2026 MARKS THE 230TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE LARGEST GROUP OF AFRICAN CARIBBEAN PEOPLE TO ARRIVE IN THE UK



Photo credit: Andre Pattenden

BACK ROW: from left of plaque: Jacqueline Roberts (Chief Executive SV2G) and Tony Hales, (Chairman of English Heritage), Pierre-Daniel Laviolette, Minister Counsellor Haitian Embassy, Brereton Horne, High Commissioner St Vincent & the Grenadines, Cherie Nisbet, High Commissioner of Belize, Christopher Roberts, Chairman SV2G, Queen Mother Chief Freda Paulino Sideroff , Shelamdean Roches,
FRONT ROW: from left to right Ronald McDonald, Dean Paulino, and Emillio Thomas.

A powerful historic moment of remembrance, honour, and cultural resilience took place on Friday 9th October 2026 for the 230th anniversary event of the arrival of Caribbean prisoners of war at Portchester Castle. The day also marked the exact date of the ship HMS London that was wrecked at Rapparee Cove, Devon, where many prisoners lost their lives. Thousands of Indigenous men, women, and children were captured in St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada creating one of the earliest archival records of Caribbean people in Britain, long before the Windrush era.

Caribbean communities across the UK, together with international guests, gathered at Portchester Castle for a ceremony and the unveiling of a new permanent plaque recognising our ancestors presence and our history. Standing on the very ground where they were held in 1796, we paid tribute to their courage, and their enduring legacy across the Caribbean and its diaspora.

The plaque was unveiled by His Excellency Brereton Horne, High Commissioner for St. Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of His Excellency Anthony Severin OBE, High Commissioner of Saint Lucia and Chair of the CARICOM Diplomatic Caucus UK. Distinguished guests included High Commissioner for Belize, and other diplomatic Caribbean representatives, and the Yurumein Royal Delegation led by Queen Mother Chief Freda Paulino-Sideroff. A libation ceremony with traditional Garifuna drumming led by the visiting delegation from Belize, supported by Minister Osmond Martinez and Minister Anthony Mahler of the Government of Belize.

The event was organised by SV2G, St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2nd Generation in partnership with the University of Warwick and English Heritage. It builds on more than a decade of research and forms part of a wider programme to preserve and share this important chapter of our Caribbean British history.

Christopher Roberts, Chairman of the Board of Trustees said;

"The 230th anniversary of the arrival of the Caribbean Prisoners of War is a moment of profound importance for Caribbean nations and younger generations. It reminds us of the courage, determination, and humanity of those who resisted colonial domination and endured displacement. May this commemoration inspire continued unity, learning, and pride across our communities, and may it strengthen the enduring bonds between the Caribbean and the United Kingdom. On behalf of SV2G, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have joined us today. Your presence honours the memory of our ancestors and strengthens our shared commitment to preserving and celebrating Caribbean heritage."