

BLACK HISTORY IN GLASGOW

A few months ago, we committed to publish more content on Black History in our cities, starting with information on Edinburgh. The response from our guests, past and present, supporters and team has been really positive, so we want to continue with a new city: Glasgow!

At Invisible Cities, we believe that the first step towards a more diverse and accepting world is knowledge and understanding of our history.

October is Black History Month but diversity, acknowledgement and respect are values we should pursue all year round.





STREET NAMES

Did you know that a lot of streets and areas in Glasgow have a direct link to the slave trade and are named after a Tobacco Lord, slave plantation or area which Glasgow was involved with as part of the trade.

We made a list of some of the main streets- but you can find a lot more!

BUCHANAN STREET

Andrew Buchanan was one of the first Scots to have tobacco plantations in the New World. He is the one who named **VIRGINIA STREET** after slave-owning areas where the 18th century merchant made his fortune.

John Glassford was a tobacco lord who owned plantations and 21 tobacco stores and ran a fleet of ships to move the product.

GLASSFORD STREET

JAMAICA STREET

Named in celebration of (slave) trade links of Glasgow merchants in Caribbean.

Named after his Archibald Ingram, who made his fortune with slave-owning tobacco plantations in the east coast of America. He was Glassford's brother in law!

INGRAM STREET

JAMES OSWALD

Here is another street of Glasgow named after a tobacco merchant: Oswald Street.



James Oswald, as well as owning four plantations in the Caribbean and over 30,000 acres in Florida, was one of the owners of Bance Island, just off the coast of Sierra Leone. Bance Island occupied what was left of an abandoned fort, and was used by Oswald as a base for conducting slave raids on the nearby African coast, but also as a trading hub for the international slave trade.

A quarter of the employees of Bance Island were Scottish, primarily from Glasgow.

Oswald built a golf course on the Island to entertain visiting slave lords and prospective buyers, and made slaves act as their caddies, forcing them to wear tartan outfits designed and manufactured in Glasgow while they did.

Despite such behaviour, James was really well respected in the city, mostly due to his great fortune. At the time of his death, he left a fortune of £500,000, equivalent to £50,000,000 today.

SCOTLAND'S FIRST BLACK SUPERHERO



Did you know Scotland had its own superhero? Beats of War, a comic book created by Etienne Kubwabo. He is a filmmaker and DJ, who moved to Glasgow ten years ago from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Its hero, **DJ ET**, comes to Earth to find a way to save his home planet from robot invaders and in the process discovers music. The comic is set in the city and looks at the barriers faced by people who immigrate to a new country.

It also features some of the most famous landmarks including the River Clyde, the Finnieston Crane and the Squinty Bridge.



Find out more by clicking
on the picture here!

GLASGOW LOVES NELSON MANDELA

Glasgow has a special connection with Nelson Mandela!

An iconic politician and anti-apartheid revolutionist, Mandela died in 2013 but his connection to the city remains.

He was given the Freedom of the City in 1981, while still being held captive. At the time, this was viewed by some as a controversial step for Glasgow City Council to take. While many saw Mandela as a freedom fighter, others felt he was a terrorist.

In 1981, Glasgow's sitting Lord Provost, Michael Kelly, started a global Lord Mayors' petition, arguing for Mandela's release - the South African was arrested in 1962 for conspiring to overthrow the state, and was consequently handed life imprisonment. The petition was signed by thousands of mayors around the world!

Mandela was released from prison in February 1990, at the age of 71. But four years earlier, in 1986, as Glasgow stepped up its campaign in support of Mandela, the decision was taken to rename city centre square, St George's Place, as Nelson Mandela Place, which it is still called today.

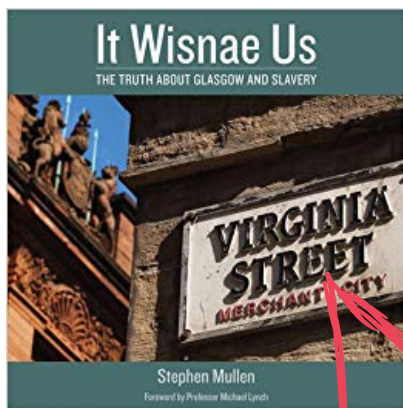
"While we were physically denied our freedom in the country of our birth, a city 6,000 miles away, and as renowned as Glasgow, refused to accept the legitimacy of the apartheid system, and declared us to be free."

Nelson Mandela, October 1993



WOULD YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you would like to read more about the connections that Glasgow had with the slave trade or Black History in the city, we recommend you take a look at this:



It Wisnae Us
by Stephen Mullen (2009)



Click here to see the Virtual Exhibition by The Scottish Archive Network It relates to Glasgow's links with slavery and black history more generally



You can also support **BEMIS**- the national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body supporting the development of the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland and the communities that this sector represents.



INVISIBLE CITIES

This booklet was put together by Invisible Cities, a social enterprise that trains people who have experienced homelessness to become walking tour guides of their own city.

We are passionate about our cities and we believe we should have honest and true conversations around their past and history as it helps us understand the communities we live in today.

If you would like us to create more booklets like this one, let us know!



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