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The History and Legacy of Slavery in South Gloucestershire



The Bristol and National Slave Trades

The Trans-Atlantic trade flourished from the 17th century. Traders sailed from Britain to Africa, where they would pick up black slaves. Between 1698 and 1807, 2,108 slave ships left Bristol. By the beginning of the 18th century, Britain had become the leading slaving nation. Bristol, along with London and Liverpool, emerged as one of the main slave trading cities.

How did it all begin?

The British slave trade effectively began with Elizabethan buccaneers or privateers. The first Trans-Atlantic English slaving expedition was captained by John Hawkins in 1562; Hawkins bought slaves from Sierra Leone and transported them to Spanish America. Hawkins was breaking the New World trading monopoly granted to the Spanish by the Pope.

The Royal Africa Company

The trade really took off in 1672, when the Royal Africa Company was granted a charter to transport slaves from Africa to the Americas. Some 12 million men, women and children would make the Trans-Atlantic journey; one in five would die before reaching their destination as a result of the terrible conditions.

Some Eighteenth-Century Residents of Queen Square and their connections to the Atlantic slave trade

Abraham Elton II Abraham Elton II (1679-1743) inherited the largest house on the Square from his father, Abraham I, the founder of an impressive mercantile empire in the city. His son, who invested in at least three slaving voyages, had investments in the slave colonies of Maryland and Virginia and replaced his father as an agent for Bristol in 1727. He also supplied copper sheathing for African ships, copper rods for trading on the African coast and copper wats used for processing gunpowder. His brothers Jacob and Isaac were also involved in slave-trading.	John Anderson He owned a number of slavers and directly managed some 66 voyages between 1764 and 1797 including the King George, which in 1764 shipped 280 Africans from the Windward and Cape coasts to Kingston, Jamaica.	Isaac Hobhouse A leading slave-trader in the city, he managed 44 slaving voyages before 1747 and partnered James Laroche in several slaving ventures. Hobhouse sold plantation produce in Bristol and oversaw the education of the children of his West Indian clients sent to England. By 1760 he lived on the Square and also had property in Clifton, then a fashionable village near Bristol.
James Laroche Bristol's most important slaving agent in this period, who managed some 132 slaving voyages between 1728 and 1760. The 350 slaves who were carried aboard his ship the Loango from Angola and delivered to South Carolina in 1737 included 40 children.	Woodes Rogers A famous privateer, he was amongst the first to set a plot in the Square and to build 'a substantial mansion house' there. He invested in slaving ships and ended his days as Governor of the Bahamas, which had a slave regime. One of his Bristol-born sons was an official of the Royal African Company.	Joseph Jefferis From a prominent merchant family, both he and his brother William, the city's leading Carolina merchant in the first half of the century, were slave-traders. Joseph Jefferis was mayor of Bristol in 1724 as well as organizing 14 slaving ventures by 1729. His ship the Pacific, which he co-owned with his brother, William Sayermer Jr and others, delivered 353 slaves to Barbados and South Carolina in 1728.
Thomas Freke From an established merchant family, he managed 14 slaving voyages before his death in 1730 including the John and Betty, which embarked from Guinea in 1729 with 250 slaves and delivered 158 to Kingston, 11 of whom died on arrival. Two other members of the Freke family were also slave-traders in Bristol, as was his brother-in-law John Brickdale.	Henry Bright He served as a factor in Jamaica and returned to Bristol in 1745 to marry Sarah Meyler, the daughter of his former employer (Richard Meyler, an African and West Indian merchant). Bright's shipping interests included a substantial interest in the African and Carolina trades. He also traded directly in slaves.	Other residents John Becher John Cressley John Day Abel Grant Nathaniel Day Thomas Harris Nathaniel Foy

Queen's Square Bristol was steeped in slavery. Profits from the slave trade financed building Queen's Square and numerous slave trade merchants lived there © M Dresser.



The triangular slave trade linking Britain, West Africa and the Americas.

The Era of Edward Colston

Colston was one of Bristol's most famous sons and an official in the Royal Africa Company. Most of Colston's wealth came about through the slave trade. When he died, Colston left vast amounts of money to Bristol schools and hospitals. His legacy still remains in the city today with a concert hall, schools and streets named after him.



Bowl demonstrating no slaves were involved in producing it. Abolitionists were proud of what they were doing.



"Am I not a woman and a sister" became a celebrated part of the campaign against Anti-slavery in the late 18th and early 19th century.

What did the trade involve?

The Trans-Atlantic trade followed a triangular route: ships left Bristol in June for West Africa, taking with them goods including textiles, iron and guns. The traders arrived in West Africa during the yam harvest in September, providing them with yams to feed the slaves en route. They exchanged the goods they had brought from Europe for slaves, wood, ivory and gold. The slave ships arrived in the Caribbean and North America during January, when the sugar harvest was taking place. This meant there was a big demand for slaves and planters would pay higher prices. Slave traders used the profits from the sale to buy sugar, rum, cotton, tobacco and coffee, which they shipped back to the U.K.

How did the trade affect Bristol?

Many Bristolians profited from the trade, and the local area as a whole flourished during this time. Much of Bristol's wealth came about as a result of the slave trade. Profits from the slave trade made many traders very wealthy men indeed, not least Edward Colston.

“Am I not a woman and a sister”

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Anti-slavery in South Gloucestershire

2007 marks the 200th anniversary of the passing of the Slave Trade Act banning the slave trade in the British Empire. This anniversary provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the trade and to pay tribute to those local people, who fought to bring it to an end. The bill meant that the buying and selling of slaves in the British Empire was now illegal.



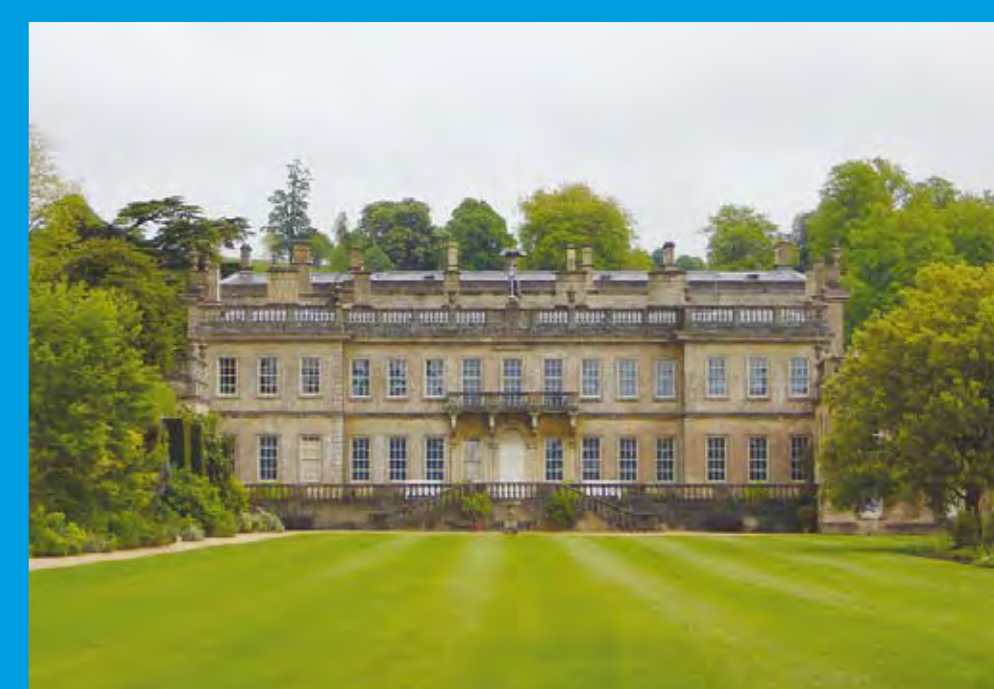
It did not ban slavery outright however, and so those who were already slaves, remained slaves. Although the bill itself did not put an immediate end to the slave trade, it was the beginning of the end to one of the darkest trades in mankind's history.

This unique exhibition aims to firstly detail the role of local families and businesses in the Atlantic slave trade and examine how they profited from the trade. Secondly, it is a chance to celebrate the very positive part many local people played in campaigning for and finally ending the slave trade.

"Am I not a man and a brother" from a Wedgwood ceramic. The slogan had become a clarion call for abolitionists in the late 18th century.



Abolitionist's sugar bowl - and proud of it.



The old frontage of Dyrham House. The Blatway family of Dyrham Park were one of many local families whose wealth came from plantations in the West Indies from the late 17th century.

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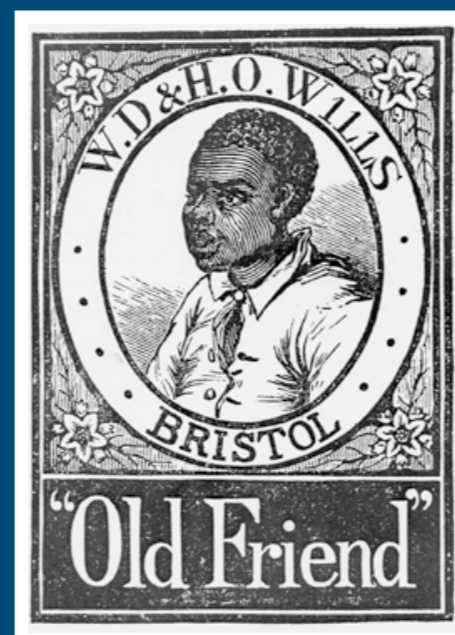
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Map of South Gloucestershire today



W.D. & H.O. Wills advert post 1826. Wills had been involved in the slave trade and continued to market the link with the West Indies well after the abolition of the slave trade and slavery in the British Empire
 © M. Dresser.



Sugar nippers became commonplace to cut the sugar cones which came from the West Indies.

“Am I not a man and a brother”

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Early Slavery

Slavery has been a part of human life since ancient times. The Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks and Romans all practised slavery and built their Empires upon it. They believed that slavery was part of the natural order of things. Mentions of it occur in some of the earliest known written documents, such as the legal code of Hammurabi in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) from 1760 BC.

Slavery in the Ancient World

Egypt

After they had conquered Israel, the Egyptians kept some of the defeated Jews as slaves. Egyptian slaves did not lose all their human rights; many deemed the economic benefits slavery brought, more worthwhile than some basic human rights. It was not unknown for an Egyptian to sell himself or herself into slavery to escape debt or poverty.

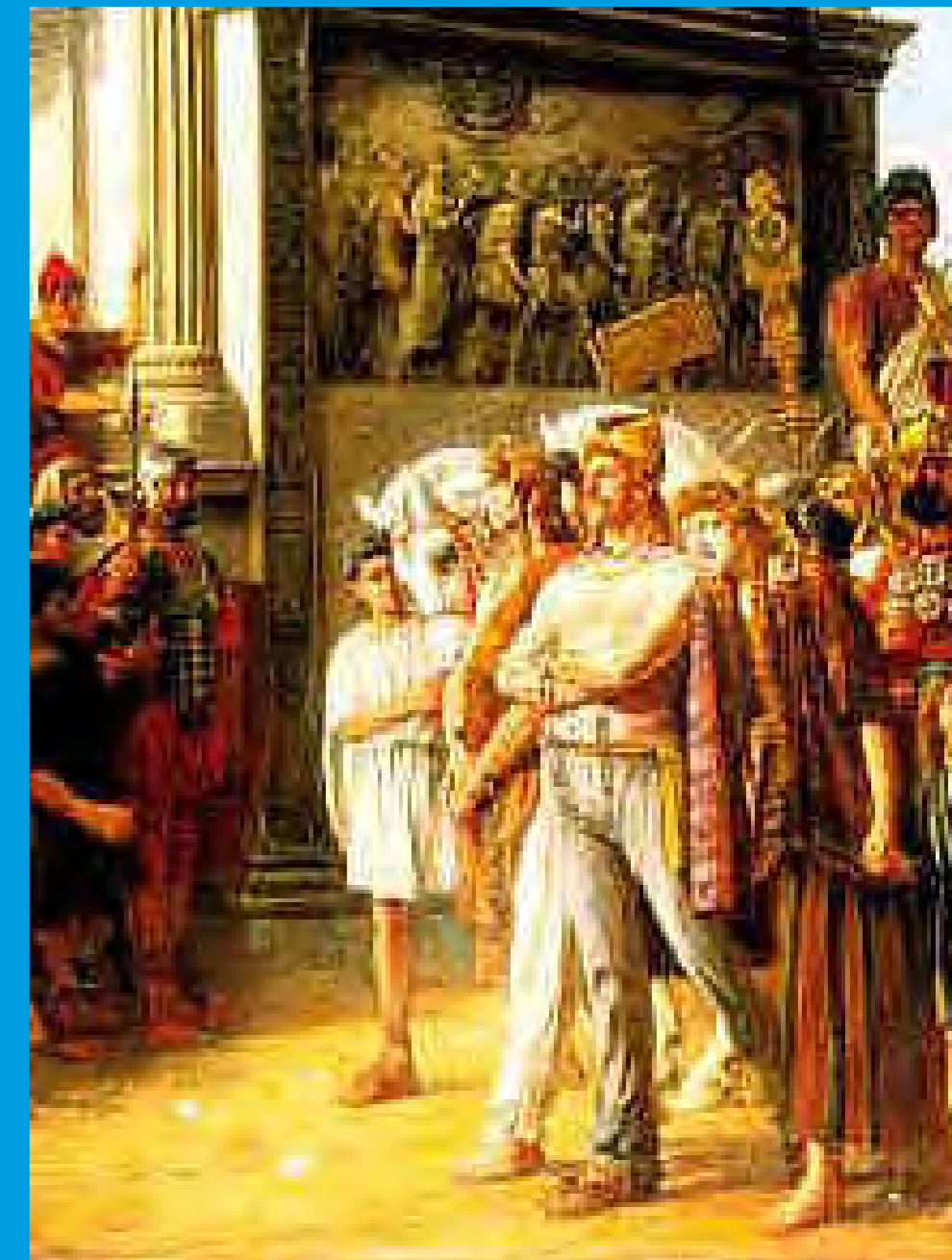
Greek Slavery

Historians believe it is possible there were more slaves than freemen in Ancient Greece. Greek slaves had rights depending on their position; some slaves could have a family and own land, others were viewed as nothing more than domestic animals. Around 400BC, the Greeks began to question the legality of slavery. The Sophists began to develop the idea that all men are born equal and therefore should be treated as such.

The Roman Empire

Slavery was also normal in Ancient Rome, with slaves accounting for around 40% of the population. Roman slaves were often skilled members of conquered tribes; they included doctors, scribes and jewellers. But this could be dangerous; in 73BC, the gladiator Spartacus led a 70,000 strong army of slaves in rebellion in Italy itself. Once a tribe had been defeated, its leaders had the choice of collaborating or being taken to Rome in chains. Life for the majority of the population, including the tribe's slaves, remained much the same.

Many Romans, especially after the arrival of Christianity, believed slavery was immoral, but regarded it as a necessary evil. They thought abolition would upset the social order so slavery was not abolished, but was gradually replaced with other forms of cheap labour.



The Romans brought slavery on a huge scale to the empire, which, amongst other things sparked rebellion amongst the Britons, not least King Caractacus in the 1st century AD © British Library.

Romans in South Gloucestershire

The area around Yate is typified by Iron Age hill forts such as Dyrham, Horton and Sodbury. When the Romans invaded Britain in 43AD, they defeated the local tribe (Dubonni around here) and took over the local military forts. Once a tribe had been defeated, its leaders had the choice of collaborating or being taken to Rome in chains. Life for the majority of the population, including the tribe's slaves, remained much the same.



Slave chains from the Roman period.



Dyrham Hill today, a former Iron Age hill fort captured by the Romans © E Proctor.

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St. Wulfstan and the Irish Slave Trade



St Wulfstan window at Worcester Cathedral © Worcester Cathedral

Slavery did not start and end with the Trans-Atlantic trade in black Africans. During the Middle Ages, Englishmen were enslaving their own people and sending them off as slaves to Ireland. St. Wulfstan, a former Hawkesbury parish priest, rose to become one of the most powerful bishops in the land. Wulfstan is remembered for being one of the first to try and abolish slavery in England. He was also responsible for compiling the Domesday entries for the Yate and Sodbury area.

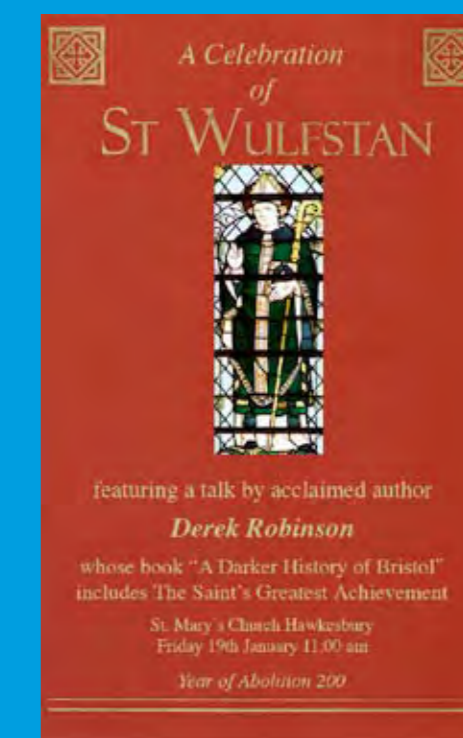
Who was Wulfstan?

St. Wulfstan was born in Warwickshire in 1008. He was a scholarly boy and decided on a career in the priesthood. Being a favourite of the then Bishop of Worcester, Beorhtheah, Wulfstan could have had his pick of parishes; instead he chose the rather unfashionable parish of Hawkesbury Upton. Here he became something of a hero amongst the people, offering free baptisms and not abusing his position.

Slavery in the Domesday Book

In the Domesday Book, entries for the area around Yate, showed 25 manors included slaves in their work force; in what is now Codrington, 18 slaves are listed. Mention is also made of female slaves in many manors, including Berkeley and Dyrham.

Hawkesbury manor lists 7 freedmen among its residents, with Berkeley having 22. The Domesday Book shows that slavery was still alive and well in the local area, over 400 years before Columbus first travelled to the Americas.



St Wulfstan lecture programme. Wulfstan was a prominent leader in ending the Irish slave trade in the late 11th century.

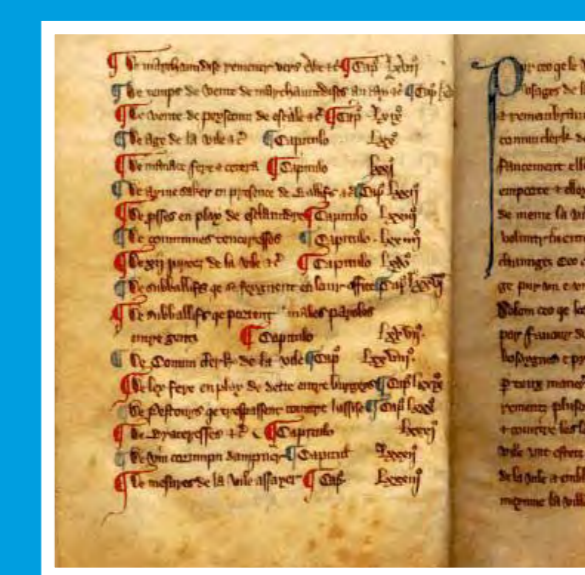
Wulfstan of Worcester

He later gave up his parish and returned to Worcester to live the life of a monk. Despite this, Wulfstan rose through the ranks and became Bishop of Worcester in 1062. He was the only Anglo-Saxon bishop to be left in post by the conquering Normans.

How was he connected to the slave trade?

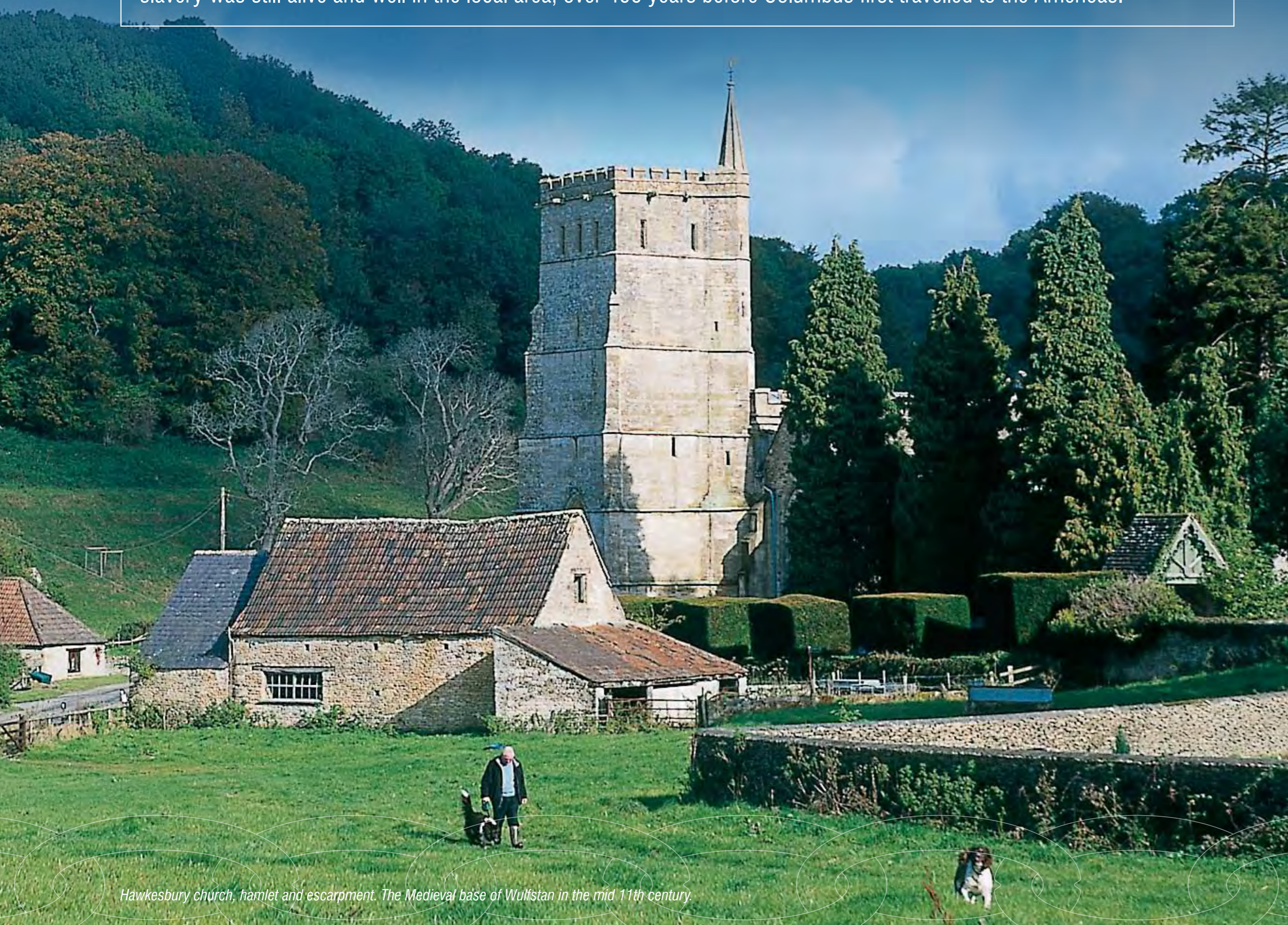
Bristol was in the diocese of Worcester and he often visited the city as part of his duty. Here, the English slave trade was in full swing, and Wulfstan was appalled at what he discovered. He believed that slaves had souls (many were baptised Christians) and thus, enslaving them was wrong. With the encouragement of Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Wulfstan became the first recorded Englishman to speak out against slavery. He regularly gave sermons at Bristol's slave market speaking out against it. He soon gained the support of the Bristol public, and was successful in putting an end to the trade.

What part did he play in the making of the Domesday Book?



Wulfstan's diocese was huge: the see of Worcester ranged from Bristol in the south right up to Birmingham in the north.

In 1085, Wulfstan assisted the royal commissioners in the survey which led to the Domesday Book in 1086.



Hawkesbury church, hamlet and escarpment. The Medieval base of Wulfstan in the mid 11th century.

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De La Warr, Tobacco and Jamestown

In 1610, Thomas De La Warr of Wickwar rescued the failed Jamestown colony in Virginia. It became England's first successful colony on the American mainland thanks to De La Warr. Many local families settled in Jamestown and some were even fortunate enough to make their fortune in the new colony.

What was life like in Jamestown?



Colonial life did not start off well. Early struggles with Native Americans, crop failure and starvation led to a proposed abandonment. Thomas de la Warr, who was descended from an old Wickwar family, arrived in 1610. He helped to turn the colony's fortunes around with the introduction of tobacco plants. Slaves were needed to work the plantation and, in 1619, the first shipment of slaves arrived from Africa. Jamestown had a slave market by 1638 and in 1661 slavery was officially recognised.

What happened to the tobacco plants?

Tobacco smoking took off back home in England and people soon considered it to be the perfect accompaniment to a pint of beer. Due to its success, tobacco plants were even cultivated in Gloucestershire. A trade war eventually broke out between the Gloucestershire tobacco growers and the tobacco merchants in Virginia. In 1662, the merchants won and the tobacco harvests in Gloucestershire were destroyed. This ended the Gloucestershire tobacco industry.

What effect did this have on the local area?

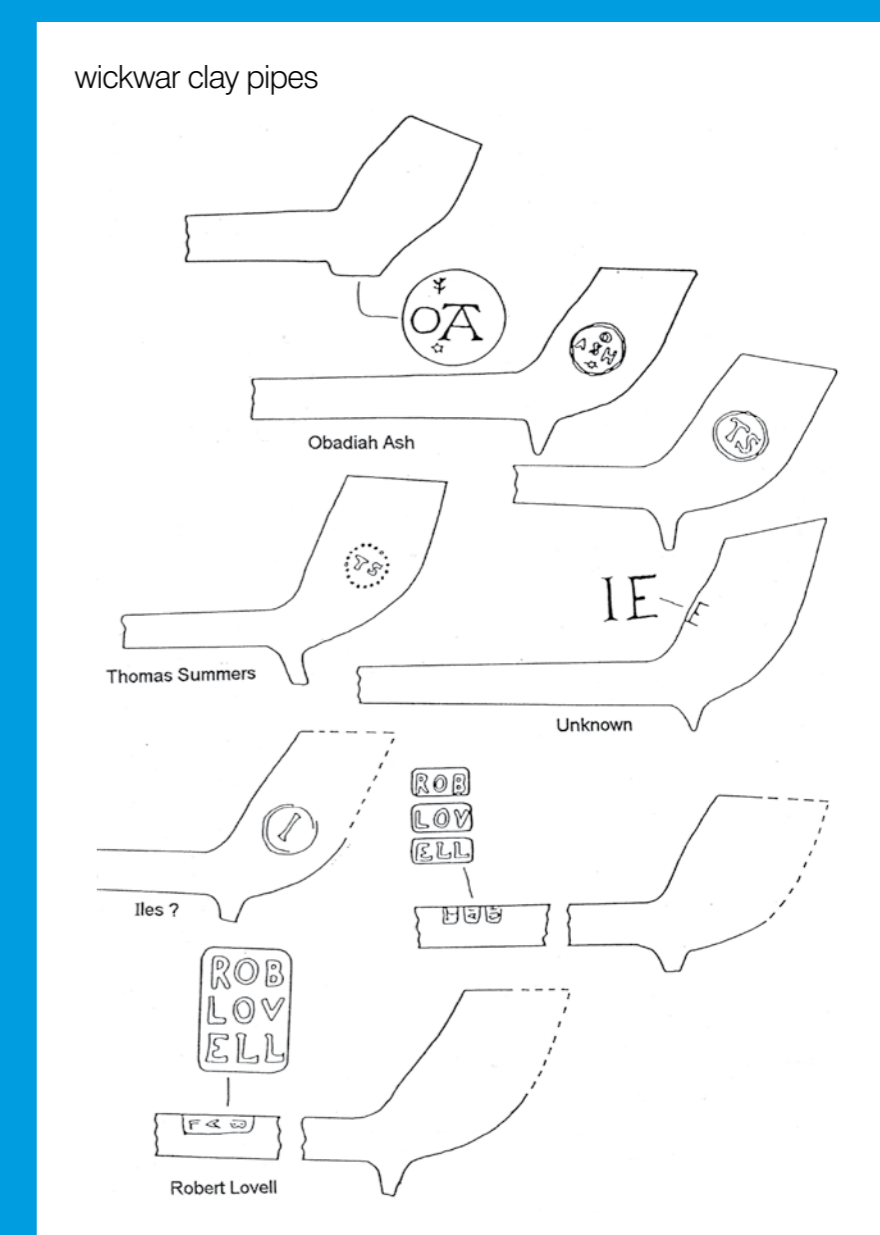
Despite the suppression, Wickwar retained an interest in the tobacco trade in the pipe-making industry. Three kiln sites existed in the town; these were believed to have been active between the late 1600s and early 1800s. Wickwar operated a small industry and only a few people were employed to work each kiln. The earliest record of a clay pipe maker comes from 1715. The factory was owned by the appropriately named Obadiah Ash, a one time Mayor of Wickwar, who became churchwarden in 1723.



Wickwar Church, which still has a few reminders of the De la Warr family today.



Early clay pipe smoking



The Wickwar clay pipe producers. Wickwar had been linked to the tobacco industry from the 17th century and remained a prominent production area into the 19th century © M Isaac.



Depiction of De La Warr's entry into Jamestown

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The Codrington Plantations

The Codringtons were one of several families around Yate, who became rich on the back of West Indian plantations. The family had slave plantations on Antigua and Barbuda for nearly 200 years, dominating island life in the process. Colonel Christopher Codrington arrived in the West Indies in 1642 and began buying and selling land there. His sons, Christopher and John, developed sugar plantations on Antigua and obtained a 200 year lease of the island of Barbuda. In the late 18th century, the Codringtons used the family fortune to build the present Dodington House.



What sort of slave owners were the Codringtons?

Many historians believe that during the 18th century, the Codringtons had a specific breeding programme on Barbuda for getting healthy slaves who were best able to toil on the sugar plantations on Antigua. Certainly, the success of the Codrington plantations during the 18th century was certainly down to careful planning on the part of the Codringtons.

Betty's Hope

Betty's Hope was the Codrington sugar plantation on Antigua. Betty's Hope covered 25 acres and stood 10 miles east of the port of St Johns. The plantation was managed by John Griffiths.

Generally, agents and managers looked after the sugar plantations on Antigua. The Codringtons had their family home on Antigua, although Christopher (III) spent much of his early life in England only returning to Antigua in 1703, aged 35.



2002 shot of the plantation sugar mill on Antigua where much of the processing took place © S Page.



2002 view of the former Codrington plantations on Antigua. Codrington and associated names are commonplace on the island © S Page.

Bringing Christianity to the Islands

Slavery and Christianity were far from separate in the early 18th century! Christopher (III) left two estates in Barbados and part of the island of Barbuda to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Priests were to be trained to help slaves learn the Bible and thus, "have the opportunity of doing good to men's souls, while they are taking care of their bodies". Arguably, Codrington's intention was to encourage slaves to learn basic morality and discipline – and not to rebel!

How were the slaves fed?

Barbuda had only a small fresh water supply, which meant the soil was poor and so sugar was not able to be grown. Instead, Barbuda supplied food such as yams to the slaves working on plantations in Antigua. The slaves on Barbuda were allowed to catch fish to eat whilst they harvested food to send to the plantation workers. Fear of being sent to work on the plantations as punishment for any wrong doing, kept the slaves on Barbuda in line.

The Slavery Battleground

William Codrington was MP for Tewkesbury from 1761 until his death in 1792. His constituents lobbied Codrington to bring an end to what they referred to as a "national disgrace". Codrington replied it was in his, and the slaves', own interests to continue with the trade.



Dodington Park the seat of Sir Christopher Codrington circa 1823.

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The Codringtons and Abolition

The period from the mid 18th century to the 1833 Abolition of Slavery act saw an increase in the slave population on Antigua; it rose from 172 in 1746 to 503 in 1831. Whether this is from a slave breeding programme on Barbuda or merely better treatment of slaves is open to question. Despite the increase in slave numbers, Anglo-French wars and the French Revolution caused unrest in the West Indies. Plantation owners began to move back to Britain, where they built mansions from their profits.

Decline and Fall of the Plantations

On Antigua, profits had halved by the early part of the 1800s and continued to decline. Agents working for Christopher Codrington took advantage of his absence and neglected their duties. Despite the fall in profits the Codringtons felt it essential to maintain Dodington "to keep up appearances."

How did the former slaves fare?

William and his wife visited Antigua in 1844. His wife's diary described the housing of the slaves, "small, 8ft by 6ft with beaten earth floor. A bed, chest of drawers, sideboard with china and glass, and several chairs. Occasionally there were two rooms, one bedroom and one living room. Water was collected from a nearby stream."



The Codrington stables in 1899. The man is Hurcom (1st name unknown), who is almost certainly from of Antiguan ancestry. Hurcom demonstrates how West Indian slaves often became servants in wealthy homes © S Codrington.

Freedom at last!

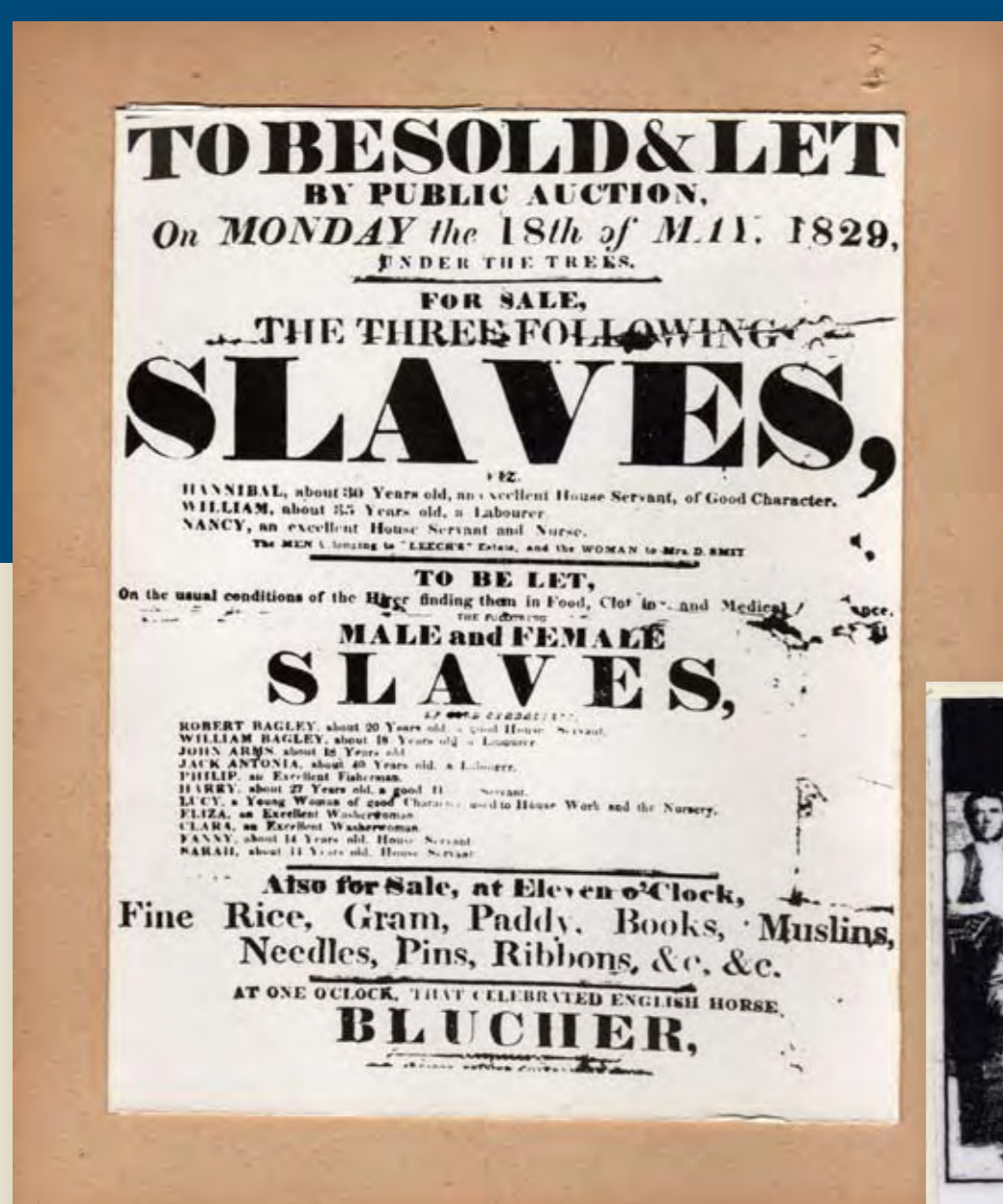
1834 saw freedom awarded to all 310 slaves at Betty's Hope following the Abolition of Slavery Act the previous year. A letter from an overseer in Antigua to Sir Christopher in March 1840, describes the circumstances there: 'Negro emancipation seems to have made the proprietor the slave. The former will reside on my property and have daily wages whether I have work for them or not.' After emancipation was granted, Betty's Hope fell into disrepair as former slaves could not be made to toil on the land as before.



The Codrington coat of arms dating back to Medieval times.

Steeped in Slavery?

In 1834, Christopher Bethell Codrington was publicly denounced as a prospective MP because he was, "Heir to property in human flesh and blood"; Codrington was elected to Parliament regardless of this criticism. The Gloucester Journal published an article criticising the people who voted for him and labelling them "Mr Codrington's white slaves."

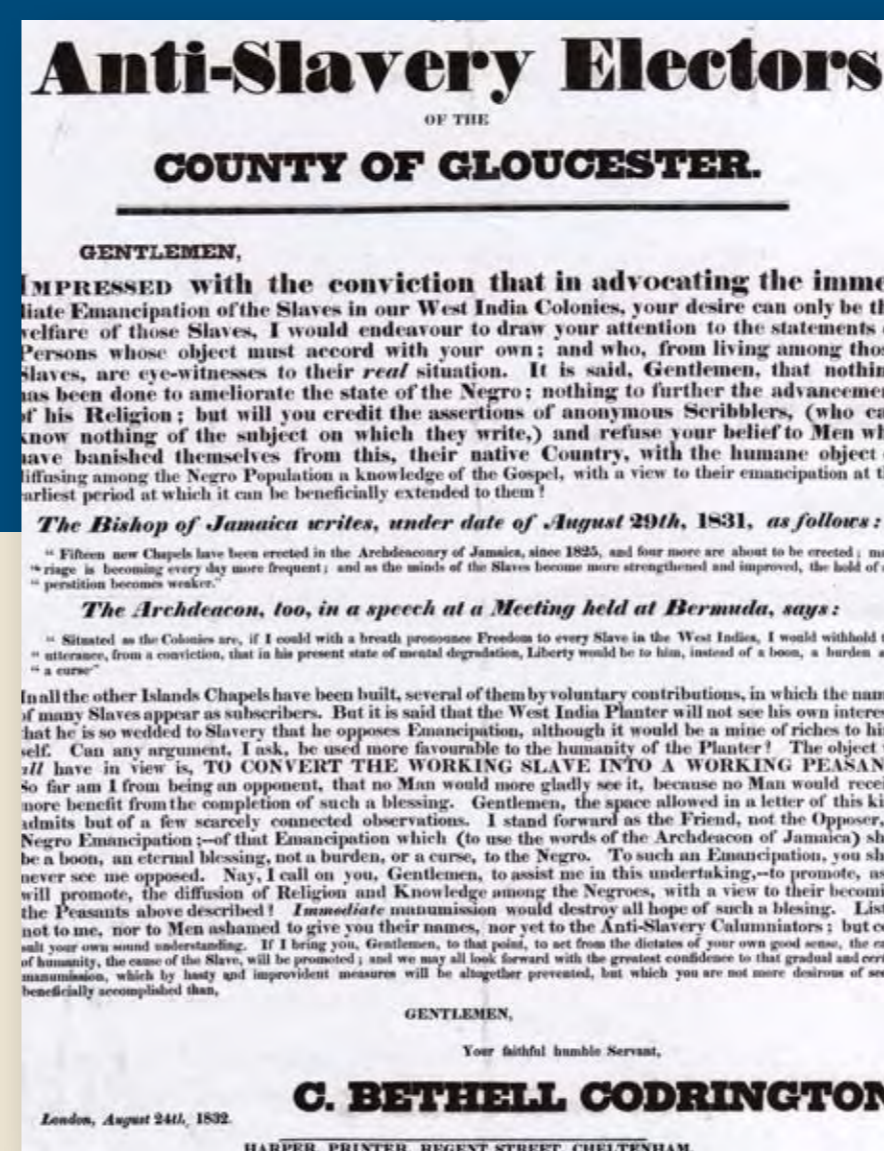


Slavery auction in 1829. Although the slave trade had ended in 1807, slavery remained very much alive in the British Empire until 1833 © S Codrington.



Estate workers at Dodington in 1895 (photograph courtesy Museum of English Rural Life, Reading University)
 Back Row: - Selman (Gardener); - Williams (Keeper); W. Chandler (Gardener); J. Uzzle, (Park Labourer).
 Third Row: - Jenkins (Blacksmith); - Bodkin (Cowboy); C. Woodman (Stableman); W. Uzzle (Gardener); W. Greenaway (Head Gardener); - Hurcom (Carter); J. Angel (Woodman); T. Woodman (Gardener).
 Second Row: J. Fitchew (Keeper); R. Payne (Keeper); - Perry (Cowman); H. Woodman (-); H. Milson (Groom); A. Tanner (Helper); R. Sweet (Keeper).
 Sitting: J. Fitchew (Head Keeper); - White (Stableboy); - Jenkins (Gardener); ? (Garden).

The Codrington staff in 1895. 3rd from the right is Hurcom, a black servant from an Antiguan family © S Codrington.



Election poster of 1832. The abolition of all slavery in the British Empire was a hot topic. The Codringtons were reformers standing in Gloucester on an anti-slavery ticket © S Codrington.

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The Sturge Family

The Quakers were one of the first groups to speak out against the slave trade. They saw slavery as a violation of their belief that every man was born equal. The slave trade was banned from Quaker properties in 1760 and by 1761, the movement expelled any Quaker who owned slaves. Many of the leading abolitionists were Quakers.

Who was Joseph Sturge?

Joseph Sturge VI was born near Olveston in 1793. The Sturge family had farmed in the local area for over 200 years and, from the 1830s, some family members lived in The Lawns in Yate. Joseph became a corn merchant. In 1822, he left the corn business in the charge of his brother and moved to Birmingham for a new start.

How did he become involved in abolition?

Joseph Sturge was appointed Secretary to the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society in 1826. He became annoyed at the lack of progress that was being made after 1807 and began to campaign for a complete end to slavery itself. Sturge left the Society when it became geared towards reform of slavery, not abolition.

Continuing the Struggle

In 1834, Joseph Sturge turned his attentions to the new apprenticeship system, which operated in the West Indies after the Abolition of Slavery act (1833). Former slave owners were still entitled to 40 hours of free labour from former slaves, but any further toil required wages. Sturge voiced his criticism of the apprenticeship scheme and informed his fellow campaigners that nothing much had changed and in his belief, apprenticeship actually prolonged slavery.



Ploughing the plantation fields on the Sturge's Montserrat plantation c1890. Despite there being no slavery at this time, labour still involved manual toil © E Garrett.



Lawns House (now the Lawns Hotel), Yate c1910. Daniel Sturge and the Yate branch of the Sturge family built the property in the 1830s and lived here during the 19th century © R Jordan.

Sturge's Solution

The lime crop had failed in 1852 and many estates were losing money. Sturge wanted to prove slaves were not lazy and that the problem with the West Indian economy was the behaviour of the landlords. He believed that if he was able to conduct business and grow crops successfully in the area, then anyone could. He bought failing estates and sold or rented the land to labourers, where they could grow sugar, fruit and vegetables; these small holdings grew into free villages.

What happened in these free towns?

In 1840, Reverend John Clark established Sturge Town in Jamaica, which he named after Joseph Sturge. There was also a major Sturge settlement in Montserrat. Sturge Town was the second free town to be set up in Jamaica. The land, a previous plantation owned by the Scarlett family, measured around 500 acres and was shared between 100 families. It is believed that around 20,000 former slaves settled in free villages in Jamaica.

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Industry and Slavery

Many local industries were linked with the slave trade; brass works produced “Guinea Goods”, which they sold to the slave traders. Sugar refiners and distillers were dependent on slave produced raw materials and miners produced the fuel needed in the various processes.

Where were these local industries?

Abraham Darby established the Baptist Mills brass works in 1702 with surplus money from his expanding slave trade business. William Champion later founded his own brass works in Warmley, in 1746. The brass works at Baptist Mills used up 2,000 horse-loads of coal a week; the coal came from mines in Kingswood, which had a coal industry since Medieval times,

How was brass connected to the slave trade?

Brass rods made around Kingswood were used as money by the slave traders. In West Africa the metal rods were made into pots and household goods and could also be melted down for other uses. Africans referred to copper as the ‘red gold of Africa’.

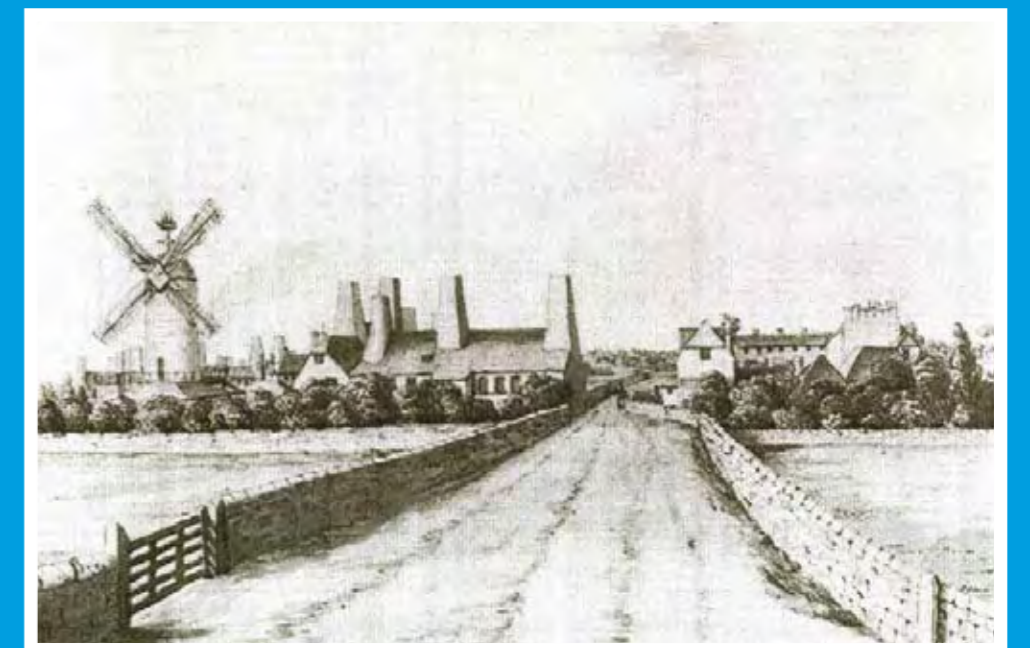
The brass industry was so commercially important that factory keyholes had to be blocked-up to prevent competitors spying. The majority of brass workers did not know where the goods they were making were heading and many of the workers were exploited themselves.

Were the local workers involved in abolition?

In 1739, John Wesley, a lifelong opponent of slavery, made the first of many sermons to the miners in Kingswood. Wesley’s opposition to slavery preceded the major campaigns of the 1770s. His religious calling began in 1736 when he visited Georgia and became familiar with the plight of slaves. Wesley went on to publish four editions of his work “Thoughts upon Slavery”, between 1774 and 1776.



Engine House, Kingswood. Remnants of Kingswood’s coal industry can still be seen © Kingswood Museum.



Warmley Brassworks in its heyday c1780 producing brass for Africa © Kingswood Museum.

What is Wesley’s connection with Kingswood?

On many occasions John Wesley preached the word of God in the open to the Kingswood miners. Although Wesley himself offered no practical solutions to poor working conditions, his attacks on slavery and outdoor preaching made him an inspiration to many poorer people in the area.



Inspirational Figure! Depiction of Wesley preaching outdoors at Hanham Mount near Bristol © Kingswood Museum.

In Bristol in 1788, Wesley delivered his most memorable sermon. Many miners were in attendance, as were a number of slave traders who were there to upset proceedings. The ceremony was disturbed by a great storm, which frightened even the most vocal anti-abolitionists.



Warmley Brassworks today. The more benign setting of Kingswood Museum © Kingswood Museum

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Exploitation Today

Although slavery in the form people knew it in 1807 no longer exists, exploitation or what some people have called “Modern Slavery” is still happening today.

According to Dr Tim Brain, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and spokesman on vice and prostitution for the Association of Chief Police Officers

– “What I have consistently said, is that while slavery has been outlawed for 200 years, human trafficking is a modern form of slavery, which is sadly alive and well. We have done much work, locally, nationally and internationally, but there is a great deal of work still to be done.”

But is there such a thing as slavery today?

In the past;

a slave was a person who was the property of someone else. Slaves could be purchased or inherited. They were not considered to have any rights.

For instance:

- it was not murder to kill a slave as he or she was not legally a human being
- the children of slaves were automatically slaves and could be sold like goods in a shop
- runaway slaves were stealing themselves from their owners and had to be returned

In 2007:

there are many people in 2007 who are exploited or very badly treated but those who exploit them or ill treat them are breaking the law. If they are caught, they are punished.

What will people think of OUR attitudes in 200 years' time?

- Do you buy cheap trainers?
- Do you buy cheap clothing?
- Do you buy cheap tea or coffee?
- Do you buy cheap chocolate?
- Do you buy cheap out of season fruit and vegetables?
- Do you know if anybody has suffered to produce them?
- Do you know where these products have come from?
- Do you know if anybody has suffered to produce them?



Do you buy cheap out of season fruit?



Laws protecting human rights apply to everyone.

Which groups of people are treated most like slaves in modern Britain?

1. People who have been trafficked; these people (often women) have been brought to Britain against their will by criminals. They are forced into prostitution, working in sweat shops or domestic service. They are usually terrified of their captors.
2. Illegal immigrants; these people have paid criminals to bring them into the country. Normally they are in search of jobs and conditions which are better than in their own countries. They are unable to find work legally and are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers.
3. Legal economic migrants; these people, often from Eastern or Southern Europe are expected to accept wages and conditions far worse than British workers.

Which groups of people, outside of Britain, do British companies exploit?

Most British companies would insist that they do not exploit foreign workers for profit. Sadly this is only technically true. Many knowingly sub-contract to other companies abroad who use:

- child labour
- convict labour
- unguarded machinery
- toxic ingredients without protection etc. etc.

Impact

The History and Legacy of Slavery in South Gloucestershire



Heroes of Slave Trade Abolition

The campaign for abolition was the first large-scale national campaign devoted to a single cause. Abolitionists, both local and national, met with great opposition from supporters of the trade. At the time, slave traders were very influential men and the trade was seen as a legitimate business. The slave trade helped maintain the prosperity of the west coast ports like Bristol and provided a lot of money for wealthy families around South Gloucestershire.

Slaves and Abolition

Slaves played a major part in the fight for abolition, from small acts of rebellion such as damaging machines to full-scale protests and revolts. The 1791 slave rebellion in Haiti led to a revolution and war of independence. The Republic of Haiti was proclaimed in 1804, creating the first free black republic.

Thomas Clarkson

Clarkson became interested in the slave trade while at Cambridge University. He produced an essay entitled "Is it lawful to enslave the unconsenting?" which prompted him to undertake further research. He was appalled by the slave trade and a great campaigner against it. Clarkson's essay was published in 1786 and influenced many of the leading abolitionists of the time.

What part did he play in abolition?

To gather evidence for his cause, Clarkson travelled 35,000 miles around the country. He was loathed by the slave trading community. Clarkson visited "The Seven Stars" pub in St. Thomas Street, Bristol in 1787. The majority of sailors Clarkson met there condemned the trade. Many had been forced to sign on by press gangs or been recruited whilst drunk and had no wish to trade in human beings.



The Sturge, quaker plantation at Montserrat c1890. This was the centre of the local lime fruit industry © E Garrett.



Lime factory at the Sturge settlement on Montserrat, c1890. Montserrat was one of several Sturge sites developed as non slave plantations well before the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833

Who else fought for abolition?

William Wilberforce was Leader of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. He entered parliament in 1780 and used his influence to try to stop the trade. He made twelve attempts at abolition. From 1791, Wilberforce supported abolition in every parliamentary session. He was greatly influenced by Clarkson's work and published his own essay, "A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade."

Hannah More of Fishponds



Hannah More was born in Fishponds in 1745. She began writing anti-slave trade material after reading the letters of former slave captain, Reverend John Newton. More went on to become the most influential female abolitionist.

In 1788, she published her most famous work: "Slavery". The poem calls the slave trade "Bristol's great shame".

*As the bright ensign's glory she displays,
See pale oppression faints beneath the blaze!
The giant dies! no more his frown appals,
The chain untouch'd, drops off; the fetter falls.
Astonish'd echo tells the vocal shore,
Oppression's fall'n, and Slavery is no more!*

Hannah More Poem/Portrait © British Library

The Quaker Abolitionists

Quakers proved a constant source of strength for the abolition movement. Hannah More and Wilberforce both stayed with John Scandrett Harford at his house in Frenchay between 1811 and 1813. Harford held a collection in the new Frenchay Meeting House in aid of Wilberforce and the Anti-Slavery movement; the meeting raised £55.

At Last!

The British Parliament received a record number of petitions on the subject of abolition before the 1807 vote; 519, one from every county in England, and most of Wales and Scotland. In 1806, Lord Grenville was appointed Prime Minister. Grenville was a strong supporter of abolition and filled his new cabinet with like-minded politicians. On 25 March 1807, the Slave Trade Abolition Bill was passed in Parliament by 283 votes to 16.

Impact

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Slave Trade Abolition and beyond

The 1807 act prohibited the trade in slaves but did nothing to help those who were already enslaved. The Royal Navy pursued ships still involved in the slave trade until the 1880s. After abolition in 1807, many anti-slavery groups saw a decline in their members but the Quakers increased their campaign for full abolition, just as others were reducing their efforts.



The Jenkinsons of Hawkesbury

Robert Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of Liverpool was instrumental in the anti-slavery movement during the 1810s. Hawkesbury Manor was the family seat and there are memorials to Lord Liverpool and the family within the church.

What did Jenkinson do?

Jenkinson was against the abolition of the slave trade at first. In 1792, he delivered a speech in Parliament speaking out against the abolition of the slave trade; this reflected his father's opposition to the campaign.

Freedom! The Abolition of Slavery Act, 1833

By the summer of 1824, there were 800 anti-slavery groups around the country and 777 petitions had been sent to Parliament. The majority of M.P.s felt that slaves did not possess the skills to manage an independent life. Therefore, the new Act introduced an Apprenticeship system to train freed slaves from the West Indies. This was seen by many campaigners as another form of slavery. The Apprenticeship Scheme was abolished in 1838 and former slaves were granted true freedom.



Depiction of the Congress of Vienna 1814-15. Lord Liverpool petitioned other leaders at the congress, which proved one step on the road to the ultimate abolition of slavery © British Library.

The Congress of Vienna

Following the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire in 1807, it was in Britain's interest that other countries should follow suit and trade on similar lines. The slave trade after all, was based on cheap labour, giving other countries an advantage. At the Congress of Vienna, Liverpool successfully petitioned other European powers to abolish the Slave Trade.

The Legacy at Home

When merchants returned from overseas, they would often bring slaves back with them to work on their estates. Owning a black slave was regarded as a sign of wealth. After they returned from the West Indies in the mid 19th century, the Codringtons brought with them a number of their former slaves to act as domestic servants. Simon Codrington also had a black servant from West Indies in the early-mid 19th century, who is believed to have been buried at Dodington House.



Legacy of the trade! The Bush Family of Alveston. Note the black servant Emily Salmon looking after Elizabeth Snipe in the chair © Thornbury Museum.



Hawkesbury church, hamlet and escarpment. The Medieval base of Wulfstan in the mid 11th century.

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