

B/N - SEACOLE, Mary

# Jamaica's Mary Seacole named greatest Black Briton

## Lennox Lewis also on the list

**J**AMAICAN-BORN Mary Seacole was named the "Greatest Black Briton" after topping the vote in a campaign that was launched last October to name the 100 Greatest Black Britons.

The announcement was made at a ceremony held at the National Army Museum, which on Monday launched a special exhibition on the Crimean War and has a permanent display on Mary Seacole.

The project was launched during the observation of Britain's Black History Month. The man behind the concept, Patrick Vernon, said the aim was to bring about a balance to the BBC's campaign to name 100 Great Britons that did not include anyone from the ethnic minority communities.

Other outstanding persons making the top 10 include:

- Jamaican-born boxer, Lennox Lewis;
- Bishop of Croydon, Wilfred Woods and Bishop OA Lyseight (Jamaican-born) sharing the number two spot;
- Mary Prince, the first black woman to publish a novel in Britain;
- sprinter Linford Christie;
- Olaudah Equiano, described as Black Britain's political founding father;
- Queen Phillipa;
- jazz musician, Courtney Pine;
- Sir Bill Morris and newscaster, Sir Trevor McDonald, share seventh place;
- singer, Dame Shirley Bassey; as well as
- late member of parliament, Bernie Grant and Professor Stuart Hall.

According to Vernon, the 100 Great Black Britons website received more than one million visitors with 10 per cent actually voting. The project sparked debate in the UK about the role of the black and ethnic minority community in British history and development. There was also a debate about the make up of



**SEACOLE... named the greatest Black Briton**

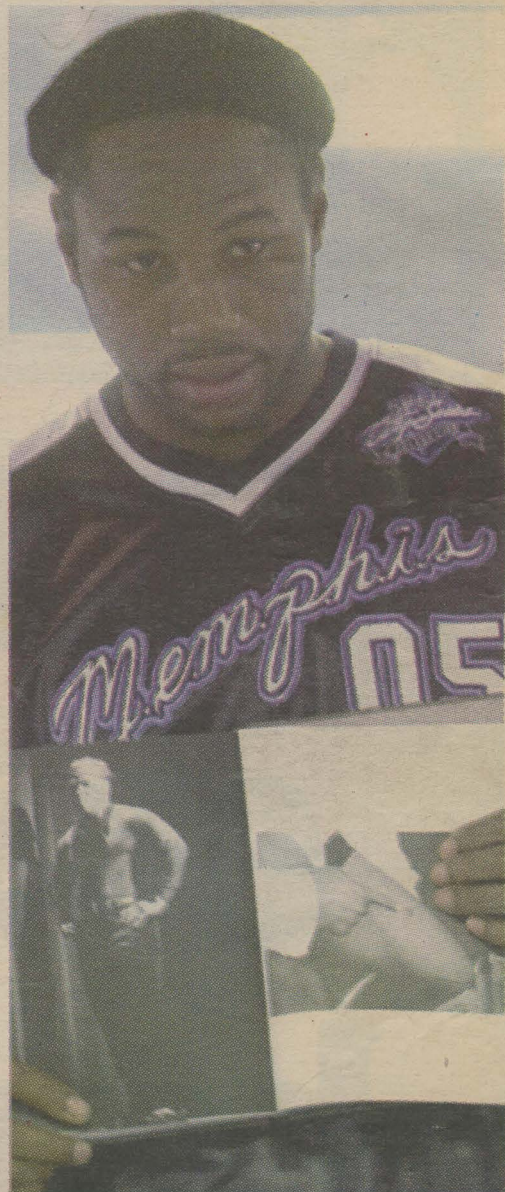
the list and questions about some of those named to it.

But Vernon, who announced the results of the four-month vote, said that one of the project's main goals was to create discussion and debate. He conceded that the final list was really only one of hundreds of possible lists that could be made.

"The popularity and success of the campaign highlights the fact that black history in Britain is intertwined with British history. We have launched the results to coincide with Black History Month in the United States because we have our own successes and achievements that need to be acknowledged," he said.

The 100 Great Black Britons had the support of the Greater London Authority (GLA) and was launched by the mayor of London, Ken Livingston. The GLA's policy advisor on race, Jamaican-born Lee Jasper, welcomed the naming of Mary Seacole as the Greatest Black Briton.

He said it was significant, as her



**LEWIS... also made the list**

contribution to the care and welfare of British soldiers during the Crimean War had gone mostly unacknowledged.

The president of the Royal College of Nursing, Sylvia Denton, also welcomed the result.

"It is wonderful news. What an achievement. A black Jamaican woman in the 19th century, Mary Seacole stood up against the discrimination and prejudices she encountered. Against all odds, Mary had an unshakable belief in the power of nursing to make a difference," she said.