

**M■SING
CHAP■RS**

**A TIMELINE OF
BLACK BRITISH HISTORY**

ROMAN BRITAIN

AD 43 – 410

Archaeological and written evidence shows us that Roman Britain, like the rest of the empire, was a multicultural place where black faces could be found in every strata of society and in as places as diverse as Cumbria, York, London and the South Coast of England.

THE AFRICAN EMPEROR

AD 208 - 211

Septimius Severus, Roman Emperor from AD 193-211, was born in Leptis Magna in present day Lybia. In AD 208, the African Emperor moved the seat of power to Britain. He brought forces to strengthen Hadrian's Wall, later invading Caledonia, modern Scotland. His ambition were cut short, contracting an infection in AD 210 which would lead to his death in early AD 211. He was buried in Eboracum, present day, York.



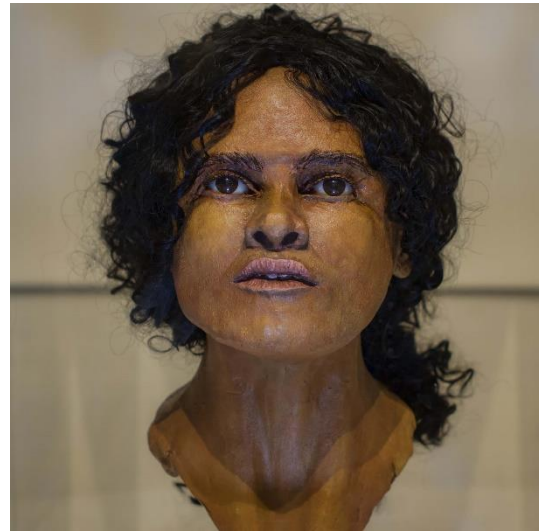
THE BEACHY HEAD LADY

c. AD 200 - 250

There is a lot we do not know about the Beachy Head Lady. We do not, for instance, know when or exactly where her skeleton was excavated.

However we do know when she lived and where she grew up – Around AD 250-200 on the south coast of England. We can be quite certain too, that she originated from sub-Saharan Africa.

At what young age did she make the journey across the Empire to Britain? Did leave behind children of her own? Why did she die at such a young age? We do not know.



THE AURELIAN MOORS

c. AD 258-253

The Roman army drew men from across the diverse Empire. Named in honour of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the Aurelian Moors were a unit of soldiers raised from Northern African provinces and later stationed at Aballava in Cumbria.

This fortified position on Hadrian's Wall is now buried under the small town of Burgh-by-Sands, however at least two pieces of written evidence place these Afro-Roman soldiers at this furthest border of the Empire.



THE IVORY BANGLE LADY

c. AD 300-400

The skeleton of the Iron Bangle Lady was found in a stone coffin in Sycamore Terrace, York in 1901. She is named for one of the pieces of jewellery which she was buried alongside. These included ivory and jet bangles, a bracelet of blue glass beads, silver and bronze pendants and two yellow-glass earrings, all marking her out as a woman of wealth and high status. Among other items accompanying her to the grave was bone shard which read, 'Hail sister, may you live in God.'

Although buried in York, the Ivory Bangle was originally from North Africa.



THE AFRICAN EMPEROR

LESSON 1

At its height, the Roman Empire covered a huge swath of land. It covered parts of not just one but three continents. Romans came from all over these lands – even the Emperor himself!

WHERE WAS THE EMPIRE?

Look at this map of the Roman Empire at its height from 27bc to AD180.

Question - Which continents did the Roman Empire cover in part?

Discussion - Which countries do you know in those continents?



WHERE WAS THE EMPIRE?

Use an atlas, globe or online map. Can you match this map to the map of the world today?

Task – Make a list of the modern day countries that were part of the Roman Empire.



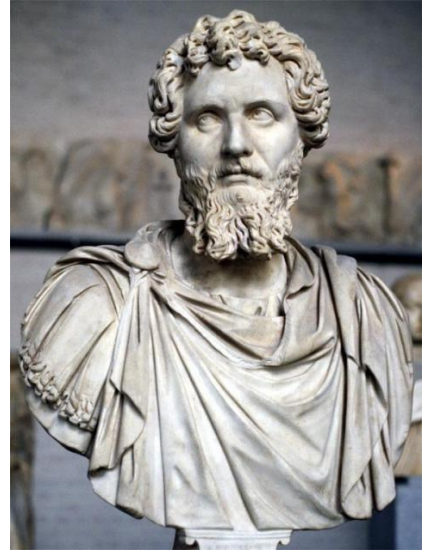
WHERE WAS THE EMPIRE?

Discussion – Where are your family from? Is it now part of the Roman Empire? Have your family moved to Britain? Do you think Romans from different parts of the Empire would have moved to Britain?



MEET SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

Septimius Severus was born in Leptis Magna in present day Lybia in 145 AD.



Leptis Magna

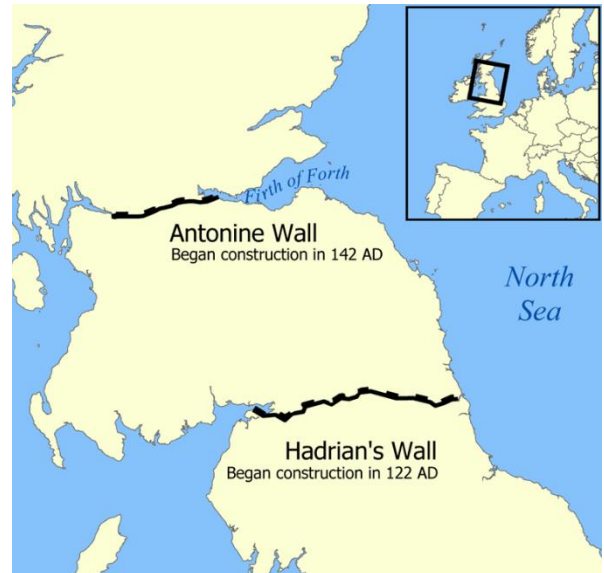
MEET SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

Septimius Severus rose through the ranks of Roman Society before becoming emperor of the whole Roman Empire in AD 193.



MEET SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

In AD 208, the African Emperor came to Britain. He brought forces to strengthen Hadrian's Wall, later invading Caledonia, modern Scotland.



MEET SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

His ambition were cut short,
contracting an infection in AD 210
which would lead to his death in
early AD 211.

He was buried in Eboracum,
present day, York.



MEET SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

You have a chance to send a letter back in time to Septimius Severus. He has just arrived in Britain. What would you ask him? Do you want to know about his life in Leptis Magna? His rise to power? Why he's come to Britain?

Task – Write a short letter to Septimius Severus, filled with your historical inquiries.



EXTENSION

You could conduct some historical research of your own to try to answer the questions that you have asked, Septimius Severus.



THE AURELIAN MOORS

LESSON 2

What did a Roman soldier look like?

We know all about their armour, weapons, banners, instruments and how they fought. We also know that Roman Soldiers came from all over the diverse Empire. Today we'll meet some soldiers from North Africa who were sent to Britain.

FROM NORTH AFRICA . . .

What's the climate like in North Africa?

How could we find out?

Task – In a group of three, find out some key information. One person find out about average temperatures. One person find out about amount of rainfall. One person find out what the landscape looks like. Be ready to share your findings.



FROM NORTH AFRICA . . .

The Roman army drew men from across the diverse Empire. Named in honour of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the Aurelian Moors were a unit of soldiers raised from the northern African provinces.



... TO NORTHERN ENGLAND

These men were sent to northern England, to guard a very important wall. Hadrian's wall was the border of the Roman Empire. The soldiers were stationed at Aballava in Cumbria.



... TO NORTHERN ENGLAND

What's the climate like in Cumbria?

How could we find out?

Task – In a group of three, find out some key information. One person find out about average temperatures. One person find out about amount of rainfall. One person find out what the landscape looks like. Be ready to share your findings.



FROM NORTH AFRICA . . .

Discussion – What differences would the Aurelian Moors have found upon arriving in Britain?



THE AURELIAN MOORS

Imagine you are one of the Aurelian Moors. You've just arrived at the Abellava in Cumbria. It's raining. You're cold and hungry. You're tired from carrying all your heavy equipment. What happens next?

Task – Write a diary entry as a member of the Aurelian Moors. What happens at your first day at Abellava?



THE BEACHY HEAD LADY

LESSON 3

We've learnt about an emperor and soldiers who migrated across the empire to Britain. But it was not just official people who made the long journey to call Britain home.

THE BEACHY HEAD LADY

There is a lot we do not know about the Beachy Head Lady. We do not, for instance, know when or exactly where her skeleton was excavated except that it was somewhere near Beachy Head near Eastbourne on the South coast of England.



THE BEACHY HEAD LADY

Scientists and archaeologists have analysed her skeleton and do know that she lived around AD 250-200. And that she had lived for some time in England – they can tell this from her diet which they can find out from her bones!



THE BEACHY HEAD LADY

We can be quite certain too, that she originated from sub-Saharan Africa.

Discussion - At what young age do you think she travelled across the Empire to Britain? Why did she make the journey? What route did she take?



A LONG WAY TO GO

Imagine you are making a long journey overseas. You may never return. What would you take with you?

Discussion – What do you think the Beachy Head Lady packed for her journey?



A LONG WAY TO GO

Sub-Saharan Africa is all of Africa below the Sahara desert. It was not part of the Roman Empire. Let's say our Beachy Head lady came from the area which is now present day Nigeria.

Task – Using an atlas, globe or online map plan a route from Nigeria to Britain. Remember that this is the Roman times. You can travel by foot, by camel, by horse and by boat. This journey would have taken a long time. Write down your route as a set of instructions.



THE IVORY BANGLE LADY

LESSON 4

The graves of the past can tell us a lot about a person. Today we'll be looking at another ordinary black Roman who called Britain home.

THE IVORY BANGLE LADY

The skeleton of the Iron Bangle Lady was found in a stone coffin in Sycamore Terrace, York in 1901. She is named for one of the pieces of jewellery which she was buried alongside. These included ivory and jet bangles, a bracelet of blue glass beads, silver and bronze pendants and two yellow-glass earrings. Among other items accompanying her to the grave was bone shard which read, 'Hail sister, may you live in God.'

Although buried in York, the Ivory Bangle was originally from North Africa.



THE IVORY BANGLE LADY



A small mirror



A blue glass perfume bottle

Discussion – What do these items tell us about the Ivory Bangle Lady? Who would be buried with these things?

THE IVORY BANGLE LADY



Glass earrings



A silver pendant



Beads from a necklace

Discussion – What do these items tell us about the Ivory Bangle Lady? Who would be buried with these things?

THE IVORY BANGLE LADY



An ivory bangle and a jet bangle

What guesses have we made about the life of the Iron Bangle Lady? What role did she play in society? What about her family?

Task – In a pair, conduct an interview with the Iron Bangle Lady. Come up with questions together and answer them as the Iron Bangle Lady.

ROMAN BRITAIN

LESSON 5

Archaeological and written evidence shows us that Roman Britain, like the rest of the empire, was a multicultural place where black faces could be found in every strata of society and in as places as diverse as Cumbria, York, London and the South Coast of England.

DIVERSE BRITAIN

Today Britain is a diverse place. This means there are people who live here from all over the world, who speak different languages, have different traditions and cultures, who follow different religions.



DIVERSE BRITAIN

Think back to our learning about Roman Britain. In what ways do you think Roman Britain was similar to and different from Britain today.

Task – Write about your thoughts on this subject.

