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PRESS RELEASE

Racing Green Pictures announces sponsorship of 100 Great Black Britons Young People's Competition as part of Black History Month and will invite winners to the film set to meet cast

London, September 2020: Last week saw the release of the long-overdue book, 100 Great Black Britons written by Patrick Vernon OBE and Dr Angelina Osborne. The authors launched their ground-breaking 100 Great Black Britons campaign in 2003, which invited the public to vote for the Black Briton they most admired and the full list comes to fruition in the book. Voted No.1 Greatest Black Briton by public Internet vote was the little-known Jamaican nurse, **Mary Seacole**; a statue of Mary was then commissioned and erected in the St Thomas' Hospital garden in Westminster in 2004.

[Racing Green Pictures](#) is to sponsor the 100 Great Black Britons [Young People 16-25-year-old category](#) and donate the winning prizes of laptops, school vouchers and books to the winners and runners up.

The top prize will be an experiential one, an exciting opportunity for the winners to visit the 'Seacole' film set, the edit suite and to meet members of the cast.

Billy Peterson, CEO Racing Green Pictures says, "I am thrilled that the 100 Black Britons is finally released, and that Mary Seacole is No. 1. The story of her life, 'Seacole' is a true, socially impactful, humanitarian film about a strong woman of colour persevering against all odds is exactly what today's audiences are thirsting for. Racing Green plans to invite the winners of the competition to the film set so they can learn through experience how her story will be told. Filming on location is one of the best forms of education one can get in moviemaking and I'm excited at the prospect of hosting the winners of this great contest created by Patrick."

Patrick Vernon OBE comments, "It is a fantastic honour that Racing Green Pictures has agreed to sponsor this category; it is really great news that Billy Peterson is making this film about Mary Seacole, who was voted No.1 Great Black Briton."

During 2019, UK based studio, [Racing Green Pictures](#) began production of the film about her life, entitled 'Seacole' due for release 2021. The pandemic halted production early in 2020, but prep for production begins again in November followed by shooting in December/January in the UK. This film will strengthen the importance of including Mary Seacole's story in curriculums in addition to shining a light on the importance of nurses and healthcare workers around the world. Mary's life story is not only unimaginable for the time she was living in, it is an instantaneous, universally relevant and an historically accurate portrait of a healthcare heroine who put her life on the line to save others during disaster.

[100 Great Black Britons](#) campaign includes a [Children and Young people competition](#), sponsored by NEU where participants are asked to create a unique project celebrating Black Britons and their legacy. Open to all age groups, it is a fantastic way to explore Black British History and multicultural Britain. Entries for the competition are now open on www.100greatblackbritons.co.uk, entries close on the 31st December 2020. The most creative and innovative projects will be featured on the website in October. The website will become a permanent resource for teachers to support Black History in the National Curriculum. It is to encourage educators who want to share their knowledge and resources to upload content to the campaign's official website: www.100greatblackbritons.co.uk

'**Seacole**' is an historical drama about the legendary Mary Seacole (played by Gugu Mbatha-Raw), who defied discrimination to nurse British soldiers during the Crimean War and found herself at odds with Florence Nightingale, (Sylvia Hoeks). The film focuses her on the period of her life following the death of her husband in Jamaica, a merchant named Edwin Seacole and when she made the decision to dedicate her life to care for the sick and wounded. In 1854, after the war began, Seacole travelled to London, England where she applied to be a nurse to the Crimean Fund, the British Army and Florence Nightingale's nursing team but she was rejected and rebuffed by all so using her own funds decided to undertake her mission directly to the battlefield in Crimea.

At that time, her Caribbean wayward friend Thomas Day (played by Sam Worthington) arrived in London and they formed a partnership preparing for the journey and finally setting off in by ship in 1855 to the Crimea. Although the battles had been fought in 1854, they set about building The British Hotel (aka the Iron House/Mrs. Seacole's). Mary became a central heroine, during the war, caring and nursing for wounded, sick soldiers and became a symbol of hope to those British soldiers who gave her the name, *Mother Seacole*.

<https://racinggreenpictures.com/>

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Notes to Editors:

Racing Green Pictures

Racing Green Pictures is an independent, international studio based in London, UK. Founded in 2019 by Billy Peterson, RGP's vision is acutely focused on projects that transcend the concept of content as only entertainment through telling impactful stories of cultural and social importance.

Billy Peterson is the CEO of Racing Green Pictures. He previously founded the Epic Match companies in 2011 and has independently produced several feature documentaries and films. Prior to founding his own company, Billy worked with several International NGOs where he focused on development and transatlantic partnerships between public and private entities. In addition, Billy is involved with several philanthropic organizations where he serves as a board member.

Gugu Mbatha Raw, the brilliant UK actress who recently starred as Jennifer Hosten, Winner of Miss World 1970 in 'Misbehaviour', is poised for major stardom with this epic role. Gugu could not be a better ambassador for the story as she is currently involved with the UN and refugee work around the globe; born in Oxford she is the daughter of a South African doctor, and an English nurse. **Gugulethu Sophia**

Mbatha-Raw was born on 21 April 1983 in Oxford; her first name is a contraction of *igugu lethu*, which means "our pride" in Zulu.

Mary Seacole was born of Jamaican/Scottish parents in Kingston, Jamaica in 1805 and followed in her mother's footsteps as a doctress, nurse and entrepreneur. In 1850, she nursed victims of the Jamaican cholera outbreak. Mary loved to travel and in 1851 single-handedly cared for patients during a cholera epidemic in Panama. 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.

Mary Seacole's role in the Crimean War is well documented. She was mentioned in dispatches where her contributions were praised, and she was warmly described as 'Mother Seacole'. Mary died in London in 1881 and is buried in St Mary's Cemetery, Kensal Green.

It has long been argued that the main reason Seacole's story was overlooked in history was because of her race. Historians believe her landmark achievements remained hidden for so long due to racial attitudes in the 19th century. Novelist, Salman Rushdie referred to Seacole as an example of 'hidden' black history. After decades of having her achievements and contributions to society overshadowed by those of her contemporary, Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole received posthumous recognition in the form of the Jamaican Order of Merit in 1991 and was also depicted on a British first-class stamp. In 2004, she was voted *Greatest Black Briton*. In 2016, a statue in her honor was erected at St Thomas Hospital in Westminster, London. Mary's obituary in The Times (21 May 1881) included these words: 'The deceased, it will be remembered, greatly distinguished herself as a nurse on the battlefield and in hospitals during the Crimean war.'

There is a great deal of evidence to show that Mary was a nurse, recognised as such by her contemporaries and embraced by the nursing profession today. Mary's practices are described in her autobiography, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*. Mary gives detailed accounts of her work with patients in various parts of the world, including during a cholera outbreak in Panama and with British soldiers fighting in the Crimea. She frequently refers to her work as 'nursing' and at other times calls herself a 'doctress', following in the footsteps of her Jamaican mother who provided care for many of the British army officers and their wives when they were stationed in Kingston.

- 2004 - 100 Great Black Britons list, Mary Seacole was voted by the public the Greatest Black Briton of all time.
- The Royal Mint and Post Office recognised Mary Seacole in the form of new coins and stamps.
- 2007 Mary Seacole was included for the first time in the National Education Curriculum.
- 2012, as education secretary, Michael Gove tried to remove Seacole from the national curriculum but was headed off by a national campaign, with more than 40,000 people signing a change.org petition in just two weeks and a letter in the Times signed by more than 100 politicians and celebrities including
- 2016 A statue was erected of her after years of campaigning by the MARY SEACOLE TRUST in 2016 outside St Thomas' Hospital, London. **The Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal (MSMSA)** was set up in 2003 by Lord Soley. In October 2016, the charity was reconstituted as the Mary Seacole Trust, just a few months after the statue was unveiled in the grounds of St Thomas' Hospital on 30 June 2016.

-2020, an NHS Rehabilitation Centre was named NHS Seacole Centre at Headley Court, Surrey

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For further information, images and comments please contact Wake Walker PR

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