

Connections with contemporary social and global issues

USI has found that making links between the history of transatlantic slavery and modern forms of slavery and child labour have helped younger audiences engage with the subject more fully, and make the history relevant to today.



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1976 Riots
at the Notting
Hill Carnival

I think the key learning experience for me has been that many of the issues in the 18th century are still being addressed today. We think that our 21st-century society is much more civilized and informed than we were two hundred years ago, when in fact we are still fighting slavery in all its forms and aiming at a fairer system for international trade. Showing young people this history may just make them question how far we have really come.

Museum Education Officer

Connections with contemporary social and global issues

Teaching approaches



- The transatlantic slave trade has had an impact on so many aspects of British and world history, either directly or indirectly, and its legacy can still be seen today.
- While people-trafficking, child and bonded labour are relevant issues, it is important, not to view them as inextricable from the wider legacies of transatlantic slavery, such as racial discrimination, inequality, and poverty in African and Caribbean countries, but rather to look at them in parallel.

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This topic will introduce people to the familiar and the less familiar. Inheritances in the form of dance, music, and histories bring joy and enjoyment and remind us of commonly held cultural referents instigated and maintained within the African Diaspora. The topic makes a person critically assess their beliefs and values as an individual and a member of this society... I would hope that the museum as well would be seen as a safe and appropriate space to engage in this conversation, a public institution supported by and for the nation's citizenry and for the purpose of representing a shared history, of which many narratives can find voice through public participation and rigorous scholarship.

Museum Education Officer

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'Slavery in Zanzibar' (about 1890)

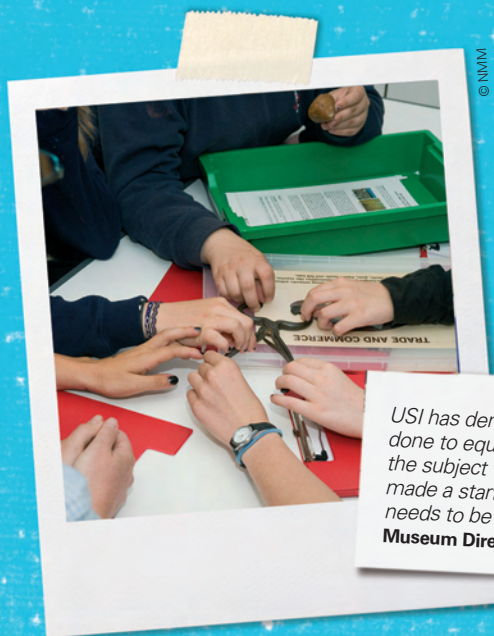
Slave Emancipation
Society Medallion



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Expertise and training

USI has enlisted the expertise and skills of on-site curators and independent researchers and educators in order to offer a learning experience that is rigorous and effective. Like any other subject the knowledge base needs to be sufficient in order to provide meaningful, informed sessions.



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USI has demonstrated how much needs to be done to equip the teaching profession to address the subject with knowledge and confidence. It has made a start in terms of resources but much more needs to be done in terms of training.

Museum Director

Expertise and training



Teaching approaches

- The USI partner museums offer Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days to assist teachers and other educators to develop their schemes of work. The sessions focus on various themes including: using handling collections to teach sensitive issues; workshops to discuss racism, stereotyping and racist terminology; subject knowledge development; and methods to develop sessions for different learning needs.



THOMAS CLARKSON

© Wilberforce House Museum, Hull Museums



Expertise is absolutely vital: full knowledge of the history, understanding of related contemporary issues and experience of working with museum artefacts. It is a mistake to assume that a very basic knowledge will equip you to teach this subject. The educator needs to ensure learners have left a session with the facts and speculative [interpretation of them]. If this knowledge is not readily available then it makes sense to appoint the right expert or make time to offer/devise comprehensive training for staff.

Museum Director

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- USI research has demonstrated that museums are ideally placed to work with other partners in the education sector to support the study of this subject at Initial Teacher Education level. It has also initiated discussions with academic institutions to work directly with schools, teachers and trainee teachers to pilot specific ITE programmes.
- Working with colleagues across departments, particularly curators, has been essential in the development of museum learning sessions.

Expertise and training

Teaching approaches

- Sharing learning approaches with colleagues internally and externally, and researching into best practice models, can support Continuing Professional Development needs and network development.
- Identifying and making provision for knowledge and skills development needs for educators teaching this subject will advance the learning programme around enslavement.



© Lee Garland/ISM

International Slavery Museum – Liverpool, 2007