

# Great Britain: Thomas Clarkson / Kneeling Slave, Anti-Slavery Convention, London

## Great Britain: Thomas Clarkson / Kneeling Slave, Anti-Slavery Convention, London



**Form:** Circular

**By:** J. Davis. Obverse after B.R. Haydon. Kneeling slave after after Josiah Wedgwood pottery

**Date:** 1840

**Ref:** BHM: 1977; Eimer: 1342; Laidlaw: 0824;

**Variations:**

Size	Metal	Mass	Value
51.5 mm	Copper-Bronze	61.5 mm	\$225

**Edge:** Plain.

**Obverse:** Bareheaded bust of Clarkson in jacket, right. Signed: "B.R. HAYDON DES." around the rim on the lower left. Legend: "THOMAS CLARKSON".

**Reverse:** Slave in chains kneeling on ground, arms raised, right. Signed: "DAVIS BIRM." below the ground. In an arc below: "AMERICAN MAN AND A BROTHER". Legend on two concentric bands; inner raised band: "BRITISH & FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY", cross at the bottom; outer band above: "GENERAL ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION HELD IN LONDON 1840". Below: "PRESIDENT Thomas Clarkson (script letters) AGED 81."

**Notes:** By 1838 the objectives of the British Society for the Abolition of Slavery had largely been accomplished with the full implementation of the Anti-Slavery Act of 1833 which outlawed slavery throughout the British Empire.

In 1839, a successor organisation was formed, committed to worldwide abolition. Its official name was The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

The Convention of 1840 drew delegates from around the world, principally from America. The elderly abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, as president of the society, was the main speaker. Women delegates were allowed to participate only as observers. The women were outraged and one of the unintended consequences of the convention was the birth of the suffragette movement.

The artist Benjamin Robert Haydon attended the convention in the Freemasons' Tavern. A painting was commissioned to commemorate the convention. The result was not an artistic success because it showed a collage of heads arranged in a circle, each portrait rendered from a hastily drawn sketch. Clarkson is shown making his address and the obverse of the medallion appear to have been modelled after this portrait.