



# Focus on... Black History Month

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Every October the UK and Ireland observe Black History Month. This is a time when we can learn more about black history and about significant historical figures from the black community.

## Ignatius Sancho 1729-1780

Ignatius Sancho was born on a slave ship and was brought to England by his owner.

He worked as a butler but the man that he worked for realized Sancho was very clever and creative.

Sancho wrote poetry, plays and music and spoke out against the slave trade too. He opened a shop in London where other creative minds could come together and meet.

At that time black people were not allowed to vote but Ignatius Sancho became the first known black British voter.



## Mary Seacole 1805-1881

Mary Seacole was born in Jamaica. Mary's mother was a black woman but her father was a white man and so she was born 'free' and not forced into slavery.

She learned medicine from her mother and

travelled to England as a teenager, learning more about European medicine.

Mary cared for many people throughout her life and in 1853 she asked the British War Office to send her to the Crimea to care for wounded soldiers in the war. She was refused, and so she raised money to travel there herself and set up her own hospital, caring for the wounded. She was known as 'Mother Seacole' by those she tended to.

