

Black History

Every October, we celebrate 'Black History Month' but we should celebrate amazing figures through black history everyday. From inventions, developments in medical science and laws which allow us to live together peacefully, we should all be thankful to many of them for how we all live today.

1st October - Jocelyn Barrow 1929 – 9 April 2020



From an early age, Dame Jocelyn faced racial discrimination. Such encounters had a profound impact on her and spurred her on to work for equality for all irrespective of the colour of their skin. Dame Jocelyn was the first black woman governor of the BBC and founder and deputy chair of the Broadcasting Council. With a range of educational and equal opportunities expertise, she has achieved ground-breaking feats such as The Race Relations Act 1968.

Dame Jocelyn continued to pursue the equality of everyone's civil rights up until her death. Rightly, her name features on the list of 100 Great Black Britons identifying her as a permanent feature in black British history.

Friday 2nd October- John La Rose 1928-2006



Publisher, poet, essayist. During the 1940s and 1950s in Trinidad, La Rose was involved in the workers' rights movement, before settling in London in 1961. With fellow writers, Andrew Salkey and Edward Kamau Braithwaite, he founded the Caribbean Artists' Movement in 1966 and his publishing company, New Beacon Books. Chairman of the Institute of Race Relations (1972-3) and of Towards Racial Justice, the campaign journal of which was *Race Today*. He pioneered the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books.

John's work enabled the black people of Britain to learn about their own cultural heritage and develop a greater sense of self.

5th October- Ira Aldridge (1807-1867)



was an American and later British stage actor and playwright who made his career after 1824 largely on the London stage and in Europe, especially in Shakespearean roles. Born in New York City, Aldridge is the only actor of African-American descent among the 33 actors of the English stage honoured with bronze plaques at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. He was especially popular in Prussia and Russia, where he received top honors from heads of state. At the time of his sudden death, while on tour in Poland, he was arranging a triumphant return to America, with a planned 100-show tour to the United States.

6th October- Sir Learie Constantine (1901-1971)



Watch a short clip about Learie [here](#)

Learie Nicholas Constantine, Baron Constantine, was an international cricketer, journalist, politician, and lawyer. Constantine was the first person of African/Caribbean ancestry to be invested as a life peer in the United Kingdom. Born in Trinidad and Tobago in 1901 he was the son of a plantation foreman.

From an early age his father encouraged him to play cricket. In 1923 Constantine was selected for the West Indies international team and came to Britain to play in the pre-test matches that eventually led to the West Indies inclusion in Test cricket in 1928. Constantine was a valuable all-rounder, being skilled at batting, bowling, and fielding. He was the first West Indian to take a wicket in a test match and the first person to ever take five wickets in one inning. He was so successful that he was asked to join the Nelson Cricket Club, a team based in Lancashire in North England.

7th October- Mansa Musa c. 1280 – c. 1337



Watch a short clip [here](#)

Mansa means “Emperor” or “Sultan”

Mansa Musa was emperor of the West African Mali Empire. Covering roughly 500,000 square miles of land, it was the biggest empire West Africa has ever known.

Mansa Musa is still the richest man who has ever lived

Historians estimate that Mansa Musa, in modern currency, was worth around \$400bn. That is more than twice as wealthy as Amazon’s Jeff Bezos – the richest person alive today. Most of Mansa Musa’s wealth came from gold and salt.

Mansa Musa made a pilgrimage to Mecca and he did not travel lightly

Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim, and observed one of the five pillars of Islam by undertaking a pilgrimage to Mecca (known as Hajj). When he embarked on his Hajj in 1324, he travelled thousands of miles across treacherous terrain with 60,000 people, 21,000 kilograms of gold, 100 elephants and 80 camels. That is a lot of packed lunches!

8th October- Paul Stephenson 1937-today



Watch a short clip [here](#)

Paul Stephenson was born in England and went to a school where he was the only black child.

Even though it does not feel like that long ago, at that time he was a child, being black and being English were sometimes seen as two very different things.

This is what inspired him to go on to dedicate his life to stopping racial discrimination and bringing black and white communities together.

He became Bristol's first black social worker, which improved the relationship between black and white people in the city.

He spent his life leading important campaigns that made big changes in how black people were treated, and it is said that his work played a part in Britain's first Race Relations Act in 1965.

This was an important law that took steps to give equal rights to black people.

Friday 9th October- **Lennox Lewis (1965-today)**



In the world of sport, Lennox Lewis is one of the most successful British sportsmen of all time and his name is known all over the world.

He was a boxer who won 41 of his 44 professional fights, which is a pretty amazing record.

He announced his retirement from the sport in 2004, after his final fight on 21 June 2003 against the Ukrainian boxer Vitali Klitschko.

Watch some of Lewis' best moments [here](#)

12th October- John Edmonstone (1793-1822)



Moving into the 19th century and away from the arts, John Edmonstone was a very important figure in the world of scientific research.

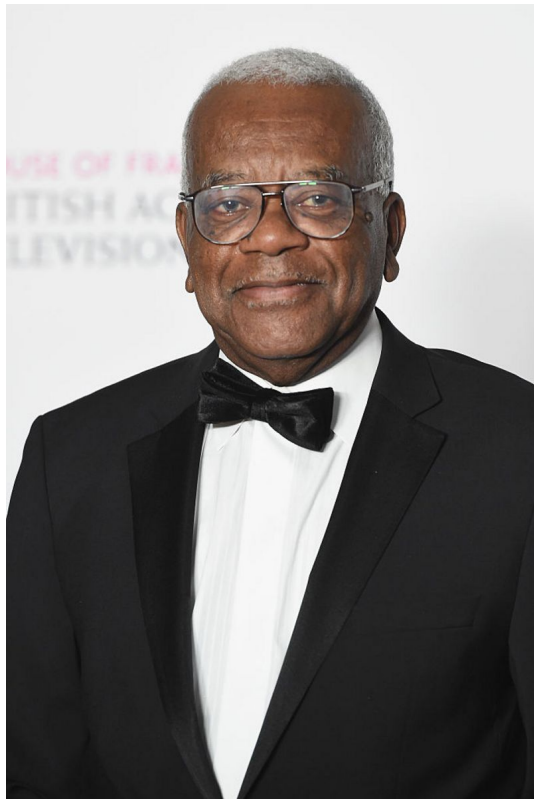
He was born into slavery, but when he gained his freedom, he moved to Scotland where he met a man called Charles Waterton, who taught him the skill of taxidermy. This is the practice of stuffing animals after they have died.

After this, he became a teacher at Edinburgh University, where he taught Charles Darwin.

You might have heard of Darwin because he came up with very important ideas about how humans have developed throughout time.

Well, it could be said that Darwin couldn't have come up with his ideas without what Edmonstone taught him - so that's a pretty big deal.

13th October- Sir Trevor MacDonald (1939-today)



You may have seen his face on the television before, as Sir Trevor MacDonald is one of the most well-known presenters on TV in Britain.

He was born in Trinidad where he worked in the media, but came over to Britain in the late 1960s to work for the BBC in London.

He later moved to a different organisation called ITN and went on to become one of the most successful journalists in the country.

In 1999, he received a knighthood from the Queen for his work.

Watch 60 seconds with Trevor Macdonald [here](#)

14th October Theresa Sanderson, CBE 1956- present



moved to Britain when she was only nine years old. Swapping the tropical Caribbean for an English city might seem a scary move but, helped by her love of sport, Tessa quickly made Wolverhampton her home. She joined the local club, where she showed a lot of promise in the javelin and other heptathlon events. She was a rising star on the field and by the age of sixteen had already won her first javelin championship. By 1976 she had earned her spot in her first Olympics Games. Meanwhile, she also participated in the Commonwealth Games – in the heptathlon, an event with seven elements (100-metre hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200 metres, long jump, javelin throw and 800 metres), and in 1981 she became the top British woman heptathlete. Tessa's biggest moment came in 1984 when she won a gold medal for Great Britain at the Olympics in Los Angeles.

Watch [here](#)

15th October- Dr Mae Jemison 1956- Present day



As a child, Mae loved reading, especially books about science and astronomy. By the time she was in nursery school, she knew she wanted to become a scientist. This, however, did not keep her from other passions. Mae also wanted to be a dancer, and throughout her youth, she studied every type of dance. In the 1970s Mae read chemical engineering and African American studies. When she learned about Dr Martin Luther King Jr, she saw his work as a call to action to help people, so after graduating, she decided to become a doctor. She joined the Peace Corps in 1983 and travelled to West Africa on a two-year programme to provide medical assistance to those in need. After returning, she saw major changes taking place at NASA. Seeing the actress Nichelle Nichols play Lieutenant Uhura in the TV show *Star Trek* inspired her to apply to NASA. In 1987 Mae became the first black woman in the astronaut training programme, and a few years later she flew into orbit – as the first African American woman in space.

Watch a clip [here](#)

16th October Harriet Tubman (born Araminta Ross, 1822 – 1913)



Harriet was an American **abolitionist** and political activist. Born into **slavery**, Tubman escaped and subsequently made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people, including family and friends, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the **Underground Railroad**. During the **American Civil War**, she served as an armed **scout** and **spy** for the **Union Army**. In her later years, Tubman was an activist in the movement for **women's suffrage**.

19th October- Amine Queen of Zaria 1533-1610



In Nigeria, after the death of her brother, Amine takes control of an army of 20,000 men.

She fought many battles and won, protecting her people from invaders.

She became known as the woman who was as able as a man and is considered the embodiment of strength in womanhood.

Given the time she was living in was very male dominated- she is an inspiration to women everywhere for her courage and determination.

20th October- Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797)



Olaudah Equiano's book about slavery is one of the earliest accounts about what it was like to be a slave - and it is one of the best-selling books about it.

Equiano was a slave himself, but he managed to buy his

freedom and moved to London.

There, he became involved in the movement to **abolish slavery**.

In 1789, he published his autobiography called *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*.

It made him a rich man and it became an extremely important piece of work for the people who were working hard to get rid of slavery.

21st October Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780)



Ignatius was a **British** composer, actor, and writer. He is the only Briton of **African** heritage known to have been eligible and voted in an 18th-century general election through property qualifications.

Ignatius wrote extensively about the slave trade and the inhumane treatment of his peoples. His writing is one of the earliest accounts of the experiences of African people at the time.

22nd October- Maggie Aderin Pocock 1968- present



Her childhood was divided between 13 schools, and she has dyslexia. But Maggie Aderin-Pocock has since designed a host of space instruments, and now presents the Sky at Night

After graduating with a BSc in physics, and later a PhD in mechanical engineering, from Imperial College London, she worked for the Ministry of Defence on projects ranging from missile warning systems to landmine detectors, before returning to her first love: building instruments to explore the wonders of space.

Alongside her academic work, Aderin-Pocock has relentlessly pursued a schedule of school visits – setting up her own company in the process – to give children a whistlestop tour of the universe as well as offering a glimpse of the excitement, the wonder, the sheer joy of prodding away at some of the biggest questions we humans wrangle with.

23rd October Grace Wales Bonner 1992- Present



Grace is a British fashion designer, whose work "addresses the politics of identity, sexuality, and race through projects that delicately balance multinationalism with a sense of personal subjectivity". Her designs are characterized by a blend of sportswear and tailoring and her interest in making every day clothes, like the tracksuit, more elegant. In 2014 she founded the London-based label Wales Bonner, originally specializing in menswear. The recipient of several awards, she was voted number 41 on the *Dazed 100* list in 2017.