

BLACK HISTORY IS OUR HISTORY

LESSONS TO GROW ON

Black people in Britain: before the
Slave trade

African/ Black history does not start with
slavery

KS2 and up

Part 1

Marsha Garratt

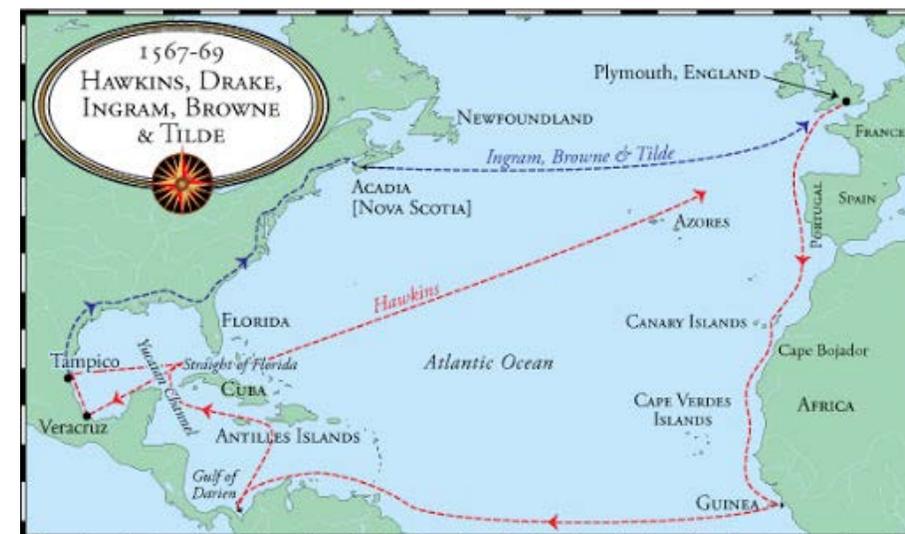
Beginning of Britain's trade in African people

- John Hawkins was a British naval captain.
- He led a voyage to violently kidnap African people in Guinea in 1562.
- The profit he made led Queen Elizabeth 1, to fund his later voyages.
- This was the start of Britain's involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade.
- The map shows the route Hawkins took.
- Britain would become the biggest trader in African people, using the concept of race (a myth promoting natural white superiority and Black inferiority) to justify its involvement.
- Before this, Black people had been living in Britain for 1000s of years.
- Lets meet some of them

John Hawkins



Queen Elizabeth 1



Cheddar man

- Cheddar man is the oldest skeleton found in Britain.
- His skeleton was found in Gough's cave, near the village of Cheddar in Somerset (shown in photograph)
- He lived 10000 years ago, also called the stone age and he died a violent death.
- Using science we can get an idea of what he looked like.
- He had dark skin but we do not know where he came from or that he was of African origin.



Black Romans in Britain



- Rome was a huge Empire from 27 BC – 476 AD.
- In dates, BC means before Jesus Christ was born; AD means anno domini in Latin which translates as the year of our lord, or after Jesus was born.
- African people were part of the Roman empire.
- Some African people came to Britain as soldiers and generals.
- There is evidence of African soldiers being stationed at Hadrian's wall in Cumbria (highlighted in red on the map)
- These soldiers manned the fort. A bit like in the picture.

Ivory bangle lady - York



- In 1901 the remains of a skeleton were found in York.
- The remains became known as the Ivory Bangle Lady as the sarcophagus (coffin) where the remains were found had ivory bangles in.
- Ivory bangle lady lived in Roman ruled York in the 4th century.
- She was from a wealthy family and of mixed North African heritage
- Her face was reconstructed by scientists shown in the picture.
- In her sarcophagus were rich objects, shown in the picture.
- In Roman times the colour blue was seen as protection from evil in afterlife.
- What objects can you see in the picture? Are any blue?

Beachy head lady



- Beachy head lady grew up in east Sussex in southeast England.
- Her skeleton was found in Beachy Head in 1953 which is why she has that name.
- She was of African origin and lived in Britain when it was under Roman rule.
- That's 1,800 years ago!
- We don't know if beachy head lady was born in England or the African continent
- She was about 30 years old when she died.
- She was 5 feet tall and ate a good diet of fish and vegetables.
- The plaque shown in the picture is a tribute to Black British history
- Get a tape measure and see how tall 5 feet is? Are you taller or smaller than Beachy Head Lady?
- How far is Beachy Head from where you live?

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The Tudor monarchs



Henry VII
1458-1509



Henry VIII
1509 - 1547



Edward VI
1547 - 1553



Jane Grey
July 1553



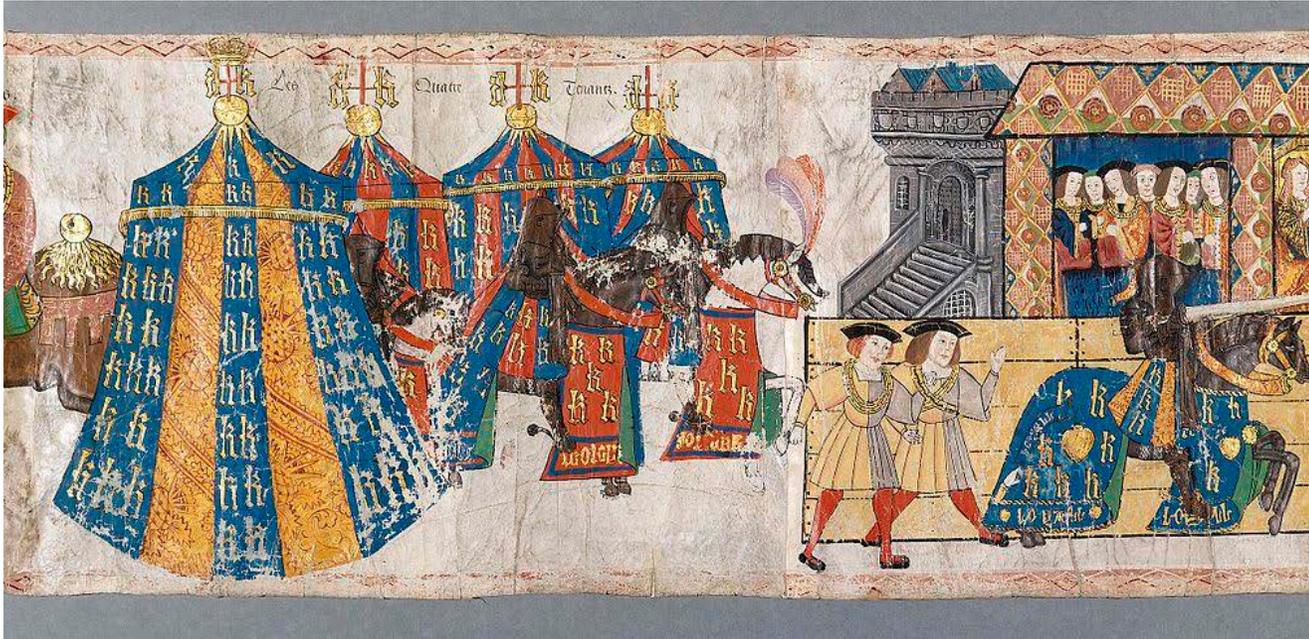
Mary I



Elizabeth I

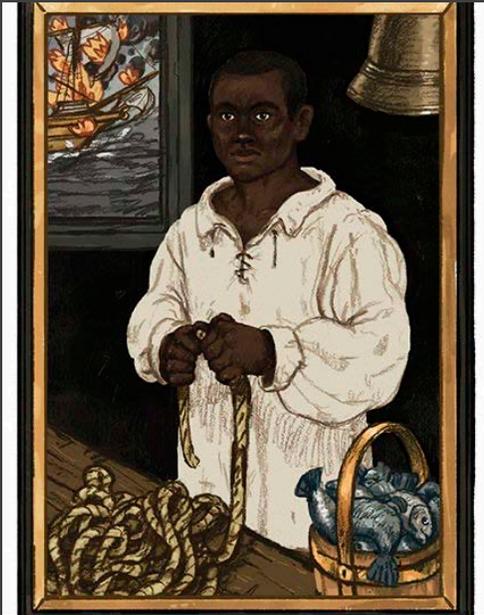
Black Tudors 1485-1603

- The enslavement of African people did begin in the Tudor age.
- But the concept of race (myth of natural white superiority and Black inferiority) was not widely understood by everyone in the UK.
- England did not have slave plantations on English soil; instead poor white people or peasants had to work the land.
- England had 6 monarchs during the Tudor age: Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Jane Grey (was queen for 9 days), Mary I and Elizabeth I.
- During this time about 20,000 free Black people lived in England.
- Lets meet some of them



John Blanke: The trumpeter

- It is believed John Blanke came to England in 1501 when Catherine of Aragon visited.
- He was a musician and played in the court of Henry VII and Henry VIII.
- He earned a good wage as a musician, more than workers and servants.
- When John got married in 1512, Henry VIII, paid for his wedding clothes; showing he was a valued member of the court.
- He is pictured in The Westminster Tournament Role; a tapestry made after a great celebration held at Westminster which also had knights jousting.
- Can you see John in the picture? What instrument is he playing? What do his clothes show you? Do you think jousting looks dangerous?



Drawing of Jacques Francis



Mary Rose sinking in Portsmouth

Jacques Francis: The Salvage Diver

- Jacques was born in the 1520's off the West coast of Africa.
- He came to England and began working for a man in Southampton.
- In 1545, England and France began fighting; Henry VIII built a great war ship called the Mary Rose which sank in the harbour of Portsmouth before doing any fighting.
- Henry wanted the guns and weapons off the sunken ship which would have totaled about 2 million pounds in today's money!
- The best divers were hired for this job and Jacques was one of them.
- This was before we had scuba diving gear. Jacques would have had to hold his breath for long periods of time to bring heavy objects up from the seabed.
- West Africans were known for being excellent deep sea swimmers.
- Why do you think many West Africans were such good swimmers?
- Can you imagine swimming to the bottom of the ocean and bringing objects up? Do you think the sea would have been warm or cold?

Mary Filis

- Mary Filis was born in Morocco in 1577.
- She was raised as a Muslim and came to England about the age of 6 or 7.
- She was a servant, not a slave, for a wealthy family in London.
- Many wealthy people had servants in Tudor England.
- Mary eventually went to work for a lady called Millicent Porter, who was a seamstress (dress maker and repairer) from Middlesex.
- At the age of 20 Mary converted to Christianity and was baptized.
- Being baptized was a big deal as it meant Mary had guardians in the form of godparents.
- Mary's godparents were Millicent Porter, William Benton and Margery Barrack.
- When Millicent died Mary may have become a seamstress to make money.
- What do you think of the painting of Mary?
- Morocco is in North Africa (on the map). How do you think Mary came to England? How long do you think the journey would have been days or weeks?

