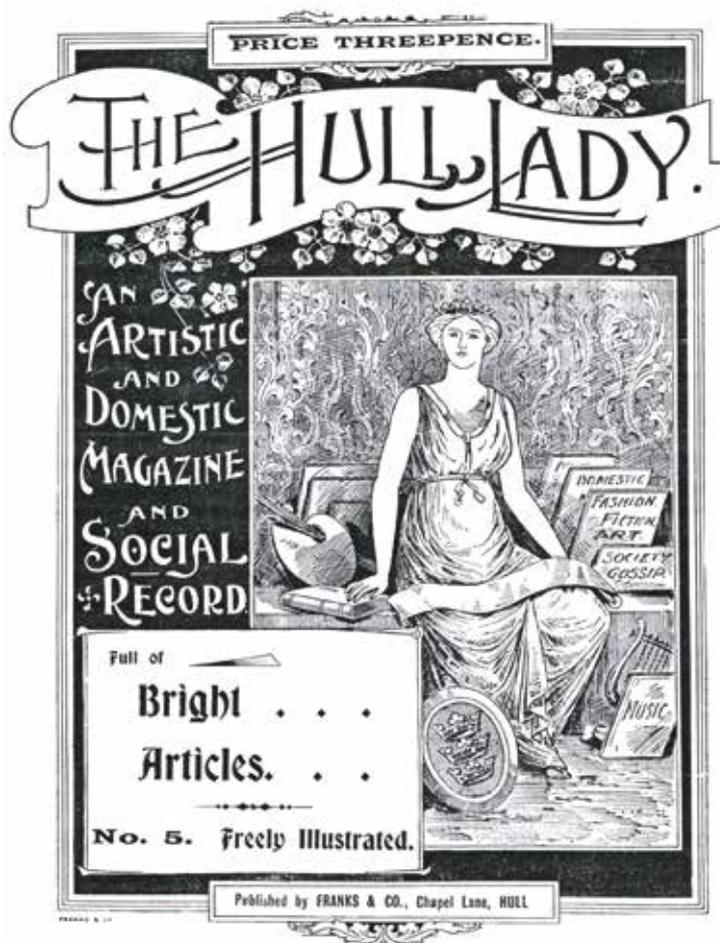
ACTIVISTS

While many Black activists visited Hull and East Yorkshire, some lived in the region for a short time before they went on to fight for equality and civil rights on a national and global stage.

Dusé Mohamed Ali

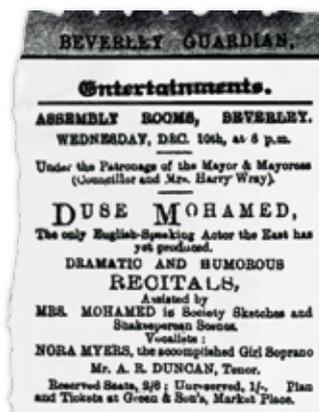


Dusé Mohamed Ali (1866 – 1945) was an Egyptian-born actor, writer, businessman, entrepreneur and political activist. He was sent to England to study as a child but after the death of his father was forced to end his studies and support himself.



Cover of *The Hull Lady*

Dusé worked as an actor for a time with Wilson Barrett's theatrical company, touring America and Canada. However, by 1899 he settled in Hull where he eventually found employment as a clerk with the Wilson shipping line. He later developed a number of creative careers, including writing for regional newspapers and a women's magazine called *The Hull Lady*. He also gave elocution lessons and in 1902 performed in several Shakespearean plays around East Yorkshire.



On 10 December Ali appeared at the Assembly Rooms in Beverley where he presented "dramatic and humorous recitations assisted by Mrs. Mohamed."

The Beverley Guardian,
6 Dec 1902

Ali tried hard to establish a niche for himself in Hull, becoming a founding member of the Shakespearean Society in 1903. After this date, he performed in plays across the country and by 1911 had settled in London where he became editor of several high-profile magazines including *The African Times and Orient Review*. He went on to influence many well-known Black political activists.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dusé Mohamed Ali's importance to Hull has recently been acknowledged by his inclusion in the Lord Mayors' Centenary plaques.

RELIGION

Between 1750 and 2007, many religious figures of African descent have visited Hull and East Yorkshire. The majority have been connected to the Christian Church and have ventured to this region to preach to local congregations.

The Black Knight

Reverend John Henry Hector (1845 – 1914) was an African American who preached on both sides of the Atlantic. He was known as 'The Black Knight' and gave lectures on the evils of slavery, the American Civil War and the temperance movement.

He visited Hull and East Yorkshire three times in the 1890s. At Beverley's Corn Exchange, Alderman Hall introduced him as the perfect speaker on slavery and alcohol because *"he had experienced not only the thralldom of a slave owner, but witnessed under many aspects the degrading resulting from strong drink."*



A family portrait of Reverend Hector, private collection



Beverley Echo, 18 May 1898



Beverley Corn Exchange, East Riding Museums Service

Salim Charles Wilson

Salim C. Wilson (1859 – 1946) was an African prince who was enslaved by Arabs. After emancipation, he converted to Christianity and eventually settled in Scunthorpe.

His work as a preacher brought him to Hull and East Yorkshire on several occasions in the 1920s and 30s. He spoke to large congregations about religion, African practices and contemporary slavery, which he described as *"an insult to both God and man."*

Venues Wilson gave lectures at included Bourne Chapel in Drifffield and Hull's Thornton Hall, Garden Village Hall, Anlaby Road Wesleyan Church and the Boulevard Baptist Church. Wilson also attended the Wilberforce centenary celebrations in 1933.



Private collection image of Salim C. Wilson



Salim Wilson and Black journalist and writer Una Marson looking at a waxwork model of William Wilberforce during the 1933 centenary celebrations, Hull Museums Collection

RELIGION

While many religious figures have visited this region, none have made a lasting impact like Reverend Cragg Haynes (1821 – 1883) who left an important legacy in the small village of Swinefleet.

Known as the “Black Vicar” by his Victorian congregation, Cragg Haynes was one of the earliest formally trained clergymen with African heritage in England and probably the first in Yorkshire.

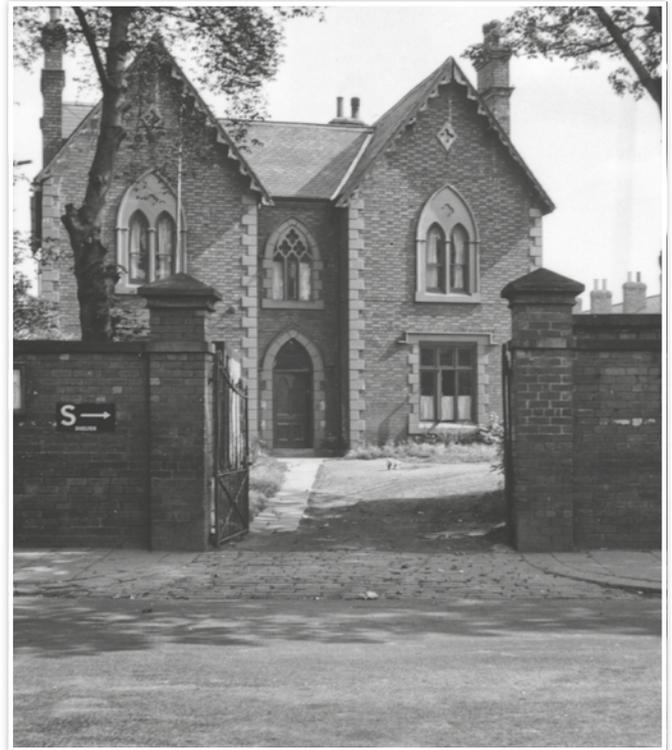
Rev Cragg Haynes arrived in Swinefleet as a curate on 19 December 1851. He tutored boys in his spare time to provide extra income and remarkably by 1854 he had established a school in the village which took in boarders and day pupils.

Twelve years later, with his own income and inheritances, Cragg Haynes built Empson Villas at Old Goole after purchasing land from Empson, a major landowner in the area.

In 1872, Cragg Haynes was appointed the vicar of Swinefleet. However, he found the church in a bad state and worked for 10 years to renovate the religious establishment. He died suddenly on 20 September 1883.

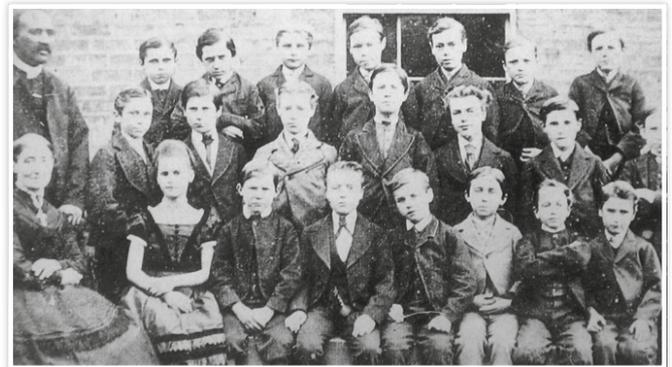
His obituary read:

“For several years the Rev gentleman has been very anxious to have the church at Swinefleet rebuilt and restored as for some time it has been in ruinous and dilapidated condition. The results of his efforts have been improvements of no slight character, the whole of which will be very shortly finished. The Reverend gentleman’s powers as a reader were acknowledged through the district.”



Empson Villa

In 1866, Reverend Cragg Haynes used funds from his Swinefleet school to build Empson Villa in Goole. Classrooms were on the first floor with bedrooms for boarders in the attic. This 1946 image is from East Riding Museums Service - the building is now Goole Working Mens Club.



Reverend Haynes and his wife Henrietta with pupils of Swinefleet Grammar School. Joseph Rank, later known for the flour mill, was a pupil. His son was J. Arthur Rank (films).

OCCUPATIONS

Between 1750 and 2007, people of African descent have worked and lived in Hull and East Yorkshire contributing to the social, economic and political landscape of this region.

In recent years, Black men and women have been present in a range of successful professions which is demonstrated in the family and contemporary voices sections of the project. However, historically, there is evidence to suggest that the greatest number of people with African heritage worked as servants or as mariners in this region.

Baptisms

A key source of evidence for Black servants in our region is baptism records. Black servants were often baptised when they came into service.

In addition, because adult baptisms were very unusual, even when a race is not given, it is likely that these individuals were Black. In 1743 the Archbishop of York wrote to all clergymen requesting information about which parishioners were not baptised. In response, the curate at Beswick, Thomas Mease, wrote:

"I know of none who come to church in this place that are not baptised, except one call'd Beswick, a Black, who is about twenty years of age; he was in the East Indies, sold to Mr William Draper, Esq of this Town. He is a Youth of no learning, and but of very slender capacity."

Three years after this correspondence Beswick was baptised in Kilnwick and given the Christian name John.

The presence of Black servants can be found on gravestones, in newspaper articles and recorded within the pages of the census. This gravestone, discovered in Elvington, has a touching tribute to a long-serving employee.

Black Servants in East Yorkshire

A case study of Boynton has shown that three Black servants lived and worked in the village during the eighteenth century - Richard Pompey, John Pomfret, a "negro servant to Mr. Knowsley" and Peter Horsfield, a footman to Sir George Strickland.

Black servants have also been identified in Market Weighton and Beverley. John Denbir "a Negro Boy" was baptised and buried at Market Weighton in the 1770s whilst "John Robinson, about 18 years of age, an African servant to Mr. R. Graham...residing in Kell Gate" was baptised in Beverley Minster in 1796.



Portrait of the 3rd Earle of Burlington, Richard Boyle, and his family which hung in Londesborough Hall, Market Weighton, courtesy of Chatsworth House Trust

**To the Memory of
FISHER MURRAY
A faithful Black servant
who came from Madeira with
Thomas Cheap Esqr who was
Consul there, and after living
Sixty Years in the Family
died the 18th Dec 1821**



OCCUPATIONS: MARITIME

Over the last three centuries, local ports have attracted a significant number of Black sailors.

While some merely came on shore to spend their wages or until they could gain employment on board another vessel, some settled in and around the seafaring ports of Hull and Scarborough. Together, these Black seamen contributed to the economic, social and cultural fabric of this region.

Scarborough

Extensive work on surviving ship musters dated between 1747 and 1765, show that several sailors of African descent worked on board Scarborough ships.

These included John Baptist, Cato Ray and Robert Suck. However, only Robert Slaves appears to have been a resident of Scarborough.

Hull

As Hull is the largest port in the region it had the highest population of Black maritime workers. Some were dockers while others were sailors.

However, out of the hundreds of seamen of African descent who arrived in the region, only a small proportion settled in Hull and had families. These included men such as Marcus Bailey, Aubrey Bowers and Hussein Mohamed Ali.

All had sons who went on to work in the maritime sphere contributing to the regions rich seafaring history. Sadly, one of Ali's sons, Adam was killed in 1968 when the Kingston Peridot sank. The vessel was part of the Triple Trawler Tragedy which affected many local families and sparked campaigns by the "headscarf revolutionaries" to improve conditions on board trawlers.



West View of Hull c. 1840 by L. Shaw, courtesy of Burton Constable Foundation



Kingston Peridot, *Hull Daily Mail*



Triple Trawler Tragedy mural on Hessle Road, *Hull Daily Mail*



Adam Ali, *Hull Daily Mail*

OCCUPATIONS: SAILORS

A selection of seaman of African descent who worked on board ships that sailed out of ports in this region during the twentieth century.

Their C.R. 10 cards show where they were born, their date of birth and information about their rating and career.

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate 2219509
M.N.S. Region Regional No.
Surname *Edwin*
Christian Name *Edwin*
Rating *Deckman* R.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of D/T Certificate
Date and Place of Birth *Sept 1889 St Vincent B.W.I.*
Nationality *British* Father *British*
Height Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks
Dis. A No. *1234* N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin



Edwin Simmons

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate 2219509
M.N.S. Region Regional No. *4790072*
Surname *Shaw*
Christian Name *Alfred Edward*
Rating *Deck* R.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of D/T Certificate
Date and Place of Birth *12 Dec 1896 Barbados*
Nationality *British* Father *British*
Height Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks
Dis. A No. *451* N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin



Alfred Edward Shaw

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate 218919
M.N.S. Region Regional No.
Surname *S.H.A.W*
Christian Name *Percival Merlin*
Rating *Cabin Boy* R.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of D/T Certificate
Date and Place of Birth *7 12 01 Kingston Jamaica*
Nationality *Brit* Father *Brit*
Height Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks
Dis. A No. *990865* N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin



Percival Merlin Shaw

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate 832204
M.N.S. Region Regional No.
Surname *Allsopp*
Christian Name *Henry S.C.*
Rating *Deck* R.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of D/T Certificate
Date and Place of Birth *13 May 1878 Georgetown*
Nationality *Brit* Father *Brit*
Height Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks
Dis. A No. *701650* N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin



Henry S. C. Allsopp

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate 221819
M.N.S. Region Regional No. *4897002*
Surname *Jordan*
Christian Name *Fred*
Rating *Deck* R.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of D/T Certificate
Date and Place of Birth *11 Dec 1878 Barbados*
Nationality *Brit* Father *Brit*
Height Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks
Dis. A No. *751707* N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin



Fred Jordan

C.R. 10. No. of Identity Certificate 832447
M.N.S. Region Regional No.
Surname *Burns*
Christian Name *Felix*
Rating *Deck* R.N.R. No.
No. and Grade of D/T Certificate
Date and Place of Birth *15 11 78 Nassau New Providence*
Nationality *Brit* Father *Brit* *Bahama*
Height Colour Hair Eyes
Tattoo Marks
Dis. A No. *922169* N.H. Insurance No.
Name and Address of Next of Kin



Felix Burns

DID YOU KNOW?

Sailors of African descent played a pivotal role in the First World War, but once the conflict ended unemployment rates soared. Insisting that a colour bar be implemented, disgruntled white sailors started race riots in Liverpool and Cardiff in 1919 and Hull in 1920. Although Black men were victims, several were arrested whilst their white attackers were seldom reprimanded.

WAR AND CONFLICT

Although it has only recently been acknowledged, people of African descent have contributed to British military campaigns for many centuries.

For example, men such as John Lewis Friday, who married Mary Woodall in Sculcoates, Hull on 29 December 1817 fought in the Battle of Waterloo.

More recently, global conflicts such as the First and Second World Wars have also included people of African descent in each branch of the British Forces.

The East Yorkshire Regiment

During the First World War, soldiers of African descent were enlisted into regiments across Britain. Even those that have been traditionally perceived as white, including the East Yorkshire regiment, often had Black servicemen in their battalions.

In 1915, the Hull Soldiers Club gathered for an awards ceremony, in which a "coloured soldier" of the East Yorkshire Regiment was given a prize for bravery. Unfortunately, it has been difficult to work out the name of this gentleman as there were several Black servicemen in the regiment at this time including Theophilus Davis who sadly died during the First World War and is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial in Belgium.



Theophilus Davis' medal card and a regimental cap badge

Palmer Samson

Private Palmer Samson who was born in Calabar, Nigeria around 1897, enlisted at Beverley during the First World War.

We know very little about his life, other than that he was adopted by Susannah Wilson and lived with her at 10 Bolton Terrace, Hotham Street, Hull. Although he signed up in East Yorkshire, Samson ended up in the 1st Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment which fought on the front line in Belgium. He was killed in action at the Battle of Broodseinde, near Ypres on 4 October 1917.



An early 19th century painting showing buglers and drummers, including a Black serviceman, on the parade ground. Image courtesy of The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire Collection, York Army Museum

WAR AND CONFLICT

The Merchant Marine

The Merchant Marine was one of the largest sectors in which Black men from the Commonwealth contributed to Britain's war effort, although their stories remain absent from the history of the Home Front.



Many survived the global conflicts, however some like Thomas Henry Biggs were severely injured and others like Adolphus Meheux lost their lives.

Adolphus Meheux,
Hull Daily Mail 1917

DID YOU KNOW?

Adolphus Meheux's name appears on the memorial board at Paragon Interchange, Hull to honour those men who died in the First World War.



Marcus Bailey (left) wearing his HMS Chester cap



Lilian Bailey in her WAAF uniform and on her wedding day with husband Ramsay Bader



The Bailey Family

Like many families, the Bailey's served in both the First and Second World Wars.

Marcus Bailey was born on 18 July 1883 in Bridgetown, Barbados. In 1902, Marcus and his friend Alonzo Herbert joined the crew of the Goole registered vessel, Charlotte and made the voyage across the Atlantic to Hull. Between 1903 and 1909 Marcus sailed on trawlers out of Hull and Grimsby. In 1909, he moved from Hull to Fleetwood and met his wife Lilian McGowan. When the First World War broke out Marcus became part of the Merchant Marine. In 1924 Marcus, Lilian and their three children moved back to Hull. By April 1925, Lilian had left the family and Marcus had suffered a mental breakdown and died. Their two sons, Frank and Jim, plus their daughter Lilian were taken into care.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Frank Bailey enlisted in the Royal Navy but was discharged because of severe asthma. His younger brother Jim Bailey served in the Merchant Navy, but died, aged 25, when his ship was torpedoed around 400 miles south of Iceland, and their sister Lilian joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Lilian had a pioneering role during the conflict as she was part of the first group of women to be allowed on to planes to check for leaks in their vital pipes. She rose to the rank of Aircraftwoman First Class and then was promoted to Acting Corporal.

WAR AND CONFLICT

During the Second World War, a significant number of Black men, many from the West Indies, served in the RAF.

RAF Ground Crew

During the Second World War, West Indian newspapers such as the *Kingston Gleaner* encouraged men to sign up to help with the war effort.

In total, Britain gained 5,400 volunteers from the Caribbean to train as RAF ground crew of which approximately 4,000 did their basic training at RAF Hunmanby Moor, Filey. In 1994, around 40 of the men who trained in this region returned to Filey for a reunion.



West Indian RAF servicemen at Reighton Chapel, *Filey & Hunmanby Mercury*, 25 June, 1994



Billy Strachan (far left) with his fellow crew members

RAF Aircrew

In addition to the groundcrew volunteers, more than 400 men from the West Indies served as RAF aircrew.

One of the first was William (Billy) Strachan from Jamaica who was fresh out of school and had sold all his possessions to travel to Britain. Billy was stationed for a time at Brough, East Yorkshire. He survived a tour of 30 operations as a wireless operator and air gunner before training as a pilot.

At the end of the war he became a liaison officer in the RAF sorting out racial disturbances and rose to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. After leaving the RAF, Billy became a legal administrator and a political activist.

Vivian Florent



Although the RAF gained substantially from Black volunteers from the Caribbean colonies, not all airmen of African descent were from distant shores.

London born Vivian Florent had joined the RAF in 1941 and after two years was promoted to Sergeant Air Gunner. On 8 June 1944, he boarded a Halifax bomber at RAF Pocklington listed as a flight engineer. Shortly after the aircraft had taken off, it ran into difficulties and the plane crashed at Home Farm, Seaton Ross.

Unfortunately, Florent and the rest of the crew perished. He was laid to rest in Pocklington Burial Ground.

WAR AND CONFLICT: AFRICAN AMERICAN SERVICEMEN

During WW2 around 50 African American servicemen were based at a US Army Camp in Cottingham now part of the Lawns student accommodation.

It is believed that they were responsible for unloading transport ships that brought supplies and armaments to the Allied Forces in Europe.

One of these men was Wylie Young, who met local woman Ellen Cole at a dance in the Kings Street Rooms in 1942. A friendship developed, leading to visits by the soldier to Ellen's family home.

Racial segregation was still practised in America and the Colonel of Wylie's regiment asked her to *"refrain from entertaining Black servicemen as mixing was not permitted"*. Ellen replied *"Colonel, you are not in America now... it is my home and that's the end of the matter"*.

In late 1943, Wylie was due to come for tea but never turned up. Evidently, the regiment had been confined to barracks before a move to a new location as part of the build-up for D-Day. Ellen never saw Wylie again, something she was very sad about. Unfortunately, it is not known precisely where Wylie came from or which regiment he was serving with.



Wylie with Alan Bernard Gulliver and Ena Stephenson, whose grandmother worked with Ellen at the Kings Street Rooms, private collection

"These Black soldiers were a real novelty to us kids who'd never seen a Black person before, in fact we were a bit scared but not enough to prevent us scrounging for sweets and chewing gum which they were generous with."

Denis Price, local schoolboy

Holme-on-Spalding Moor

In the 1950s, during the Cold War, American servicemen returned to East Yorkshire when the RAF airfield at Holme-on-Spalding Moor was used as a United States Air Force (USAF) reserve station while their intended main base at Elvington was being developed.

Although we do not know how many African American servicemen were based there, we do know that Black airmen such as James Clinton Jordan spent their spare time in Hull and East Yorkshire.

A brawl in the city one evening led to Jordan being sentenced to hang for murder. However, he was successful on appeal and his case became a legal landmark as it was the first time medical negligence was considered to have contributed to the death of the victim rather than the assault itself.



A Halifax bomber taking off from the RAF base at Holme-on-Spalding Moor during the Second World War © IWM [CH 11529]

DID YOU KNOW?

The area in East Yorkshire where the Holme-on-Spalding Moor airbase was situated is known as The Land of Nod!

FAMILY

Families with African heritage have been a part of the rich social and economic history of this region for many decades.

Their experiences illustrate how important their contributions have been to the local area. The project team are very grateful to all the individuals who have come forward to share their interesting stories.

Robin Hope



School photo of Robin Hope, 1975

In 1988, Robin Hope travelled to Hull to meet a friend. After several subsequent visits to this region, he met his ex-wife and in 1990, decided to leave London, where he had been born and raised, to move to Hull.

In 1991, the couple had a son at Hedon Road maternity hospital. Due to the lack of job opportunities in Hull and East Yorkshire in the early 1990s, Robin commuted between his home in Hull and job in London. However, in 1994 he gained employment at Willerby Caravans. It was during this time that, he felt, he needed a greater challenge and volunteered with Aids Action which involved outreach work in places like Greenwood Avenue, East Park, Bridlington and Beverley.

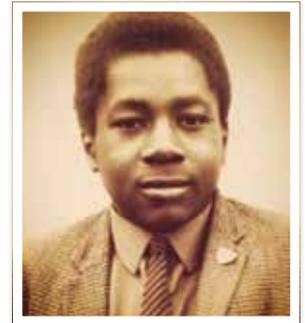


Robin between his parents with siblings Fabian, Eugene and Lorraine, 1974

Robin pursued a career in youth and community work and gained a diploma from the University of Hull in 2008. He continues to work in this sector with people from a whole host of different backgrounds.

The Fox Family

Kenny Fox was born in the Caribbean island of St Kitts. His mother came to Britain in the 1950s and settled in Derby working for the NHS.



Kenneth Llewellyn Fox, aged 16, as a prefect at Dale Secondary School, Derby

Kenny arrived in England for the first time aged ten and settled with his mother, her new husband, four sisters and a brother.

At school Kenny made lots of friends. He was sporty and at the age of 16 took up Taekwondo later becoming a 3rd Dan Black belt.

It was Kenny's second marriage that brought him to East Yorkshire. He married in Beverley in 1990 and the couple settled in East Yorkshire near his wife's family.

Although naturally skilled as a carpenter and joiner, Kenny attended East Riding College to gain the appropriate qualifications. He now makes beautiful wooden furniture for local company Alexander Ellis formerly known as Beverley Pine and Farmhouse Furniture.



The Fox family returning to St Kitts in 2012

FAMILY: THE WEEKS FAMILY

The Weeks have strong ties with Hull and East Yorkshire and are particularly well known by those connected to the agricultural sector.



By 1901 Nathaniel Weeks (1871-1953) had moved from Barbados to Hull. He married Harriet Annie Jefferson and the couple had three sons, Harry, Fred and Ernest, who died aged 15.

Harry and Fred both served in the Second World War working at Blackburn's in Brough (later British Aerospace).

Despite not being on the front line, Fred had a serious brush with death in 1940 when he was testing a prototype flying boat, the Blackburn B20, which had been built in Brough and assembled in the Blackburn Aircraft company's factory at Dumbarton, Scotland.

Fred recalled that on 7 April 1940, he and four other men boarded the aircraft, however two minutes into their flight they realised something was wrong. The pilot then gave orders for the crew to bail out, so Fred got into a parachute and jumped out of the plane.

Thankfully, he landed in water unharmed. Fred was later sent a gold caterpillar to celebrate his success in using a parachute to bail out of a failing aircraft becoming number 2,000 in the Caterpillar Club. After the war Fred and Harry became entrepreneurs in the farming industry.

The early deaths of both brothers changed the lives of their children. Their family stories have subsequently been shared by their sons Richard and Paul.



Nathaniel Weeks, who was a keen gardener, in his garden in Willerby in the 1940s/early 50s



Harry and Fred Weeks

Richard contributed an oral history testament to the project in which he explains how, in the absence of any acknowledgement that his grandfather was of African descent, he was 21 years old before he was made aware of his heritage.



CONTEMPORARY VOICES

You can listen to Richard's story on our audio post

africansinyorksireproject.com

has more information about the fascinating lives of the Weeks family

FAMILY: THE WEEKS BROTHERS

After the Second World War ended in 1945, the entrepreneurial brothers, Fred and Harry Weeks, looked to capitalise on their skills as engineers by setting up their own car repair garage in Lambert Street, Hull.

The business was initially slow. However, after twelve months, the brothers branched out and began producing doll's prams. Machinists were brought into the garage and a small number of women around the region were employed to make pieces for the prams in their homes.

As their business began to grow, the brothers started to make hen batteries. When delivering and installing these large chicken coups to farms around East Yorkshire, they learned that the maintenance and production of farm machinery had suffered extensively during the war.

Thus, they were inspired to start designing and producing the first Weeks trailer. They delivered the first trailer to the farmer who originally sparked the idea and the second was taken to Beverley market in 1948. In total eleven trailers priced at £125 each were ordered that day.

In 1958 Fred and Harry made their most successful breakthrough. They designed and introduced into the market the WEEKS ALL-STEEL TRAILER.



The Weeks brothers and Weeks Trailers

It revolutionised the agricultural sector allowing large quantities of grain and foodstuff to be transported in one journey. This trailer was sold to farmers all over East Yorkshire.

In 1961 advancements in cattle farming prompted Fred and Harry to produce a high sided 3 in 1 trailer. This was a success from the outset. The Weeks brothers also started to make industrial trailers which added further to the company's success. To accommodate its growth, the business was moved to Ferry Road, Hessle in May 1968.

The Weeks family business moved from strength to strength and was a global success. However, sadly both brothers died in the 1970s.



Ted Moulton with Fred and Harry Weeks at Weeks

FAMILY

The Gittens Family

Claude Drayton Gittens was born in Bridgetown, Barbados around 1877. By 1910, he had moved to Hull and married Babette Marie Burkhardt. Together the couple had six children in this region.

Gittens had an eventful life at sea. He was once shipwrecked in the Atlantic after a fire was discovered on board his vessel and it blew up. Luckily all the sailors escaped by rowing to an uninhabited island, where they remained until they were picked up by an American patrol boat.

In April 1936, there were further fears for Gittens' life after the vessel he and his son were on board had been reported as in distress in the mid-Atlantic. Thankfully these fears were unfounded and both father and son returned to Hull safely.



Claude Drayton Gittens Senior and Junior, *Hull Daily Mail*

"AFRICAN CHIEF'S WEDDING AT HULL – Mr. Ben Simmons, Paramount Chief of Saltpond, Gold Coast, West Africa, with his bride, Miss Margaret Wyng of Anlaby Park Road, Hull, a coloured actress. Their wedding took place at St. Nicholas's Church, Hessle Common, Hull."

Hull Daily Mail

The Wyng Family

James Emmanuel Wyng was an African American sailor from Boston, Massachusetts. In the late 1890s he met and married Margaret Elizabeth Catchpole in Great Yarmouth.

The couple had four children together, three of whom were born in Hull. When James died at the age of 34, Margaret moved back to Hull to raise her family. She married twice more and had a further three children.

Margret Junior, Venus and Billy, three of Margaret and James' children pursued careers in the entertainment industry. All were talented singers and dancers and performed in Hull on several occasions.

Margaret moved to London after securing a position as a member of the Mississippi Chorus and Dancers for the production of Show Boat, which opened at the Drury Lane Theatre on 3 May 1928, where she met her husband Ben Simmons. The couple wed and moved back to Hull in 1929. However, unfortunately their marriage did not last long.



ENTERTAINMENT

Over the last three centuries, many famous actors and singers of African descent have performed in Hull and East Yorkshire.

Ira Aldridge: The African Roscius

The famous African American actor, Ira Fredrick Aldridge (1807-1867) was sent to Britain to pursue a career in the clergy but his passion for acting prompted him to move to London to learn his craft in the arts. His popularity as an actor grew quickly, landing him prominent roles and tours around the country.

Between 1829 and 1859, Aldridge performed in Hull and East Yorkshire several times. In July 1841, he took to the stage at the Assembly Rooms attached to the Nag's Head in Drifffield. Large crowds flocked to the venue eager to see the African American actor and it was reported that they were not disappointed by his performances which were all *"highly applauded."*

Aldridge was a pioneer of his time because of his race, talents and willingness to confront contemporary issues of slavery and freedom within his performances.



Othello the Moor of Venice, James Northcote, 1882
© Manchester Art Gallery / Bridgeman Images



The Fisk Jubilee Singers, Columbia University Collection

The Fisk University Jubilee Singers

The Fisk Jubilee Singers were a group of eleven young African Americans, nine of whom were former slaves.

They toured Europe and America singing previously unheard "negro spirituals" to raise funds for the newly established Fisk University in Tennessee. Over the course of two tours in the 1870s, the group sang in Hull, Scarborough and Goole.

The original Jubilee Singers disbanded in July 1878 but some of the members returned to the region in the late nineteenth century, performing in Drifffield and Hull.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fisk University was established in 1865 for the education of African Americans. It is still flourishing today.

ENTERTAINMENT

Although most Black entertainers arrived in Hull and East Yorkshire voluntarily and were celebrated by local audiences for their talents, a small minority were brought to the region as a curiosity.

The Brandesburton Pygmies

In the early 1900s, Colonel James Harrison of Brandesburton Hall decided to bring a group of diminutive Congo tribesmen, who would become known in the media as the Brandesburton Pygmies, to Britain.

Their names were Chief Bokane (35), Matuka (23), Mafutiminga (22), Mongongu (18) and two women, Amuriape (31) and Kuarke (22). They were toured around England and Scotland as exhibits and seen by over one million people. Despite the cold, they often appeared naked or in children's clothing.



East Riding Archives DDX1544/2/13

When they were brought to East Yorkshire in June 1905 they were showcased at Londesborough and Brandesburton Hall. Their presence attracted hundreds of local people who wanted to catch a glimpse of the pygmies.

Between touring, they came back to Brandesburton Hull where Harrison had erected a glass hot house to reproduce the temperatures of the rainforest.

They also spent many hours at the village blacksmith's forge, using horseshoe offcuts to make arrowheads.

Their final appearance in this region was at Hull's Albert Lecture Room in November 1906.



Hull Packet, 10 December, 1811

DID YOU KNOW?

The first known human exhibit was brought to this region in December 1811. She was the Hottentot Venus (probably the famous Sarah Baartman) and was displayed at Sam's Coffee House in Hull.

ENTERTAINMENT

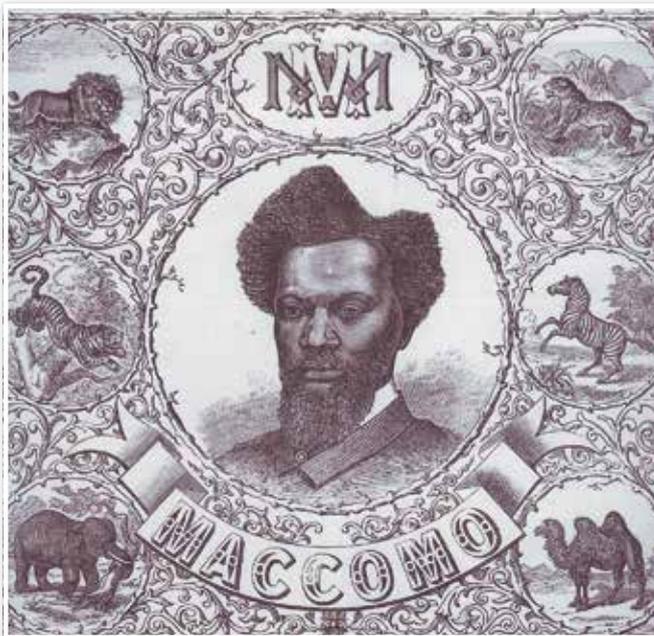
Lion Tamers

Lion Tamers were a significant part of travelling menageries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The first and probably the most famous Black lion tamer to appear in our region was Martini Maccomo, who performed with Manders' Royal Menagerie in Beverley as early as 1860.

The Beverley Guardian described a remarkable scene in which Maccomo, in "full costume" of the "African lion hunter" entered the town at the head of a large procession, driving a large "elegant" carriage drawn rather incredibly "by three camels and two horses."

It was recorded that Maccomo "astonished the company by his daring feats with the lions and tigers" and that his "command" over them "was truly surprising, as a mere wave of his hand was all that was required to put these striped animals through their evolutions."



Poster of Martini Maccomo, source jeffreygreen.co.uk



Hull Daily Mail, 9 November 1897

In 1865, Maccomo appeared at Scarborough with "Barbary Lions and Bengal tigers". Four years later, he performed at Hull Fair and in Beverley, where he paraded through the town in a grand carriage drawn by zebras.

In 1887, whilst working for Chipperfield's Menagerie in Driffield, Maccomo was injured by a lion but luckily survived the ordeal. Maccomo was followed by a host of other men of African descent who travelled to the region to show off their talents at Hull Fair, Beverley and more rural areas such as Driffield. Whilst these men were exceptionally talented, working with wild animals such as wolves, lions, tigers, hyenas and bears was extremely dangerous.



This carte de visite of a Black lion tamer was found on eBay.

Research has revealed that Sargano performed with Bostock and Wombwell's Menagerie in Beverley in 1885.

ENTERTAINMENT

Pablo Fanque



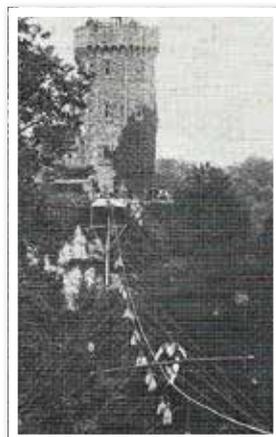
Pablo Fanque (1810 – 1871), born William Darby, is believed to have been the first Black English circus owner. He became famous in Victorian Britain for his extraordinary shows which remained hugely popular for around 30 years.

Fanque's circus performed mainly in Yorkshire and Lancashire, though he also travelled to Scotland, Ireland and other parts of England. In East Yorkshire, Fanque's circus performed at Hull, Scarborough and Bridlington.

The African Blondin

Carlos Trower was an African American high rope artist who wowed audiences on both sides of the Atlantic with his incredible performances throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

In 1868, a tightrope artist calling himself the African Blondin, who was most likely Carlos Trower, starred in a two-night show in Beverley. The *Hull and Eastern Counties Herald* reported that he performed in a field adjoining the Beverley Cattle Market in front of several hundred spectators.



The first night went well but the second night ended in disaster as the African Blondin had a serious accident after the rope snapped and he crashed to the ground.

PABLO FANQUE'S CIRCUS ROYAL,
TOWN-MEADOWS, ROCHDALE.

Grandest Night of the Season!
AND POSITIVELY THE
LAST NIGHT BUT THREE!
BEING FOR THE
BENEFIT OF MR. KITE,
(LATE OF WELLS'S CIRCUS) AND
MR. J. HENDERSON,
THE CELEBRATED SOMERSET THROWER!
WIRE DANCER, VAULTER, RIDER, &c.
On TUESDAY Evening, February 14th, 1843.

Messrs. KITE & HENDERSON, in announcing the following Entertainments, assure the Public that this Night's Production will be one of the most splendid ever produced in this town, having been some days in preparation.

Mr. KITE will, for this night only, introduce the CELEBRATED
HORSE, ZANTHUS!
Well known to be one of the best Broke Horses
IN THE WORLD!!!
Mr. HENDERSON will undertake the arduous Task of
THROWING TWENTY-ONE SOMERSETS,
ON THE SOLID GROUND.
Mr. KITE will appear, for the first time this season
On the Tight Rope,
When Two Gentlemen Amateurs of this Town will perform with him.

Mr. HENDERSON will, for the first time in Rochdale, introduce his extraordinary
TRAMPOLINE LEAPS
AND
SOMERSETS!
Over Men & Horses, through Hoops, over Garters, and lastly through a Hoop of REAL FIRE! In this branch of the profession Mr. H. challenges THE WORLD!

For particulars see Bills of the day.
JONES & CROSSKILL, PRINTERS AND BOOKSELLERS, YORKSHIRE STREET, ROCHDALE.

Advertisement for Pablo Fanque's circus

DID YOU KNOW?

The title of the song *Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite!* by the Beatles came from an advertisement for Pablo Fanque's circus.

“OH I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE”

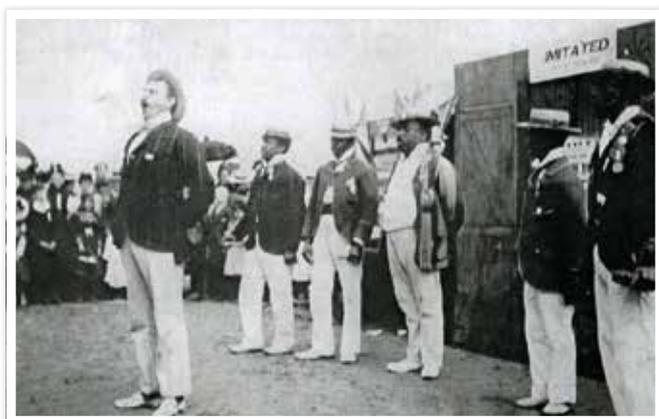
The Yorkshire coast is blessed with many beautiful seaside resorts which have attracted holidaymakers, entertainers and people seeking employment for the last 300 years.

Scarborough

Scarborough became famous as a spa town and by the 1730s had become Britain's first seaside resort. It attracted wealthy visitors accompanied by their servants, some of whom were Black.

Church records demonstrate that several Africans, such as John Pittess who was described as a “*Negro servant to Captain Winter*”, were baptised in the town. People of African descent who visited, worked or lived in Scarborough include John Fraser, described as “*a young man of colour who was well known in the town*”, who died when the fishing smack Rambler was lost at sea in 1869.

John Thomas Lewis was recorded in the 1891 census as being born in Africa and a firewood dealer and James Edward Philadelphia Moore was a flower-seller who lived in the town for several years at the turn of the twentieth century.



A group of entertainers, including Black performers, in Scarborough, c. 1900, from the collection of NYCC Libraries

Bridlington Spa



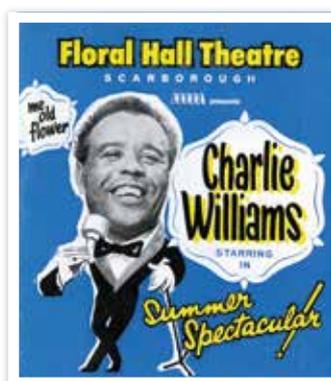
The front cover of a 1932 Bridlington Spa programme, image courtesy of East Riding Museums Service

Bridlington's top-class venue, the Spa attracted several well-known Black performers including world famous actor and singer Paul Robeson, African American vocal and piano duo Layton and Johnstone, Little Richard and Charlie Williams.

Charlie Williams

Charlie Adolphus Williams (1927 - 2006), who was awarded an MBE for his charity work, broke all box-office records at Scarborough's Floral Hall when he topped the bill in 1973.

Charlie started life as a coal miner before becoming a successful footballer. He tried his hand at singing but found the audience preferred his between-numbers patter, leading to his successful career as a comedian.



His act was based on the fact that although he was Black he was “*Yorkshire born and bred*” with the accent to match.

Image courtesy of Scarborough Collections, care of Scarborough Museums Trust

SPORT

Clive Sullivan - A local hero

Clive Sullivan had a magnificent career. Although, he was not from this region, he was adopted as a local and was celebrated as the uniting force across Hull after playing for both Hull FC and Hull KR.

Professionally, he earned the stunning accolade of captaining both Great Britain and the Welsh Rugby teams in the 1960s and 1970s. He also received an MBE for his achievements.

Away from the spotlight Clive was a loving husband and father. He met his wife Ros in July 1964 at The Duke of Cumberland pub in Ferriby where local group The Aces were playing. Ros recalled that:

"The music was great, the room was packed, and the evening was going well. Unfortunately, the bitter lemon was not going down well so I produced my bag of sherbet lemons and handed them around the girl at my table, then a hand appeared from behind me and coolly took a sweet. I looked around and saw a handsome man with a big smile on his face. This was my first meeting with the man who was to become my husband."

The night after the couple met they went to Bridlington and Clive escorted Ros back to her home in Welton. After their second date they began to see each other regularly.

Ros and Clive married at St Helen's Church in Welton and had their reception at the village hall where The Aces played. The couple went on to have two children. Anthony, their son followed in his father's footsteps and played rugby for Hull KR and Wales during the 1990s. Sadly, Clive died of cancer in 1985 at the young age of 42.



Terry Devonshire, Brian Sullivan, Keith Barnwell, Rosalyn and Clive
Photo © Rosalyn Daniel



Photo © Hull Daily Mail



Clive, Rosalyn,
Lisa and Anthony

A LASTING PROJECT

On the project website there are many more stories about people of African descent who are connected to Hull and East Yorkshire, alongside in-depth studies of some of the themes explored in this exhibition. It is hoped that, over the coming years, more stories and research will be added.

There is also numerous short stories about Black lives which, with future research and information from the public, could be expanded upon. Examples include the "Simmons Orphans", a Black photographer called Henry Glover and an unknown Black sailor who drowned at Bridlington.

The Simmons Children

An article in the Hull Daily Mail led to the discovery of Edwin, Frederick and Albert – three Black orphans from a Hull seafaring family who had been evacuated to West Cowick near Snaith and were supported by American troops.

American Soldiers "Adopt" Three Hull Orphans

Coloured United States troops discovered the three, bright, dark-skinned, curly-haired youngsters at an evacuees' party. Tremendously intrigued, they at once "adopted" the trio and made them the mascots of the unit. Generously they agreed, on learning that the boys were orphans, to provide for their upkeep and education, and it was not long before upwards of £160 was subscribed by the soldiers.

Hull Daily Mail, 26 February, 1943

The Great Gale

An article in the *Bridlington Free Press* has revealed that a Black sailor was one of the many lives lost in the 1871 storm known as the Great Gale.

ONE BODY [WAS] THAT OF THE COLOURED MAN WHO ESCAPED FROM THE BRIG THAT STRUCK NEAR TO THE END OF THE PIER, AND WHOSE SPLENDID SWIMMING WOULD HAVE SAVED HIM BUT THAT HE WAS DISABLED BY BREAKING HIS LEG IN SOME WAY, AND THE POOR FELLOW WAS THUS COMPELLED TO SUCCUMB TO THE WAVES THROUGH WHICH HE HAD BATTLED SO BRAVELY, AND SANK CLOSE TO THE NORTH SIDE OF THE PIER.

Bridlington Free Press, 18 February, 1871



A painting depicting the 1871 Great Gale in which seventy men are known to have died. East Riding Museums Service

FURTHER READING

Interested in British Black History and want to learn more?
Some suggestions for further reading...

Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, Pluto Press, 1994

David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*, Pan, 2017

David Dabydeen, et. al, (eds), *The Oxford Companion to British Black History*, OUP, 2007

Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story*, Oneworld, 2017

Kathleen Chater, *Untold Histories: Black People in England...c.1660-1807*, Manchester University Press, 2009

Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians*, Frank Cass, 1998

Gretchen Gerzina (ed), *Black Victorians/Black Victoriana*, Rutgers University Press, 2003

Paul Gilroy, *Black Britain: A Photographic History*, Saqi Books, 2011

Ray Costello, *Black Salt: Seafarers of African Descent on British Ships*, Liverpool University Press, 2012

Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery*, Macmillan, 2005

Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, Picador, 1997

Eric Williams, *British Capitalism & British Slavery*, Diasporic Africa Press, 2013

Joseph E. Inikori, *Africans & the Industrial Revolution in England*, Cambridge University Press, 2002

Madge Dresser & Andrew Hann (eds.), *Slavery and the British Country House*, English Heritage, 2013.

David Olusoga, *The World's War*, Head of Zeus, 2014

Stephen Bourne, *Black Poppies: Britain's Black Community and the Great War*, The History Press, 2014

Stephen Bourne, *The Motherland Calls: Britain's Black Servicemen and Women, 1939-1945*, The History Press, 2012

Stephen Bourne, *Mother Country: Britain's Black Community on the Home Front, 1939-1945*, The History Press, 2010

Mark Johnson, *Caribbean Volunteers at War*, Pen & Sword Aviation, 2014

Robert N. Murray, *Lest We Forget: The Experiences of World War II Westindian Ex-service Personnel*, Hansib, 1996

Hakim Adi, *The History Of: African and Caribbean Communities in Britain*, Wayland, 2014 (this book is particularly suitable for younger readers)

Reading list compiled by Audrey Dewjee



Othello the Moor of Venice, James Northcote, 1882
© Manchester Art Gallery / Bridgeman Images