

"I trust that England will not forget one who nursed her sick, who sought out her wounded to aid and succour them, and who performed the last offices for some of her illustrious dead."

Foreword to Mary Seacole's autobiography 1857 by Sir William Howard Russell, War Correspondent: *The Times* newspaper.

Background

A campaign for a permanent memorial of Mary Seacole in London, led by Lord Soley of Hammersmith, was launched in 2003. Mary was a celebrated Crimean nursing heroine but, amazingly, there is still no monument to remember her by. The organisation, a registered charity, is comprised of Patrons, Ambassadors, Trustees, Artist Selection Panel and Stakeholders. The latter consists of dedicated volunteers from a range of organisations who give their time and expertise in pulling together resources to raise the vital funds needed.

Information about Mary Seacole [1805-1881]

Mary Jane Grant was born in 1805 in Jamaica, then a British colony. Unlike many of her fellow country people she was not born into slavery despite the fact that emancipation of all slaves in Jamaica did not take place until 1838. Her exact date of birth is unknown but the age of 76 years was recorded on her death certificate in 1881. Her mother, a free Jamaican Creole, kept a boarding-house called Blundell Hall in Kingston and practiced as a 'doctress'. Her father was a Scottish army officer, possibly named James Grant and she had a sister [Louisa] and a brother [Edward]. Mary recalls in her autobiography the influence of her mother: 'It was very natural that I should inherit her tastes; and so I had from early youth a yearning for medical knowledge and practice which has never deserted me.' In 1836 Mary married Edwin Horatio Hamilton Seacole, godson of Admiral Horatio Nelson. There is no record of any children and Mr Seacole died in 1844.

Mary loved to travel and in 1850 went to visit her brother in Cruces, a gold prospecting town in Panama. When a cholera epidemic struck and the American doctor fled from the scene, Mary single-handedly took over caring for the patients. Back in Jamaica, Mary looked after victims of a yellow fever epidemic in 1853 and the British army asked her to supervise nursing services at their headquarters in Up-Park Camp, Kingston. The Crimean War broke out in 1853 and in 1854, in order to help, Mary travelled thousands of miles to London. She repeatedly offers her services to nurse soldiers alongside Florence Nightingale, who by this time had already left for Scutari. Mary became depressed after 5 rejections, despite the glowing references she had from senior medical people in Jamaica and Panama. This is when Mary decided she was not going to succumb to discrimination. By 1855 Mary had successfully raised enough funds to pay for her passage to the Crimea where she set up the British Hotel. Soldiers were provided with accommodation, food and nursing care. The British public read about the tender treatment of 'Mother Seacole', both at the hotel and in the actual war zone, in media such as *The Times*, *Punch* and *The London Illustrated News*.

In 1856 the Crimean war suddenly ended and Mary experienced severe financial difficulties and became bankrupt. All those who admired her came to her aid, whether soldiers, generals or members of the royal family. In 1857 a gala was held for Mary over 4 nights at the Royal Surrey Gardens, on the banks of the River Thames in London and over 80,000 people attended! Towards the end of her life Mary travelled back and forth to Jamaica and was also a masseuse to the Princess of Wales. She died in London on the 14th May, 1881 and was buried in St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London. Obituaries appeared in *The Times* and the Jamaican *Daily Gleaner* and the latter stated that Mrs. Seacole received 'English, French, Russian and Turkish decorations'. After her death Mary was virtually airbrushed out of British history. Fortunately, in 1973, a ceremony was held to re-consecrate Mary Seacole's grave and her 1857 autobiography was republished in 1984. For more details about Mary Seacole visit: www.maryseacole.com

MSMSA Fact Sheet 4: APRIL 2009

Registered charity: 1103862

Image courtesy of Fowokan (George Kelly)

MARY
SEACOLE
MEMORIAL
STATUE APPEAL



e. contact@maryseacoleappeal.org.uk
w. www.maryseacoleappeal.org.uk

The Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal

Our Goals

Our primary goal is to raise £450,000 to erect a memorial in memory of Mary Seacole and £50,000 has been donated so far with a further £50,000 guaranteed by 2009. The charitable arm of Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd is committed to implementing any construction requirements at cost price and the agreed site, donated by and in front of St Thomas' Hospital, will be opposite the Houses of Parliament. An artist selection panel has been established chaired by Baroness Amos and eight were shortlisted. On 13th May 2009 Baroness Amos will announce the chosen artist. Education and activities designed to raise awareness of her work and achievements is another important part of the work of the charity. In addition, our efforts will further enhance the knowledge of the Nation with respect to the long history of Black heroes and heroines and their contribution and associations with Britain.

Patrons

The High Commissioner for Jamaica
President of the Royal College of Nursing
Mayor of London
Trevor Phillips, Chair, Commission for Equality and Human Rights
Sir Willard White, Opera Singer

Trustees

Lord Soley of Hammersmith – Chairman
Professor Elizabeth N Anionwu, CBE FRCN – Vice-Chairperson
Robbi Robson - Secretary
Michael Parker - Treasurer
Juliet Alexander
Celia Grandison-Markey
Maxine Hurley
Marsha John
Gina Osbourne

Mary Seacole Memorial Artist Selection Panel

Baroness Amos – Chairperson
Lord Smith of Finsbury, former Secretary of State for Culture [1997-2001]
Dr Stephen Deuchar, Director, Tate Britain
Alexander Amosu, Business Entrepreneur
Lady Hollick, Chair: London Regional Arts Council
Professor Elizabeth Anionwu, Vice-Chairperson, MSMSA
Stephen McGuire, Director of Capital, Estates and Facilities Management, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Andrew Barnett, Architectural Advisor, Hopkins Architects
Advisor: Philomena Davidson, Director, The Davidson Arts Partnership (DAP)

How you can help

1. You or your organisation can donate online at www.maryseacoleappeal.org.uk or send a cheque [made out to MSMSA] to the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal c/o Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN using the Gift Aid form below – this form can also be used to arrange a more regular donation to the Appeal
2. Encourage others to do so!
3. Organise fundraising events for the Appeal – for further details please contact: contact@maryseacoleappeal.org.uk

For latest updates on the Appeal please visit: www.maryseacoleappeal.org.uk/news

THANK YOU

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GIFT AID FORM

CAF Unique Ref No.: 7337-04

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation go further.

This means that £10 can be turned into £12.80 just so long as donations are made through Gift Aid. Imagine what a difference that could make and it doesn't cost you a thing.

So if you want either your one-off or your regular donations to go further, Gift Aid it.

Just complete either Section A or Section B of this form and send it back to us. Thank you.

First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Email [optional] _____

A] One-off donation

I enclose a donation of £

I am a UK taxpayer. I want all donations from the date of this declaration, until I notify you further, to be treated as Gift Aid donations.

B] Regular Donation

BANK STANDING ORDER FORM

To: Your Bank Manager: _____

Your Account No:

Your Sort Code:

Please pay to: National Westminster Bank plc, Bloomsbury Parr

For the credit of: **CAF/Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal**

Account No. 36880043

Sort Code: 60-30-06

The sum of: £ _____ (say _____ pounds)

on the _____ day of _____ 2008

and monthly*/quarterly*/annually* until further notice.
(please delete where appropriate)

I / We authorise you to debit my/our account with you with the above payment. This instruction cancels all or any previous instructions in favour of **Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal**.

Name: _____ Signed: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / _____

None of your personal details will be circulated to any other 3rd party.

Please return this form and any enclosures to: Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal, c/o: Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN. THANK YOU

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