Can you help Brighton and Hove Black History Project to solve a local mystery?





Picture from imaginati on by Dr Ludo Foster

Funding raised by The National Lottery and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

heritage lottery fund LOTTERY FUNDED

BRIGHTON & HOVE BLACK HISTORY

Lesson 2



Researching Tom's life



Photo by Jonathan Simcoe on Unsplash

- Brighton and Hove Black History group went to **The Keep** in Brighton which stores old records.
- We also looked at the census and used the internet to try to find out Tom's story..
- We have the evidence for you to examine!
- We'd like you to use this evidence to make tentative claims about Tom's life.

(Sometimes you might move your claims on your certainty line if your certainty about what happened changes)

We found details of his rescue in a newspaper

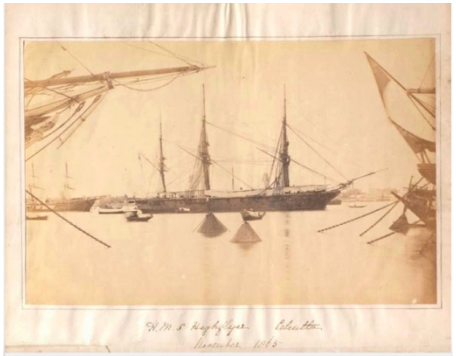
NAVAL AND MILITARY INTELLIGENCE.

NAVAL APPOINTMENTS.

Captain.—Henry Harvey, to the Eclipse, vice Moore.
Commander.—T. Harvey Royse, to the Impregnable.
Navigating Lieutenant.—George P. Tomlin, to the Eclipse.

The Highflyer, 21, screw corvette, Captain T. M. S. Pasley, was paid out of commission alongside the Pitch-house jetty at Portsmouth dockyard yesterday morning. She has been in commission since the 15th of December, 1864, and sailed from Spithead on the 7th of January, 1865, for the East India and China station. She arrived at Spithead on the 12th ult. In October, 1866, the Highflyer captured a slave dhow, for which prize money is about to be distributed, and three African boys who were found on board the dhow have been brought to England, and will, we hear, be well cared for by some of the officers. They had become great favourites on board, and had been named respectively "Tom Highflyer," "Sam Oldfield," and "Bob Dhow." Black, a gunner's mate, who is about to leave the service on a pension, received a gratuity of 7*l.* and a medal for long service. The Highflyer is to be removed up Portsmouth Harbour.

From: The London Evening Standard, 1st September 1868



The Highflyer: a ship in the British navy

Captain **T**homas **M**alcolm **S**abine Pasley
1829-1870, captain of the **Highflyer**



His treatment on the ship seems to have been...

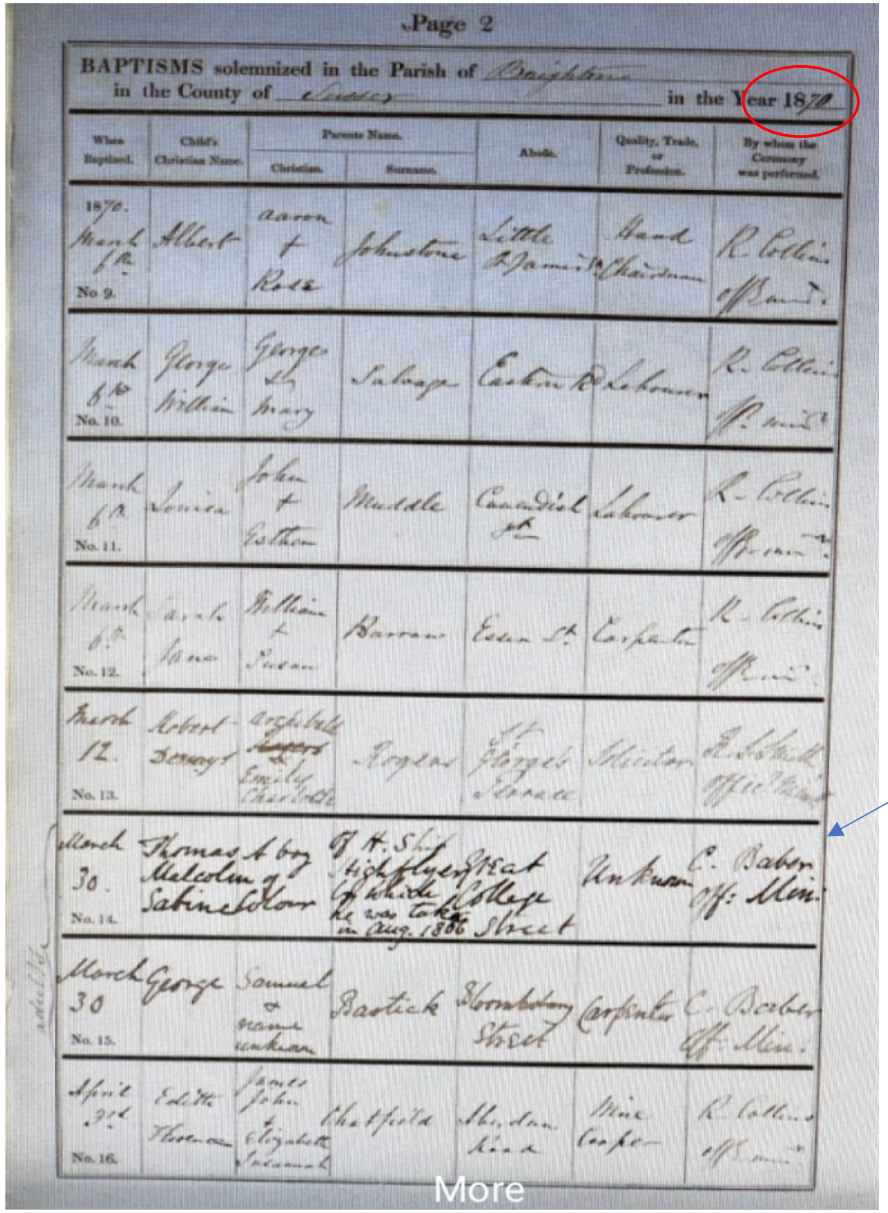
Details about his rescue suggest that..

His real name was clearly not.....

- How do you think Tom got his name?
- What can we learn about Tom's rescue from this newspaper?
- How long was he on the ship?

Put your claims on your certainty line

We found Tom's record of baptism in the church records.



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BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Brighton in the County of Sussex in the Year 1870

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name. Christian.	Surname.	Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
1870. March 6th No. 9.	Albert	aaron & Rose	Johnstone	Little [illegible]	Hawker	R. Collins Officiating Minister.
March 6th No. 10.	George William	George & Mary	Savage	Carlton Row	Labourer	R. Collins Officiating Minister.
March 6th No. 11.	Louisa	John & Esther	Muddle	Cannon Place	Labourer	R. Collins Officiating Minister.
March 6th No. 12.	Sarah Ann	William & Susan	Barrow	Essex St.	Carpenter	R. Collins Officiating Minister.
March 12. No. 13.	Robert Bennett	Archibald & Emily Charlotte	Rogers	St. Georges Terrace	Mariner	R. Collins Officiating Minister.
March 30. No. 14.	Thomas Malcolm Sabine	A boy of Colour	H.M. Ship Highflyer Of which he was taken in Aug. 1866	Great College Street	Unknown	C. Baber Officiating Minister.
March 30 No. 15.	George	Samuel & name unknown	Bastick	Shoreham Street	Carpenter	C. Baber Officiating Minister.
April 3rd No. 16.	Edith Florence	James John & Elizabeth Susannah	Chatfield	Sheridan Mews	Mine Carpenter	R. Collins Officiating Minister.

More

Tom was certainly baptised on (date).....

He clearly lived at...

He was probably ...(age) when he was baptised

When baptized: March 30th
Child's name: Thomas, Malcolm Sabine
Parent's name: A boy of colour
Of a ship Highflyer
He was taken August 1866
Address: Great College Street

- What can we learn about Tom from this source?
- How sure are you?

Put your claims on your certainty line

We found his old house on “street view” and looked at the census



This is 19 Great College Street in 2018

The census is taken every ten years to record information about people in the country. In 1861 & 1871 this house is listed as **a lodging house.**

In the census Henry and Eliza Thompson lived at 19 Great College Street. Tom is not mentioned. Can you guess why (from the dates of the census)?

It is highly likely that Tom lived at....

Tom might have felt....

Tom was probably looked after by...

The house seems....

- What can you claim about where Tom lived? ***Put it on your line of certainty***

We found the diary of Lieutenant Ramsbotham

20th August 1966: the **Highflyer** arrived in **Zanzibar**
20th to 25th August: anchored off Zanzibar
24th: ship was coaled up and prepared to sail
25th: at 3am a cutter went on shore and brought 'Babe' on board – an African princess who was escaping to marry a sailor
27th August: Lt. Ramsbotham mentioned the "capture of 110 tons dhow with **152 slaves in beautiful condition**. I shipped a **valet** from amongst them and called him '**Blackbird**' – Took them on board & burnt the dhow."
1st September: sailed for **Madagascar**
7th September: set sail for **Aden** (*in modern Yemen*)
10th September: arrived in Aden
26th February 1867: Ramsbotham transferred ship to HMS Lyra (*Tom went to **Portsmouth** at some point)*

Ramsbotham served on HMS Highflyer from 13th December 1864 to 26th January 1867

This indicates Tom was rescued on….(date)

Tom was probably on the ship with….

Tom seems to have travelled to…….

Tom might have felt….

Can you find Tom's route from Zanzibar on a world map or interactive maps?

Put your claims on your certainty line

- How does this information disagree with other evidence?

We asked an expert about Tom's headstone

This is what Tilley's stonemason's says

This seems to suggest that...



Usually people just put a name and dates on a headstone. Someone paid to have details about Tom's life on this headstone. This is a nice stone and it would cost £1500 in today's money

01273 555882
TILLEYS
STONEMASONS
www.filleystonemasons.com

We don't have a record of who paid for the headstone

Tom is not buried near anyone he knew

- Do you think Tom had a positive experience in Brighton?

Write your claim on your certainty line

We found Tom's death certificate online

- Where did Tom die?

FE 169212

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

Registration District Brighton

1870. Death in the Sub-District of Kemp Town, Brighton in the County of Sussex

Columns:- 1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and Surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of Death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
160	Nineteenth June 1870 19 Great College Street	Thomas Malcolm Sabina Highflyer	Male	13 years	Son of an African, name unknown	Tubercular liver Dropsey certified	Henry Thompson Present at the death of 19 Great College Street Brighton	Twenty third June 1870	J. M. Nias Registrar

- What was Tom's age ?

Add some claims to your certainty line

It seems.....

- Who were his parents?
- Who did he live with?
- How did he die?

~~He~~ probably...

We found a story about his arrival in school in a book

About three years ago….the children…of our St. M. 's schools, ….were told that they were to have a black schoolfellow, that his name was Tommy, and that it was **hoped he would find that children with white faces and Christian names would be gentle and kind** to the little dark-skinned stranger who was to come among them.

The children were delighted at the thought of having a real black boy for their companion; ….**I remember going into school, and ….patting his woolly head**, and asking him how he liked it; upon which his answer, " **Me like it bery good," made us all smile.**

As he grew more accustomed to English ways and school life, and as everyone grew more acquainted with him, **he became a great favourite**. He used to be seen at cricket on half-holidays, and was **very fond of his bat and b**all; and in Sunday-school **great pains were taken to teach him of One who had brought him out from slavery** and misery to a country in which he might learn about his God and Saviour.

From Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor, volume 6, issue 6 1870

Tom might have felt….

Tom probably enjoyed…..

People seemed to treat him……

Extension: What do you think about how the author describes Tom?

We found this account of his rescue.

Her Majesty's ship "Highflyer," was coasting off Africa, when, one day, she fell in with a ….**ship full of poor blacks**, who had been carried off from their homes on the east coast of Africa by **cruel men**……

The poor Africans were taken ….and **were set free**; although, after the **miseries they had gone through**, they were in a very different condition from that in which the slave-stealers had found them.

Three of the boys, **bright black little fellows**—interested some of the young officers, and they **kindly undertook to care for them**, and adopt them; and one of these boys was Tommy.

Tommy had a **happy life** on board ship. He was **devoted to his young master**, and was very proud of **belonging** to him.

From Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor, volume 6, issue 6 1870



East Africa

Tom's experience with the slave – stealers seems to have been…

Tom was probably born in….

The officers of the Highflyer seem to have treated Tom well, although….

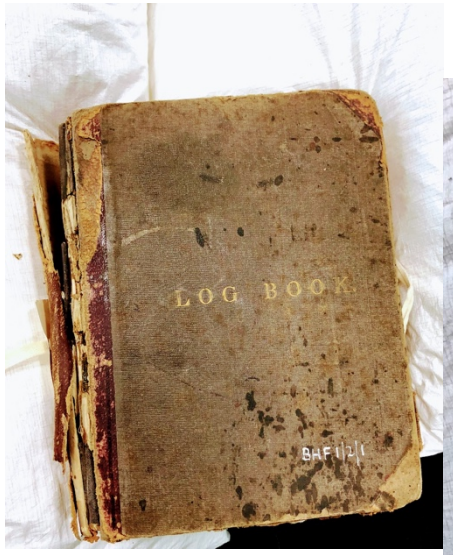
- Does this agree with the newspaper story from 1868?

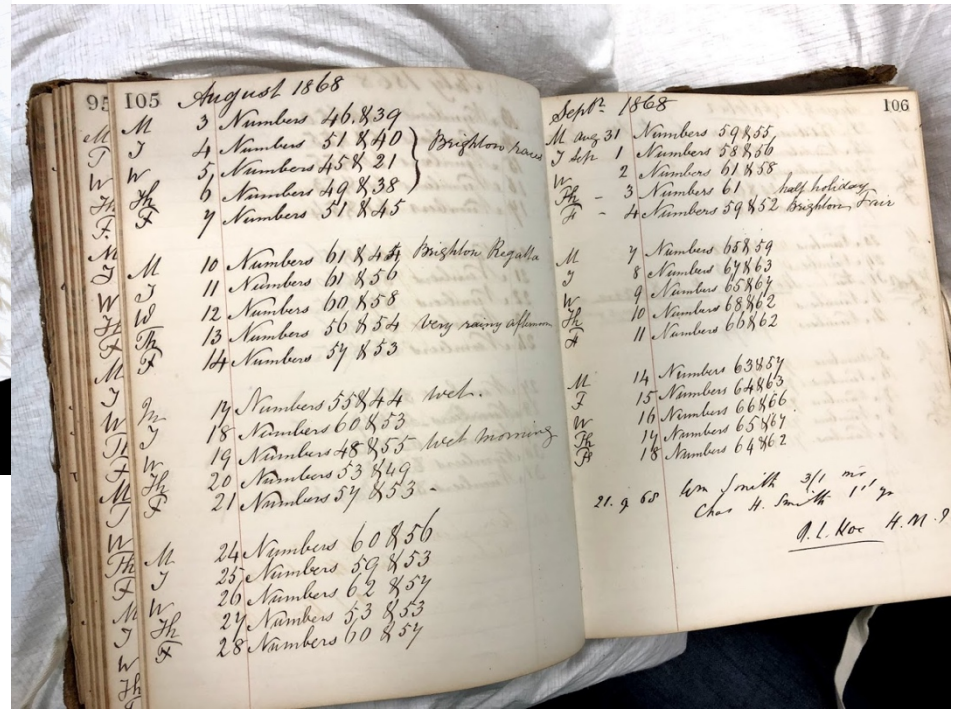
Put your claims on your certainty line

We found some information about Tom's school

Extension Task







This is the old St Mark's school on Arundel road where Tom would have attended

When he saw the school Tom might have thought...

Tom's experience of school probably involved...

The log book says how many people come to school in the morning and afternoon; attendance drops if there is a fair or a horse race.
It records when there is bad weather
It does not mention Tom
Children learn about reading, writing, maths and religion

- ***Write down anything you can learn about Tom's life from these sources***

We found some pictures of Brighton from the time

Extension Task

From the West pier 1866



Life in Brighton might have been...

Brighton chain pier 1860s



Tom would probably have seen ...



King's road, looking west 1860s



Cricket at St Peters 1849

We found some information about other Black people in Brighton at the time

Extension Task



Tom's experience of other Black people was probably...



Tom might have felt...



Musicians west of the pier 1870

Sarah was West African royalty who was a favourite of Queen Victoria.
She was married in St Nicholas Church, Brighton

Blind Tom: musical genius
1848-1908

- What can we claim about Tom's experience of living in Brighton?