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THE BROMLEY AREA AND ITS SLAVE TRADE CONNECTIONS

Bromley has never been an influential place; ever since the establishment of London as the nation's capital in the middle ages, its main role has been as a quiet place where people who work in London can retreat to at weekends for periods of rest. The town itself grew up to service these people's needs and local inhabitants developed a rather insular attitude, satisfying their needs locally and taking little interest in the wider world. The situation in the 18th century was no different. The major landowners in Bromley were mainly farmers,



High Street, Bromley in the early 19th century. (Horsburgh's History of Bromley)



Bromley Church in 1795 (Horsburgh's History of Bromley)

civil servants or members of the legal profession. Others made their money from their land, charging rent to their tenants. One factor did mean that Bromley played a significant role in the abolition story though: the presence at Holwood of William Pitt.

PITT'S & WILBERFORCE'S INFLUENCE

Pitt had become Prime Minister in 1783 aged 24. He had entered the Cabinet 18 months earlier, so throughout the period of campaigning for abolition he was the premier political figure in the country. His support would greatly enhance the chances of any campaign succeeding. One local family who had been politically active for generations were the Earls of Stanhope; their seat since 1717 was at Chevening, a few miles south of Holwood. Charles, the 3rd Earl, was married to Lady Hester, William Pitt's sister.





PITT'S & WILBERFORCE'S INFLUENCE CONTINUED 1

Stanhope had a strong interest in the slave trade and two notebooks mainly



Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope (1803) by John Opie. (National Portrait Gallery, London)

created between 1789 and 1794, record his views and discussions on the subject. He was in communication with abolitionists, such as Clarkson and Wilberforce, but also supporters of the slave trade, including Sir Banastre Tarleton and Henry Dundas. He was an ardent supporter of abolition. After his death in 1816, the family took no further interest in the issue. Other local political figures included:

Charles Pratt of Camden Place, Chislehurst, (d.1794)

was a friend of Pitt the elder. His views on the slave trade are unknown but he could usually be relied on to vote with the Pitt camp.



Charles Pratt, 1st Earl Camden of Camden Place, Chislehurst c.1768 (Portrait by Nathaniel Dance) (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Thomas Townshend, Viscount Sydney of Frogna and



Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney (Etching by James Sayers, 1784) (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Scadbury, Chislehurst, (d.1800) was a lifelong opponent of abolition. He initially voted with the Pitt camp but after speaking against abolition in 1788, found himself sacked from the Cabinet. He is believed to have had a black servant.

William Eden, Lord Auckland (d.1814) of Eden Farm, Beckenham, was a friend of both Pitt and Wilberforce. Auckland came from a family who had made their money from land in North East England.

He had no financial interest in the slave trade or the West Indies and was a lawyer by profession. A believer in penal reform, abolition fitted well into his political creed and as an efficient Parliamentary administrator he helped to steer the eventual abolition Bill to success as President of the Board of Trade.



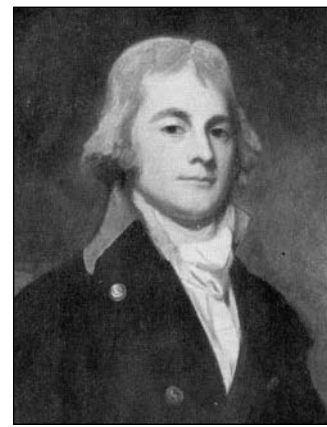
William Eden, 1st Baron Auckland. Pencil & watercolour by Henry Edridge, (1809) (National Portrait Gallery, London)



PITT'S & WILBERFORCE'S INFLUENCE CONTINUED 2

Bromley was, until 1832, part of the Kent County Parliamentary constituency. It returned two Members of Parliament. From 1790 to 1830, the representation was shared between three families. In 1806 the candidates were:

Sir Edward Knatchbull (d.1819) of Mersham Hatch near Ashford, was a Tory MP from 1790 to 1802 and again from 1806 to 1819. He was a consistent supporter of abolition. In 1792, in a complex debate, he succeeded with an amendment to Wilberforce's Bill, getting the House of Commons to agree a date (1796) for abolition of the slave trade for the first time, but it was thrown out in the House of Lords.



*Sir Edward Knatchbull MP.
Portrait by George Romney c 1800.
(Trustees of the Hon. Clive Gibson)*



*Marks Hall near Coggeshall, Essex, 1833 (Essex Libraries).
Main home of Sir William Honeywood MP from 1809.
An engraving by J. C. Armytage.*

William Honeywood of Sibton near Folkestone and Marks Hall, Essex, (d.1818) was a Whig MP from 1806 to 1812, replacing his uncle, Filmer, who retired at the 1806 election. In his successful election campaign, he described the slave trade "as disgusting to human nature as it was disgraceful to Englishmen"; however, an attack of gout prevented him attending Parliament to support the Bill.

Sir William Geary of Oxenhoath, Hadlow, (d.1825) was an independent MP from 1796 to 1806 and from 1812 to 1818. In the 1806 campaign, he claimed no one was more anxious for abolition than him, but two years earlier, speaking in the House, had questioned the 'propriety' of immediate abolition. This inconsistency may have been a factor in his failure to be re-elected.



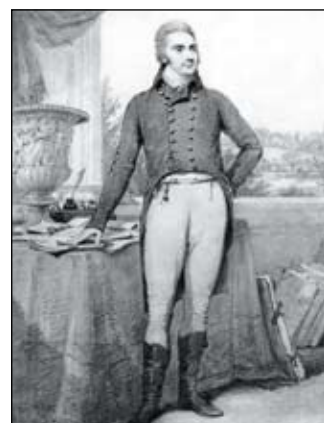
Sir William Geary MP. (Christie's Images)



KEEPERS OF BLACK SERVANTS AND LOCAL SLAVERS

Although Bromley was distant from the major slave trade ports of Bristol and Liverpool, its proximity to London made it a popular location for the country houses of the rich. Among those with links to the slave trade were:

Charles Long, Lord Farnborough of Bromley Hill, (d.1838) was the grandson of Col. Charles Long, owner of the Lucky Valley sugar plantation in Jamaica and a cousin of Edward Long author of the 'History of Jamaica' (1774), a book that made liberal use of racist sentiment to justify slavery. His father, Beeston Long of Carshalton Park, Surrey, was a West India merchant.



Charles Long, 1st Baron Farnborough, 1805, by Henry Edridge (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Although not directly involved in the trade himself, much of Charles Long's wealth was inherited, so his lifestyle was funded by slavery. He was a friend and political ally of Pitt but was primarily an administrator and, although an MP for 36 years, rarely spoke in the House.



Arnold Nesbitt. Portrait attributed to Thomas Gainsborough. (Private Collection)

Arnold Nesbitt of Keston and Grove House, West Wickham, (d.1779) was a banker and trader. He moved to Keston in c.1750, relocating to West Wickham ten years later. Some time later he and a partner bought a plantation in Grenada, which he named Mount Nesbitt, and another huge estate, Duckenfield, in Jamaica, but he had overstretched himself and died insolvent, not helped by his love of gambling. His cousin, John (d.1817), now living at Keston, continued in the same business until his bankruptcy in 1802 when the family's local connections ended.





KEEPERS OF BLACK SERVANTS AND LOCAL SLAVERS **CONTINUED 1**

William Manning (d.1835) was from a long-standing local family. He was grandson of John and Sarah Manning of the Crays and grandfather of Rev.



Rev. Francis Murray, Rector of Chislehurst, 1846 - 1902. Grandson of William Manning. (Webb's History of Chislehurst)

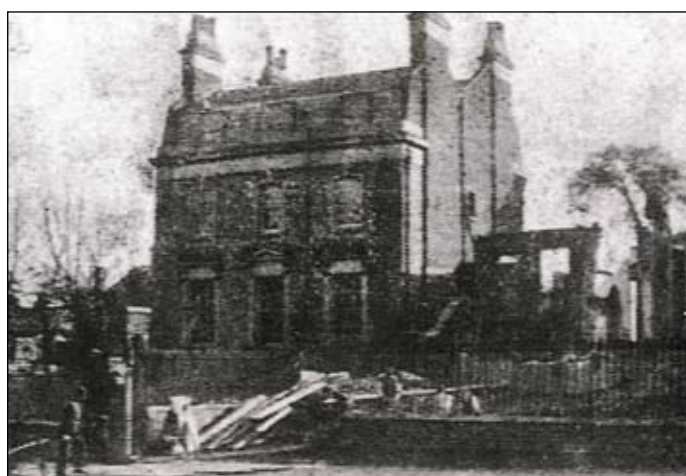
Francis Murray, 19th century rector of Chislehurst. His father and father-in-law were both planters on St. Kitts and he became wealthy from these estates. As an MP he was a strong supporter of the West Indies interest and fought for compensation for slave owners following emancipation in 1833. He denied, however, that he was opposed to emancipation. From 1813 he lived at Sundridge, near Westerham and was buried there.

John Julius Angerstein (d.1823) was an insurance broker and member of Lloyd's of London. He specialised in marine work, almost certainly including the insuring of slave ships, and was a part owner of a plantation in Grenada. His main residence was Woodlands at Blackheath, but in 1784 he bought Kent House in Beckenham.



John Julius Angerstein, c. 1815. Mezzotint after Sir Thomas Lawrence. (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Joseph Marryat of Malvern House, Sydenham, (d.1824) was a merchant and owner of estates on several Caribbean islands. An MP from 1808, he was strongly opposed to abolition, argued against slave registration and emancipation, claiming them unnecessary. His son was Captain Frederick Marryat author of 'The Children of the New Forest'.



Malvern house, Sydenham, home of Joseph Marryat being demolished, 1899. (John Coulter)

Charles Marsham, 2nd Earl of Romney, of Mote Place, Maidstone, (d.1845) inherited profitable estates on St.Kitts through marriage. Prior to this he was an MP from 1798 to 1802 and again from 1803 to 1807. He married Mary Townshend of Frognal and Scadbury, daughter of



Charles Marsham and his sisters by George Sanders Mezzotint after Thomas Gainsborough, 1787. (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Viscount Sydney. Later, in 1890, his son Robert inherited these Chislehurst estates as Robert Marsham-Townshend.



LOCAL ABOLITIONISTS

Apart from the major political figures that gathered around Pitt, only a few abolitionists had Bromley connections.

Henry Hallam (d.1859) was mainly known as an historian, but he was also a radical political figure outside Parliament, supporting Catholic emancipation as well as the abolition of the slave trade and slavery itself. His daughter married John Farnaby Cator of Pickhurst Manor, West Wickham.



*Henry Hallam, attributed to Gilbert Stuart Newton
(National Portrait Gallery, London)*

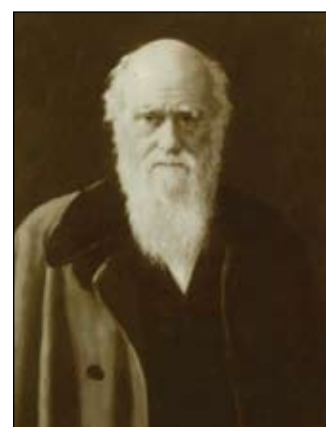


Ira Aldridge; lithograph, 1853, by Nicolas Barabas (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Ira Aldridge (d.1867) was an American black Shakespearian actor who was outspoken against slavery, and was often the victim of racism. Emigrating to London c.1824, he was initially treated more fairly but found himself used as a pawn by the pro-slavery lobby in the 1830s. In 1827, he was honoured by the Haitian government for his role in creating a positive image for black people. After emancipation in 1833, discrimination against him increased.

In later life he toured widely but made his home at Luranah Villa, Hamlet Road, Anerley from c.1866.

Charles Darwin (d.1882) famously lived at Down House, Downe, from 1842. Both his grandfathers, Josiah Wedgwood and Erasmus Darwin, were outspoken opponents of slavery. Wedgwood produced the Slavery Medallion, adorned with the emblem of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, in 1787. He had many disagreements with contemporaries who tried to defend aspects of slavery, including American Charles Lyell and Robert Fitzroy, the captain of HMS Beagle. His wife, Emma, shared his strong anti-slavery sentiments and, in 1864, boycotted The Times newspaper for not taking a tough enough anti-slavery line.



*Charles Darwin, 1881
(National Portrait Gallery, London/
Bromley Libraries P/DAR/2)*

Bromley was also situated close to the major abolitionist centres of Clapham and Teston. The presence of so many influential political figures in the area meant many meetings on slavery took place here.



KEY FIGURES AT CLAPHAM



James Stephen
(Memoirs of James Stephen)

James Stephen (d.1832) was a lawyer and an early advocate of abolition and emancipation. He was inspired by a debate in London in 1779 and the horrors of a corrupt trial of slaves he witnessed on Barbados in 1783. He lived on St. Kitts for many years and supplied Wilberforce with facts to support the cause. In 1796, he moved to Clapham. As MP from 1808 his main interest was emancipation and he was a major figure in the creation of slave registration from 1812. He resigned from Parliament in 1815 in protest at the government's opposition to further slave registration, allowing him to concentrate on writing an important book on slavery in the West Indies. His passion for the cause remained until his death.

Zachary Macaulay (d.1838) emigrated to Jamaica in 1784 aged 16. He quickly accepted the horrors he witnessed but did what he could to help with slave welfare. Returning to England in 1789, his eyes were opened to the true nature of slavery and he volunteered to help with the setting up of the Sierra Leone colony for freed slaves. He settled in Clapham in 1799 and was soon active in the campaign for abolition. After 1807, he pushed for full enforcement of the new

laws and soon moved on to campaign for emancipation, but from 1823 financial problems took up most of his time.



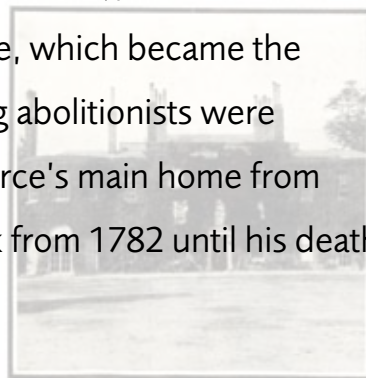
Zachary Macaulay, 1842.
Bust by H. Weekes
(Dean and Chapter of Westminster)



John Thornton, c 1782 by Thomas Gainsborough (Marine Society)

John Thornton (d.1790) was the father of the sect. It was in his house in Clapham that Wilberforce stayed during the early years of his campaign.

Henry Thornton (d.1815), son of John, owned and lived at Battersea Rise, which became the headquarters of the sect. Many leading abolitionists were regular visitors and it became Wilberforce's main home from 1792. Thornton was MP for Southwark from 1782 until his death.



Battersea Rise (Lambeth Archives)



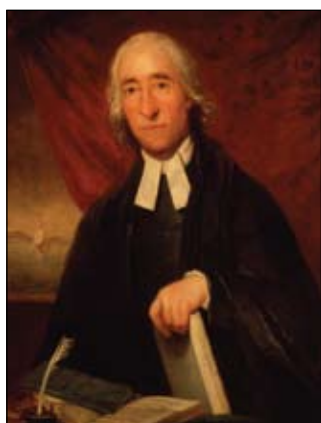
Henry Thornton, c 1814,
Mezzotint by James Ward
(National Portrait Gallery, London)

...with the anti-slavery movement. Thornton ...
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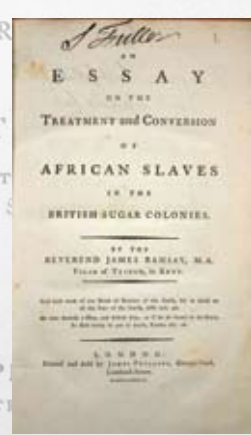
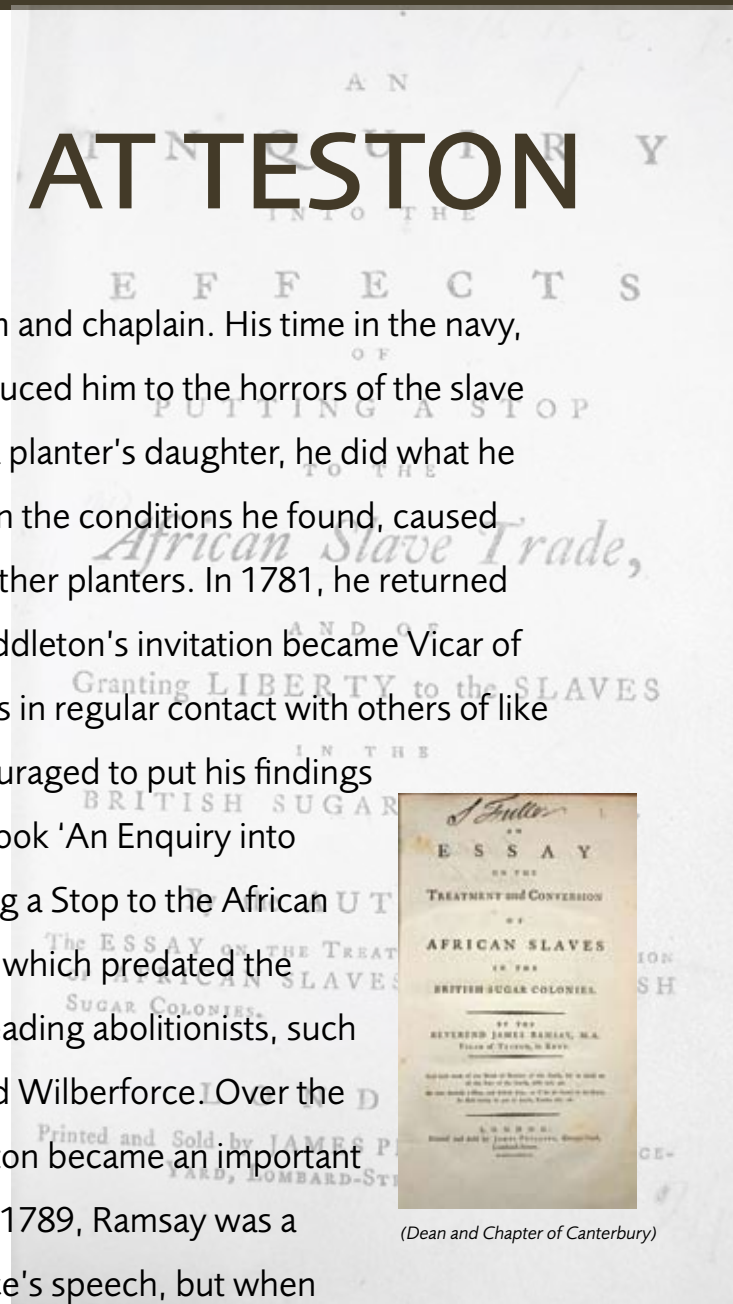


KEY FIGURES AT TESTON

James Ramsay (d.1789) was a naval surgeon and chaplain. His time in the navy, where he met Sir Charles Middleton, introduced him to the horrors of the slave trade. Later on St. Kitts, where he married a planter's daughter, he did what he could to help slaves. This and his writings on the conditions he found, caused unpopularity with other planters. In 1781, he returned to Britain and at Middleton's invitation became Vicar of Teston. Here he was in regular contact with others of like mind and was encouraged to put his findings and thoughts in a book 'An Enquiry into the Effects of Putting a Stop to the African Slave Trade' (1784) which predated the thoughts of other leading abolitionists, such as Clarkson, Pitt and Wilberforce. Over the next five years, Teston became an important centre for discussion about slavery. In early 1789, Ramsay was a major supplier of information for Wilberforce's speech, but when Crisp Molyneux, a St.Kitts planter, attacked Ramsey's arguments he became ill and died in July.



James Ramsay, 1789
by Carl Frederik von Breda
(National Portrait Gallery, London)



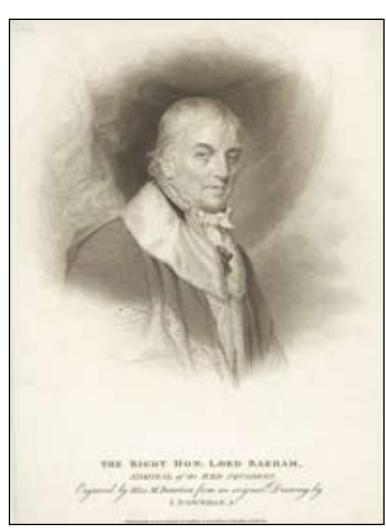
(Dean and Chapter of Canterbury)



Hannah More, (1821) by Henry William Pickersgill
(National Portrait Gallery, London)

Hannah More (d.1833) was born near Bristol and was famed as a writer. More met the Middletons at Teston in 1776. Inspired by the work of Clarkson and John Newton, she wrote a poem 'Slavery', indicating the nation's shame at the trade. She also had connections with the Clapham sect. Her later years were dominated by family and her own illnesses.

Sir Charles Middleton, Lord Barham, (d.1813) was a naval man. Following his marriage to Margaret Gambier, he settled at Barham Court, Teston, alternating his time there with periods at sea. As Tory MP for Rochester from 1784 to 1790, he took a great interest in abolition, acting as host for meetings of the Teston group. He wrote to Wilberforce in 1786 urging him to take up the cause. In later years, he concentrated on his naval career and was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in 1805.



Sir Charles Middleton, 1st Baron Barham (1809)
by Marie Anne Bourliere (National Portrait Gallery, London)



KEY FIGURES AT TESTON CONTINUED 1



Beilby Porteus, (1800); engraving by Henry Edridge (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Beilby Porteus (d.1809) was the son of a Virginian tobacco planter. When his family returned to England in 1720, he chose a religious career and became Vicar of Hunton, near Teston. In 1776, he was appointed Bishop of Chester and in 1787, Bishop of London. He made full use of his position to support abolition, regularly supporting Bills in the House of Lords. He was buried at Sundridge, near Westerham.

Another little known man of interest with local connections was Prince Hoare (d.1834). He was a close friend of Granville Sharp and wrote Sharp's biography in 1820. Although a resident of Brighton, he is buried at St. Nicholas' Church Chislehurst, near to his sisters Mary and Anne. He left money to the church to be used for helping the poor of the parish.



Prince Hoare (National Portrait Gallery, London)

