



# Inhuman Traffic

A virtual exhibition by  
**Gloucestershire Archives**  
in partnership with **Set All Free**

Marking 200 years since the  
abolition of the British  
transatlantic slave trade

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# What is a slave?

**A slave is a person:**

**Forced to work** - through physical or mental threat

**Owned or controlled** - by an “employer”

**De-humanised** - treated as property to be bought and sold

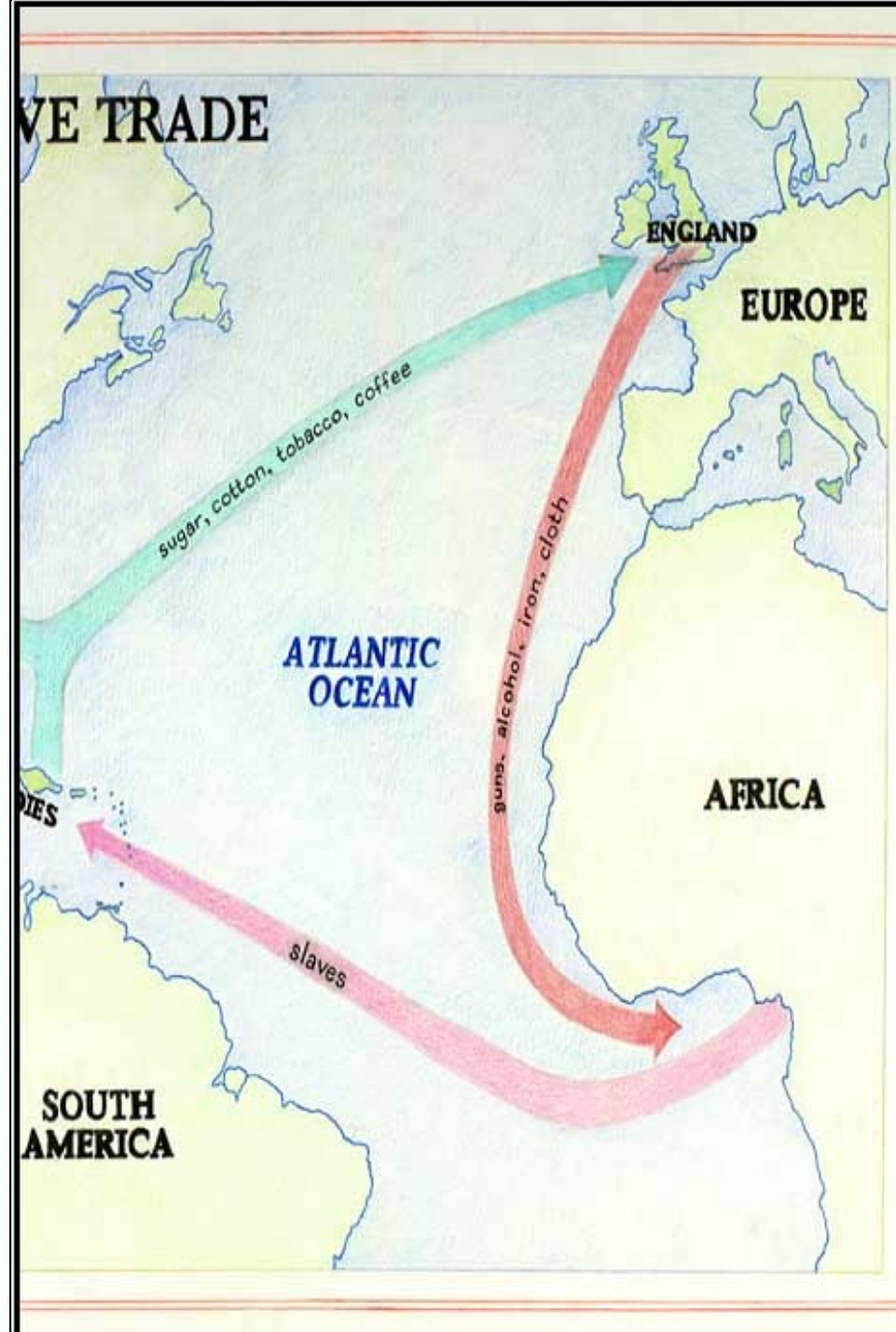
**Physically constrained** - or has restrictions placed on freedom of movement

# The slave trade

The transatlantic slave trade was the enforced removal of 12 million Africans to the Americas to work as slaves.

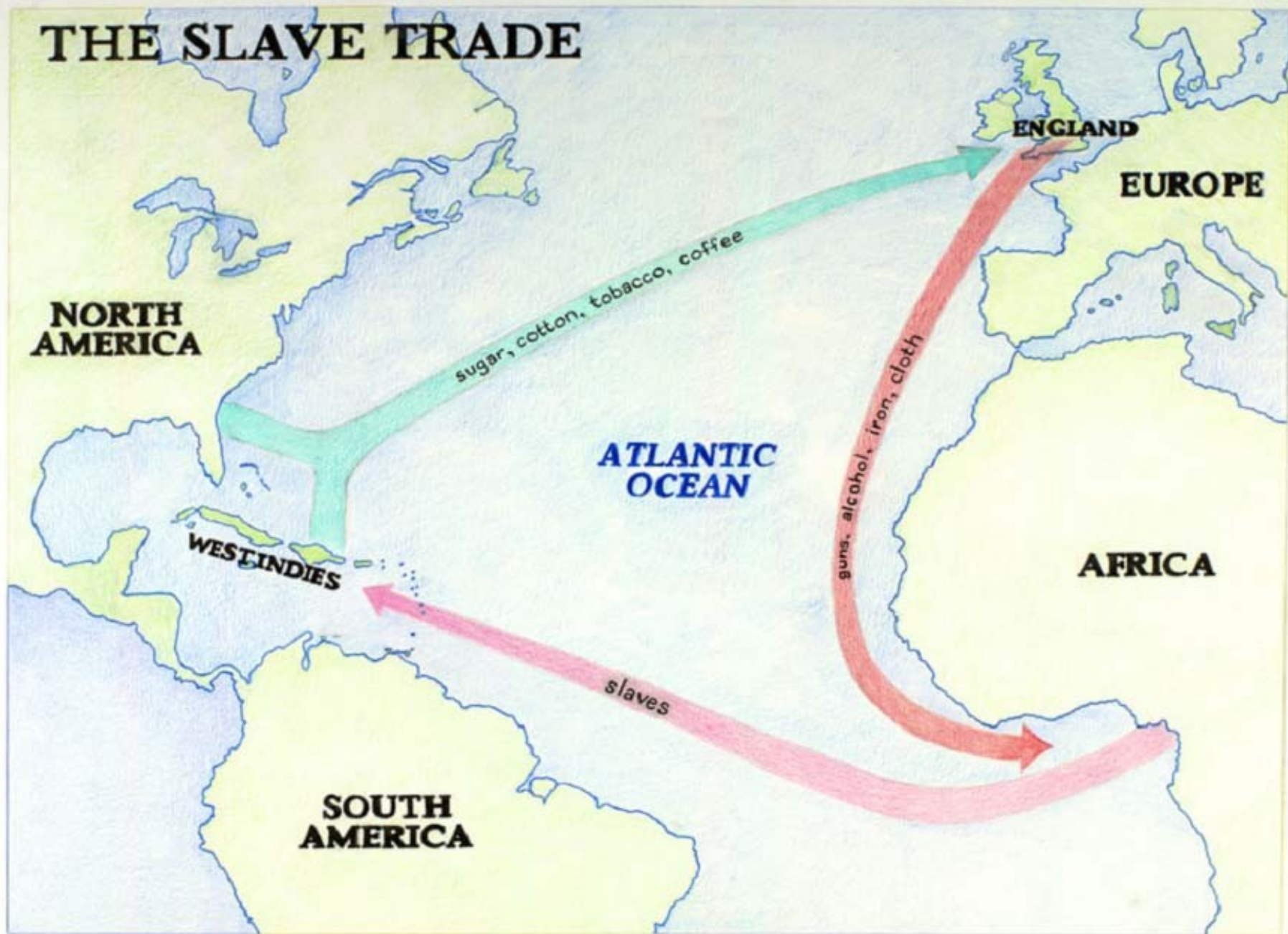
All the major European sea-faring powers were involved with the trade.

Britain did not start the trade but by the 18<sup>th</sup> century had come to dominate it.





# THE SLAVE TRADE



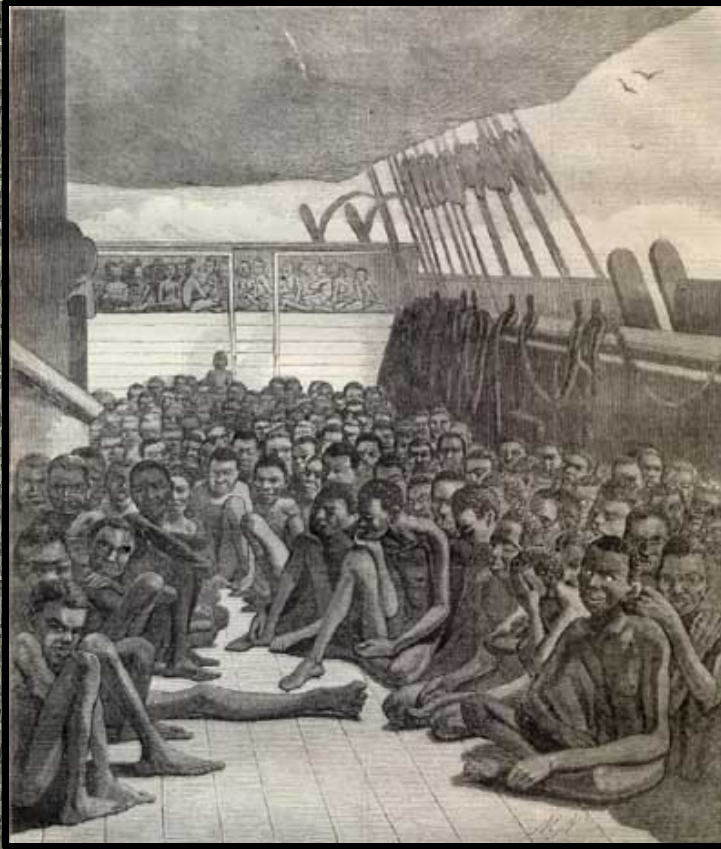
# The slave ship

**1.5 million Africans died on board slave ships.**

Up to 400 men, women and children were stowed below deck like cargo.

Disease and illness were widespread.

The voyage across the Atlantic took up to four months.





# People property

Enslaved Africans were sold to work on sugar and other plantations. A slave cost less than an ox.

Family and friends were deliberately split and given new names to remove their identity.

One third of all slaves died within three years of reaching the Americas.





# THE SLAVE AUCTION.





# Granville Sharp

The British slave trade reached its height during the 1700s.

The trade boosted the nation's economy. Many people enjoyed the wealth and goods, such as sugar and tobacco, which the trade brought.

Few people questioned the cruelty caused by the "trade".

One man who did was Granville Sharp.



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**In 1765, Granville Sharp, then aged 30, met a young run-away slave called Jonathan Strong.**

Jonathan had been brought to London from Barbados (in the West Indies) by his master, but had escaped after being badly beaten and left for dead.

Granville was deeply affected by Jonathan's plight. He looked after him and found him a job.

An Account of the Occasion which compelled  
Granville Sharp to study Law, and undertake the Defence  
of Negro Slaves in England.

One Morning in the year 1765. as Granville Sharp  
was going out of the House of his Brother M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup>  
Sharp, (then an eminent Surgeon) <sup>in St. Martin's Lane & Passover, in the Old Church</sup> he saw a poor Negro  
Boy about 16 or 17 Years of age, standing at the Door  
with other poor ~~poor~~ sick people waiting for advice;  
The Boy seem'd ready to die, The Appearance of the  
Boy was so extremely distressful (as he seem'd ready  
to drop down) that G. S. thought it right to go back again  
& speak to his brother that immediate Relief might be  
given to him. <sup>the Boy's own account that he had been relieved a day or 2</sup>  
so J<sup>r</sup>. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he was confin'd  
above 4 Months before he was fit to be discharge  
after which having no place to go to, he apply'd  
again to G. S. for relief, who recommend'd him  
to a Surgeon & Apothecary in <sup>as an Orphan Boy</sup> ~~London~~ <sup>to carry</sup>  
out Medicines, with whom he lives, about 2 Years,  
was paid Wages, <sup>in that capacity</sup> ~~had~~ a Livery given him, & grew  
to be a stout good looking young Man -  
On the 12<sup>th</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 1767. G. S. received a Letter date  
from the Poultry Counter, signed Jonathan Strong,  
imploiring protection from being sold as a Slave.  
G. S. did not recollect the name, but <sup>the next day (Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 1767)</sup> ~~that~~ went to the  
prison & demand'd to see Jonathan Strong, who  
being call'd up, G. S. immediately recollect'd him and  
enquir'd what he had done to be thus imprison'd? The  
Lad said he had not been guilty of any offence  
whatever, but that his former Master, David Little Esq<sup>r</sup>  
who

Two years later, Jonathan's old master captured him and sold him to a plantation owner.

Granville took the case to court although he had no legal training.

Jonathan was eventually freed but died of his injuries a few years later.

Granville wrote an account (shown here) of their first meeting which changed the course of his life.

He was to spend the next 40 years fighting to end slavery.



# James Somerset

**Granville Sharp taught himself law so that he could challenge the English laws on slavery.**

He went to court five times on behalf of run-away slaves who were about to be sent back to work on plantations in British colonies.

The judgment went against him each time, until in 1772 the case of James Somerset gave him the chance he needed.

A N  
A R G U M E N T  
I N T H E C A S E O F  
J A M E S S O M M E R S E T T  
A N E G R O,  
L A T E L Y D E T E R M I N E D B Y  
T H E C O U R T O F K I N G ' S B E N C H :  
W h e r e i n i t i s a t t e m p t e d t o d e m o n s t r a t e  
T H E P R E S E N T U N L A W F U L N E S S  
O F  
D O M E S T I C S L A V E R Y I N E N G L A N D .  
T O W H I C H I S P R E F I X E D  
A S T A T E O F T H E C A S E .

By Mr. H A R G R A V E,  
O n e o f t h e C O U N S E L f o r t h e N E G R O .

L O N D O N :  
P r i n t e d f o r t h e A U T H O R :  
A n d s o l d b y W . O T T R I D G E , o p p o s i t e t h e N e w  
C h u r c h , i n t h e S t r a n d .  
M . D C C . L X X I I .



**Slave James Somerset had been brought from Jamaica to London by his owner.**

He ran away but was captured and imprisoned on a ship bound for Jamaica.

The judge, Lord Justice Mansfield, took a month to decide that James should be set free.

The case was hailed as a victory meaning that a slave became free as soon as they set foot in England.

Lord Justice Mansfield



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# The 'Zong' massacre

In 1783, Granville Sharp helped publicise the shocking case of the slave ship 'Zong'.

133 slaves were thrown alive and handcuffed into the sea when supplies of water ran low.

The ship's captain intended to make an insurance claim for the slaves he had cast overboard.

Granville tried to prosecute the ship's captain for murder, but was unsuccessful.



# The campaign

In 1787, the **Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade** was formed.

Other people now worked alongside Granville Sharp in his campaign against slavery.

Granville, by now in his 50s, was made chairman of the Society's London branch.



HEROES OF THE SLAVE TRADE ABOLITION.



# Slave champions

**Slaves themselves played an important role in changing public attitudes to slavery.**

Olaudah Equiano, a former slave, became an important black leader and London society figure.

He wrote his life story which was published in 1789 and became a best seller.

Meanwhile, frequent slave rebellions such as those in Jamaica and Haiti, made many people question slavery and the trade.





# Wilberforce

**William Wilberforce, the young M.P for Hull, became the public face of the campaign against slavery during the 1790s.**

His first Parliamentary Bill to abolish the slave trade was defeated in 1791.

However, Wilberforce continued to fight the slaves' cause in Parliament for the next eighteen years.



The anti-slavery cause spread throughout the country with many people in Gloucestershire joining the fight.

In 1806 the voters of Tewkesbury lobbied their MP, Christopher Bethel Codrington, about the issue.

The Codringtons were a well known slave owning family.

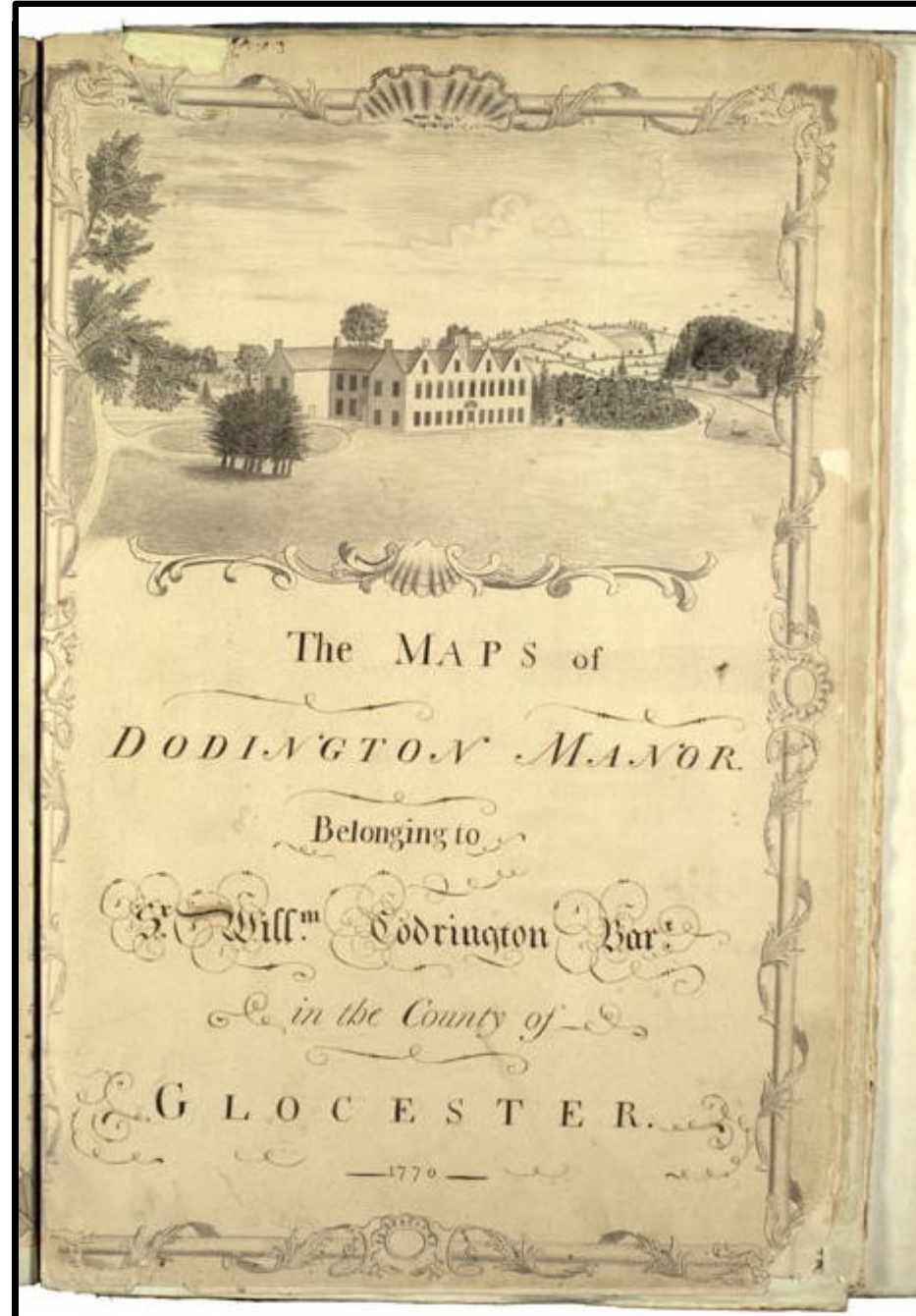


# The Codringtons

The Codrington family lived at Dodington Manor in Gloucestershire (now South Gloucestershire).

Their wealth came from a large sugar plantation in Antigua (in the West Indies) called Betty's Hope.

Nearly 300 slaves lived and worked on the plantation which covered 870 acres.





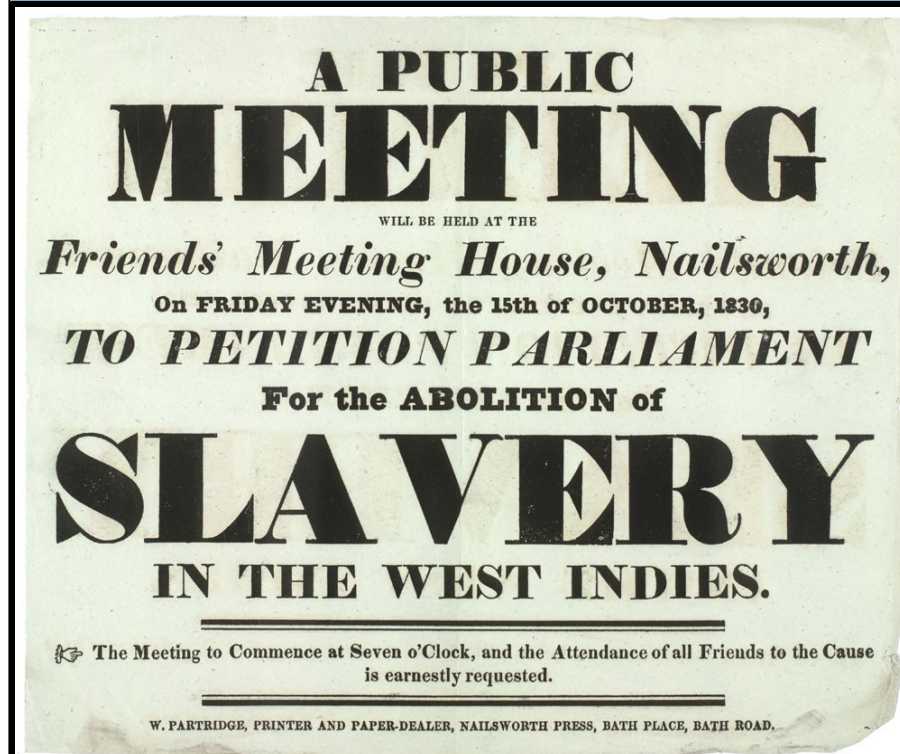
# 1807 - Abolition

Finally, on 25 March 1807,  
the slave trade was abolished.

Campaigners now began to fight  
for the abolition of slavery itself.

Over 500 local petitions against  
slavery were presented to  
Parliament.

No other issue has ever produced  
such a response.



# A PUBLIC MEETING

WILL BE HELD AT THE

*Friends' Meeting House, Nailsworth,*

On **FRIDAY EVENING**, the 15th of **OCTOBER**, 1830,

**TO PETITION PARLIAMENT**


**For the ABOLITION of**

# SLAVERY

## IN THE WEST INDIES.

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 The Meeting to Commence at Seven o'Clock, and the Attendance of all Friends to the Cause is earnestly requested.

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**Slavery in British colonies was finally abolished by Act of Parliament in 1833.**

The anti-slavery arch in Stroud survives as a unique monument to the event.

The arch is inscribed:

**“God gave freedom;  
may glory be given to God.”**

# The story continues....

## Slavery was abolished

by the British Parliament, **1834**

## Slavery was outlawed

by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, **1948**

## Slavery contravenes

the United Nations Convention of **1956**



# Yet today 12 million people live in slavery

(United Nations International Labour Organization)



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ACT TO END SLAVERY  
ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE ACT  
BICENTENARY 2007



**Granville Sharp and other abolitionists fought slavery**

# **What can you do?**

**Visit**

**[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)**

**to find out how you can fight modern day slavery**