



## Press Release

16 March 2007

### **New portal offers insight into slavery 200 years ago**

**The National Archives today launched a new online exhibition on its award winning website.**

The online exhibition at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/slavery](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/slavery) has been created to serve as an informative resource for schoolchildren, budding amateur historians and complete novices interested in the history surrounding the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. The Act was passed on 25 March 1807, 26 years before the Emancipation Act (1833), which led to the gradual abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire.

The online exhibition draws together a range of historical documents and information describing Britain's involvement in slavery and the slave trade, and finally its eventual abolition. This is linked to the extensive records held within The National Archives, including:

- Slave registers containing personal details of enslaved persons
- Colonial Office records describing how slavery shaped the history of Britain's former colonies
- Records of British African companies describing Britain's early relationships with Africa and the supplying of Africans to the Americas
- Britain's naval and diplomatic records relating to the suppression of the slave trade

The aim of the site is to become the first starting point for anybody interested in learning more about the subject. It contains links to significant collections and other online resources available from The National Archives and other archives, as well as links to the popular Archive Awareness Campaign, whose theme for 2007 is Freedom and Liberty.

The National Archives has also produced six new research guides, in collaboration with key experts and interested community leaders. These introduce new researchers to the material on slavery held in The National Archives (as well as other archives) and how they can locate and research it.

Guy Grannum, Caribbean specialist, The National Archives said:

*"To be involved in a project like this is important for The National Archives. The new guides and the online exhibition will prove to be a valuable research tool. Researchers from anywhere in the world can now easily access our material on this subject."*

The launch of the online exhibition was marked with an event at the House of Lords, River Room, hosted by Baroness Ashton of Upholland, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, giving

everybody involved in the project the opportunity to view the new exhibition and discuss the guides.

## Notes for editors

**The National Archives**, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk), is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs. Over 600 staff work in Kew, in Norwich, at Admiralty Arch in central London and at the Family Records Centre in Islington. The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

**The National Archives is at the heart of information policy** – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record. **The National Archives is also the UK government's official archive**, containing 900 years of history from Domesday Book to the present, with records ranging from parchment and paper scrolls through to recently created digital files and archived websites. Increasingly, these records are being put online, making them universally accessible.

### **The vision of The National Archives is to:**

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone

**The National Archives is home to a number of online exhibitions and resources of interest to people who wish to find out more about Britain's involvement in Africa and the Caribbean, as well as black British history overall:**

- [The Black Presence](#). Asian and Black History in Britain, 1550-1850  
*This exhibition has a large number of images of records describing the history of Britain's involvement in the slave trade, enslavement, and abolition and the early experiences of Africans and African-Caribbeans in Britain.*
- [Moving Here](#)  
*Documenting 200 years of migration to Britain*
- [Caribbean migration to Britain](#)
- [Caribbean family history](#)
- [Citizenship: a history of people, rights and power in Britain](#)
- [Caribbean Histories Revealed](#)
- [Read about Moira Stuart's ancestry, as discovered in Who Do You Think You Are?](#)
- [Slavery: How did the Abolition Acts of 1807 and 1833 affect slavery?](#)
- [Snapshot on Slavery](#)
- [Bound for Britain: Experiences of Immigration to the UK](#)

For more information or images please contact Tim Matthews on 020 8392 5277, or [tim.matthews@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:tim.matthews@nationalarchives.gov.uk).

### **About Archives Awareness campaign**

Archive Awareness is an annual campaign run by the National Council on Archives and supported by The National Archives and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. The theme for 2007's campaign is 'Freedom and Liberty' with archives throughout the UK planning special events to mark the bicentenary of the Parliamentary Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic British Slave Trade.

Find out more at [www.archiveawareness.com](http://www.archiveawareness.com), or contact Elise Oliver, Archive Awareness Officer, on 0208 392 5237 or [elise.oliver@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:elise.oliver@nationalarchives.gov.uk)