



Parwich & District Local History Society

www.parwichhistory.com

News Quarterly 1 (May - July 2008)

Produced November 2008

Cost £2

Some Eighteenth Century Love Letters

Peter Trehwitt

In 2002 the Derbyshire County Record Office acquired a collection of Swindell papers relating to Parwich and Brassington in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These records, from a descendant in North America, contain family documents, such as wills, letters, farm records and some parish related records. The family lived at the Fold in Parwich for several hundred years. Various members of the family had served as Overseer of the Highways, Overseer of the Poor and Constable at different times. This collection of material is a rich source of information on village history, but also it gives some insight into the personalities.

Even the farm records are surprisingly revealing. One account book, for the 1790s and early 1800s, contains draft Overseer of the Poor accounts, records of cattle breeding, wage records for staff and mathematical exercises, all mixed together. The mathematical exercises are quite complicated, and the cattle records list the cows' names, which include the following: Grissil, Mottle, Blossom, Pricket, Young Pricket, Lovely, Broadhead, Bentley, Roachback,

Although the Swindell family lived in various houses locally, including Flaxdale and Japonica, and moved between Parwich and Brassington, the Fold (shown below in the early 1900s) was owned by and was the principal home of the Parwich Swindells from at least the 1600s until the 1860s



Contents

Articles:

Some Love Letters	p. 1
The Prince Family Parwich	p. 7
Local links with Slavery	p.16
2007 Christmas Quiz	p.26
Sir Gawain & Lud's Church	p.28
Social Evening	p.30

Society Pages:

Editorial	p.31
Programme	p.32

October & November 2007 Slavery Season.

It is estimated that world wide, up to twelve million individuals are subject to some form of forced labour or slavery. Can we be confident that the contents of our shopping baskets in the current global market were produced without oppression and exploitation? To commemorate the 200th anniversary of the British Abolition of the Slave Trade, Parwich Church and the Local History Society organised a short series of events.

Operation Reflex - a talk by Alasdair Duncan. (30/10/07)

One of the points that came out of this evening was the difficulties not only in establishing who is guilty of these crimes, but also identifying when these crimes are occurring. Some of the questions raised related to what could we a small rural community do in relation to this issue:

- most importantly, as in the eighteenth and nineteenth century abolition movement, recognise that individuals taking a stand can create change.
- support the relevant charities and organisations.
- raise awareness to help establish when these crimes occur.
- explore the issue of 'safe houses'.

Local Links with Slavery: a few facts and a lot of speculation - a talk by Peter Trehwitt. (20/11/07)

Peter Trehwitt outlined the local involvement in slavery from pre-historic times through the high reliance on slave work forces in Roman and Saxon times to the influx of wealth from the exploitation of African slaves on Caribbean plantations, also exploring a number of byways.

Perhaps the main message of this talk was that slavery is not something foreign and remote from us. It is likely that we are all descended from both slave owners and slaves; that the environment around us has been shaped by slave labour and the profits from slavery; that direct links between our area and slavery continued as recently as the early twentieth century. Discussion included the problems of how easily people seem able to justify the oppression of others when it is in their self interest, and that lack of education, opportunity and self belief can be as debilitating as direct oppression.

Slavery has been a feature of British life from earliest times. We do not know its earliest origins, but they are likely to be prehistoric. In the Neolithic times (from eight thousand years ago), farming and larger building projects such as stone circles and burial mounds began to appear, indicating the development of more complex social structures. It is possible that this increased requirement for man hours resulted in some form of forced labour. Local Neolithic monuments include the stone circle at Arbor Low some four miles north of Parwich, and the



Arbor Low, a henge and stone circle (R Francis)

massive burial mounds at Minninglow just outside the parish. In the Bronze Age burial mounds such, as Moot Low, continued to be built locally, but they tended not to be as large as the earlier mounds.



Minninglow, three important Neolithic burial mounds adjacent on a prominent hill top (R Francis)

We know much less about what was happening in the Iron Age in our immediate area prior to the Roman Invasion. It is known that the Peak District formed the southern range of the Brigantes, whose territory stretched north over what is now Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland. On the richer farm land of what is now south Derbyshire, in the territory of the Coritani, settlement remains are found in the broader river valleys, and to the north, in Brigantia, settlement seemed focused around hill forts such as Mam Tor, Fin Cop and Carl Wark. However there are few archaeological remains here, the nearest possible hill fort site being Castle Ring on Harthill more, some five miles north of Parwich. We do know that in Iron Age or Celtic Britain, slavery did occur: as a result of capture in battle,

Elton Local History Group

This is group that meets at 7-30 pm on the second Monday of each month (excluding December) at Elton Village Hall. They do not have a formal programme but meet to share memories of Elton past and the results of their research. They are gathering information available from Lichfield Record Office, Derbyshire Record Office and Sheffield Archives, as well as looking at local roads, trackways and boundaries.

For more information contact Lynn Burnet, The Old Rectory, Well Street, Elton, Nr. Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 2BY.

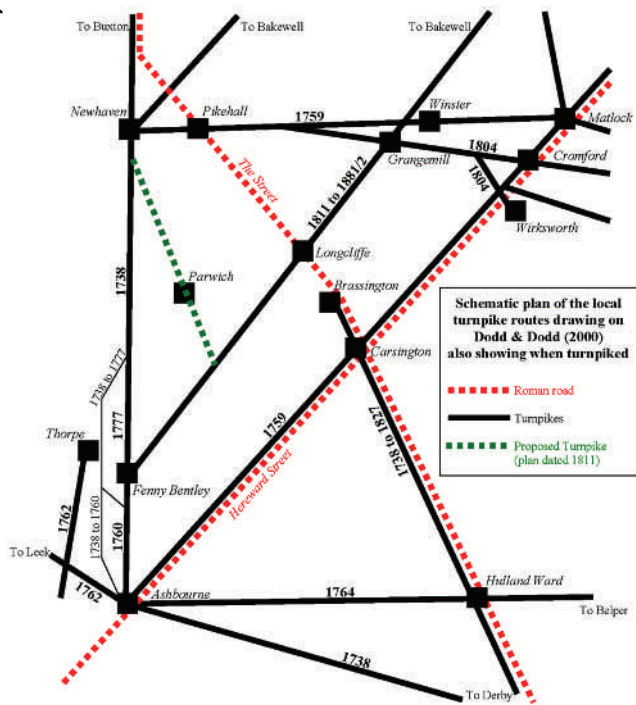
Email: eltonhistory@talk21.com

punishment for crimes or as a result of extreme poverty. Also by two thousand years ago across the English Chanel tribes, such as the Begae who gave their name to the modern Belgium, were increasingly raiding Britain for slaves for the expanding Roman market. Although our area distant from the sea may have been safe from the Belgae, its lack of archaeological remains from this period and the hill forts to the north suggest the earlier population may have been displaced and even enslaved by boarder disputes between the Brigantes and the Coritani.

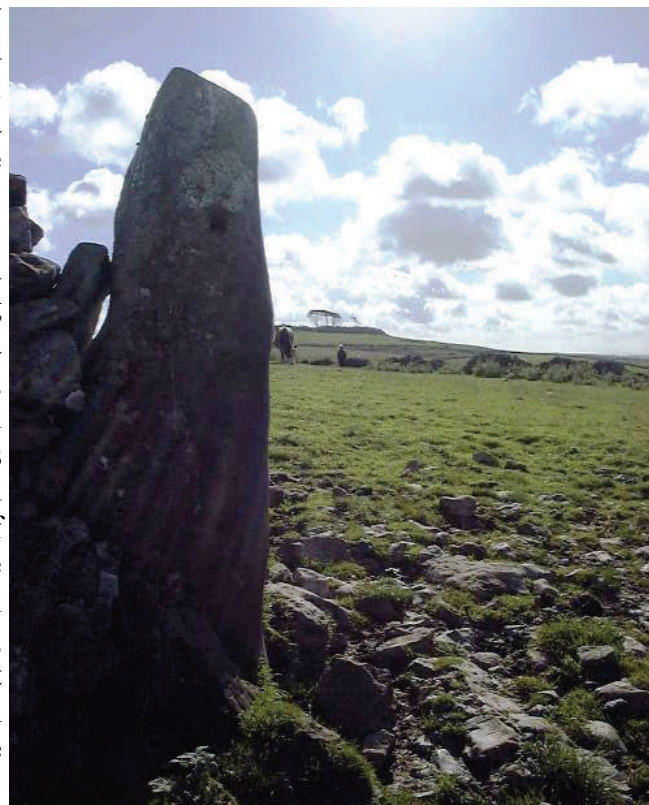
With the Roman Invasion everything was to change. Initially the Brigantes under Queen Cartimandua became a loyal subject kingdom. However in AD 68, Cartimandua decided to dump her husband, Venutius, in favour of his armour bearer. Venutius, having charge of the army, rebelled against his queen and her Roman overlords. This resulted in Rome declaring direct military rule in Brigantia and any rebels would have been fair game for enslaving. (Note, the Brigantes became something of a byword for unruliness and gave us the modern word 'brigand'.)

The Romans quickly organised our area under the centre of Lutudarum, exploiting the lead here. They will have brought in a slave work force for civic buildings, though we do not yet know where the town of Lutudarum was located. Some argue it is now under Carsington Water reservoir, and others that it is under the foundations of Wirksworth. Also slave labour will have been used to build the two near by Roman Roads; Hereward Street and King Street, known locally as the Street. The Street continued in use as the main route from Derby to Manchester up to the Turnpike Era of the eighteenth century.

We do not know how the Romans provided labour for lead mining but there are local traditions that slaves were used. In Bakewell there is the tradition that the town was established by Italian criminals enslaved as punishment for their crimes and brought here to mine lead. Also there is a tradition that there was a barracks for slave lead miners in



Local Roman roads shown in red above, and a view along the line of The Street towards Minninglow below (photo by R Francis)



Middleton by Wirksworth at the time of the Emperor Hadrian.

There has been some investigation of the local Romano-British settlements at Lombard's Green (Parwich), Royston Grange (Ballidon) and Rainster Rocks (Brassington). All three were involved in lead mining; however Lombard's Green and Rainster Rocks have provided no evidence for direct Roman involvement, suggesting that mining was undertaken only by Britons and leaving open the possibility that they were freemen not slaves. In contrast at the more extensively investigated Royston Grange there is evidence for a direct Roman presence in addition to the native settlement, suggesting that mining may have been undertaken by slaves here.



Middleton by Wirksworth as it is today



Romano British site at Lombard's Green (R Francis)



Romano British site at Rainster Rocks

Christianity will have made its first appearance here in the late Roman period. It is possible that St Mary the Virgin in Wirksworth with its unusually circular/elliptical church yard is a Roman site. It has been also argued that the unusual carved coffin lid that can be seen in the church is a late Roman survival and not as some suggest Anglo-Saxon.



St Mary the Virgin, Wirksworth could be on the site of a previous late Roman church (P Trehitt)



The unusual carved coffin lid in Wirksworth Church (P Trehitt)

Again we have a gap in the archaeological and historical record between the end of the Roman period and the establishment of Anglo-Saxon rule. We do not know what happened

to the Celts from the Romano-British settlements identified. The indigenous Celts would have been fair game for Anglo-Saxon slavers; indeed weahl, originally meaning ‘foreigner’ which came to indicate any British Celt and is the origin of the modern name for ‘Wales’ and the ‘Welsh’ was also widely used to indicate a ‘slave’. Yet there must have been some continuity as there are some place-name survivals. Parwich is thought to be a combination of the Celtic ‘pever-’ thought to be the brook’s name plus ‘-wick’ Anglo-Saxon for a dairy farm. Also the Ecclesbourne valley takes its name from the Celtic ‘eccles-’ meaning a church with the Anglo-Saxon ‘-bourne’ or broad brook. In this case the most likely candidate for the church is St Mary the Virgin in Wirksworth, meaning it could be a site of continuous Christian worship for over fifteen hundred years.

Slavery was a major factor of Anglo-Saxon Britain, with as much as one in ten of the population of what was to become England being slaves. There were also established slave trading routes through Bristol to Ireland and across Europe to Rome and on through Venice to the Byzantium, and later to the emerging Muslim world. Perhaps the best known story of Anglo-Saxon slaves is that of Pope Gregory’s famous encounter with the blond Anglo-Saxons in a Roman slave market, saying when told they were Angles, ‘Angels not Angles’, which supposedly resulted in St Augustine’s mission to Canterbury in 597.

We do not have any records for this early slave trading, but information begins to emerge in later church records, laws and wills. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, we know that the larger estates relied heavily on slave labour. Often slaves provided the labour, with ploughing being particularly associated with slaves. The Colloquy of Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham near Oxford contains:

‘What have you to say, ploughman? How do you undertake your work?’

‘Oh, my lord, I work excessively. I go out at day-break, goading the oxen to the field, and I join them to the plough; there is not a winter so harsh that I dare lurk at home for fear of my master. But after yoking the oxen and securing the ploughshare and coulter to the plough, throughout the whole day I must plough a full acre or more.’

‘Have you a companion?’

‘I have a boy spurring on the oxen with a whip, who even now is hoarse with the cold and shouting.’

‘Do you do anything else during the day?’

‘I certainly do more. I must fill the stalls of the oxen with hay and supply them with water and carry their dung outside. Oh! Oh! The work is hard, because I am not free.’

But also tenth and eleventh century wills indicate that skilled workers such as metal workers, goldsmiths, and needlewomen could also be slaves.

Locally we have little direct evidence relating to the levels of slavery. Our area seems to have been settled as a spread of farmsteads such as Parwich, Alsop, Newton Grange, Hanson Grange and Cold Eaton. However as early as the seventh century, we find high status graves cut into the Neolithic site at Wigber Low. These graves indicate a wealthy warrior elite in the area, and it has been speculated that



Wigber Low, the site of a Neolithic excarnation platform and later burial mound, with high status Anglo-Saxon graves dug into the mound.

they drew their income from more than just farming, also exploiting the lead mines locally. It is probable such a family or families would be slave owners. The people in this area were known as the Pecsæte, and by the late seventh century they were firmly part of Mercia, though near the much disputed boarder with Northumbria.



The Bonsal T'owd man, a Saxon carving of a lead miner now in Wirksworth Church

By 966 Parwich was in the hands of Ælfhelm, who had considerable landholdings in the Midlands. After Ælfhelm's death, Parwich became part of a royal estate under his son-in-law King Canute. This estate was centred on Wirksworth and almost certainly would have made use of slave labour. King Canute although accepting the institution of slavery attempted to control it by legislating against: parents selling their children into slavery; married men taking female slaves as concubines and the export of Christian slaves to non-Christian lands. Another large holding at the time of the Norman Conquest was that of Siward Barn 'commended man' of the earl of Mercia, who held a significant number of Derbyshire manors, probably including Brassington, Bradbourne, Tissington, Elton and Winster. Again he was likely to be a substantial slave owner. However we do not know if the many small farmsteads scattered across the limestone plateau made use of slaves.

The Normans brought with them a system of serfs that had largely replaced the use of slaves in agriculture. Moreover the distinction between slaves and free fellow tribesmen was irrelevant to the Norman overlords, so the institute of slavery disappeared, with the slaves gaining freedoms, whilst the landless Anglo-Saxon freemen lost status and had reduced rights. However it was not until 1102, in response from pressure by Church leaders, that the Council of Westminster formally outlawed the slave trade in England: "That no one is henceforth to presume to carry on that shameful trading whereby heretofore men used in England to be sold like brute beasts."



A 'Crusader Grave' in Parwich

The next link with slavery is perhaps a surprising one, the Crusades. It is known the members of a number of local families including the Alsops and the Beresfords went on Crusades. The Knights of St John held land locally. In Parwich Church there are several twelfth century grave stones known locally as the 'Crusader graves'. The Crusades brought English knights into contact with a wealthy and sophisticated Islamic culture that made extensive use of sub-Saharan Africans as slaves. The numbers of black Africans that died crossing the Sahara desert in the slaving caravans may



Alsop en le Dale Hall, the former home of the Alsop family

have equalled the numbers that were to later die in the infamous middle crossing. This trans-Saharan slave trade was responsible for establishing the local slave trading infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa that the Europeans and the British were to later utilise in the trans-Atlantic trade. But perhaps most significantly the Crusades brought the English into contact with cane sugar.

The first British colonies in North America attempted initially to develop either a native work force or make use of transported criminals. Neither was particularly successful and in New England bonded labour became the norm. Here individuals who sought to emigrate would sell their labour for a fixed number of years in exchange for their passage and land options when their term was complete. So far we have only identified members of the minor gentry and yeoman classes emigrating from our area in the early seventeenth century. This includes Alsops from Alsop en le Dale, Hawleys from Parwich and Brownson possibly also from Parwich. They had the resources to pay for their own passage and establish themselves in the new world, but it is likely they would have been supported by bonded servants also from our area.

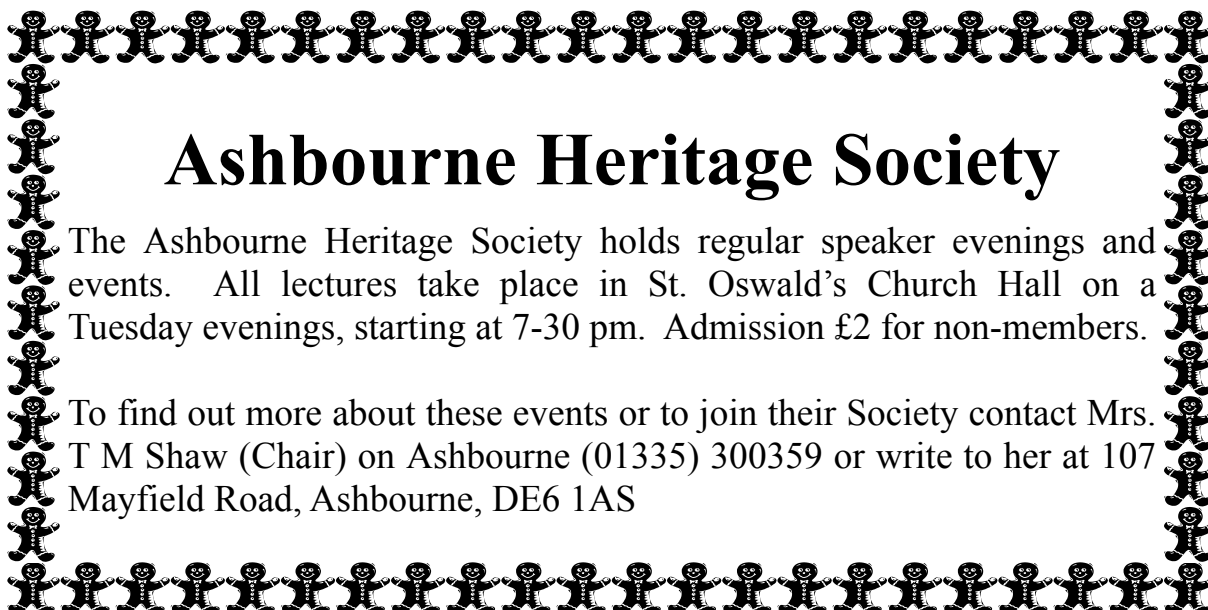
The shift from slave to serf did not take place in the Iberian Peninsula, where the fighting between Moslem and Christian provided a ready source of slaves for both sides. Neither side can take the moral high ground, though by the sixteenth century, the few returning British travellers who had been galley slaves on both Moslem and Christian vessels reported



Winster Local History Group

Winster has an active Local History Group, which holds regular speaker evenings and events to which non-members are welcome.

For further information contact Geoff Lester, tel. 01629 650 090



Ashbourne Heritage Society

The Ashbourne Heritage Society holds regular speaker evenings and events. All lectures take place in St. Oswald's Church Hall on a Tuesday evenings, starting at 7-30 pm. Admission £2 for non-members.

To find out more about these events or to join their Society contact Mrs. T M Shaw (Chair) on Ashbourne (01335) 300359 or write to her at 107 Mayfield Road, Ashbourne, DE6 1AS

harsher treatment on the latter. The expulsion of the Moors from Spain reduced the supply of Moslem slaves and opened the way for Spanish and Portuguese slave trading directly with sub-Saharan Africa. The Spanish and Portuguese were the first to establish sugar plantations in the Americas and make use of slave labour, initially Native Americans, and then Africans. However the British were not slow to follow suit.



Tissington Hall, home of the FitzHerberts for some five hundred years (P Trehwitt)

The FitzHerberts of Tissington, a cadet branch of the Fitzherberts of Norbury, who had been established there since the twelfth century, illustrate the involvement of the British gentry in exploiting African slaves. William FitzHerbert (1712-1772) inherited the Turner's Hall plantation in Barbados from his wife's family, the Alleynes. His son, also William, spent some time in Barbados managing the family estates there, so can not claim

ignorance as a defence for the suffering of the slaves. The son, William FitzHerbert (1748 - 1791), in turn further inherited four Jamaican plantations (Vere, Forrest, Grange Hall and Blue Mountain) through his wife, Sarah Perrin. The Jamaican plantations amounted to some 3,000 acres and would have been home to between 300 and 400 slaves. These plantations were managed via attorneys from Tissington Hall, with the Perrin and FitzHerbert records now housed in the Derbyshire County Archives giving insight into their extent and management. Their involvement continued until the final emancipation of slaves in British territories in the late 1820s.



Above: The Barbados Mulatto Girl, after Agostino Brunias, 1779 (Web source)

Left: The Blue Mountains of Jamaica (Web source)

The current Baronet, Sir Richard FitzHerbert, speculates that the compensation his ancestors received from as compensation on the final liberation of their Caribbean slaves paid for extensive building work in Tissington.

In the late eighteenth century Ashbourne 'boasted' a manufacturer of manacles and irons for the slave trade. This is perhaps surprising for such a land locked town, although Ashbourne

did have a thriving metal working industry at this time, and the FitzHerbert connection may also be a contributory factor.

As well as providing examples of slave owners, the nineteenth century Derbyshire gentry also contained more enlightened individuals. The Evans family of Darley Abbey were good examples of evangelical Anglicans active in the Abolitionist movement. They were related to the campaigner the Rev Thomas Gisborne of Derby, and personal friends of William Wilberforce:

A great event during my parents' residence at Parwich was a visit from Mr. Wilberforce, the great philanthropist politician, and religious reformer. At the time when his influence first made itself felt, religion appeared to be almost extinct in the upper circles of Society. His book, A Practical View of the Christian Religion, had a wonderful effect in awakening careless persons to a sense of their responsibilities. I have heard the remark made that this book, combined with Mr. Wilberforce's personal influence, revolutionized London Society. At the time I speak of he was a Member of Parliament, together with my uncle, Mr. Evans, of Allestree, a kindred spirit, and they worked together for the suppression of the Slave Trade.

To the great joy of my parents, Mr. Wilberforce accepted an invitation to visit them. The day after his arrival, my mother had asked her most distinguished neighbours to meet him at dinner, probably at any time between five and six o'clock, and the previous hours were spent in a visit to Dovedale and Ilam Hall. In the library at Ilam, Mr. Wilberforce discovered some ancient volumes or manuscripts, in which he became so engrossed that my mother (who was growing uneasy at the lateness of the hour) could not induce him to leave them. The London gentleman had evidently no idea of the earliness of country hours. He was so absorbed in the ancient books that he would not listen to any persuasions, and when at last they did make the start for home my mother realised with dismay that it was impossible for them to reach home before the guests should have arrived.



Parwich Hall, belonging to the Evans family of Darley Abby, was home of the Rev Carr at the time of William Wilberforce's visit to Parwich

On entering her drawing room she found the company, in full dress, sitting round the room awaiting her arrival. "What could I do?" she asked, in telling me the story; "I could only say to them, 'I have brought him, he is here, I could not help it, you must forgive me.'" I never heard what happened to that dinner. In spite of this inauspicious commencement the evening was a grand success. Mr. Wilberforce put forth his most brilliant conversational powers. The guests were delighted, impressed, carried out of themselves by his gifts and eloquence,

and went away expressing to my mother their warmest appreciation. They left about ten o'clock, and my parents supposed it was bedtime, but the Londoners considered that the evening was only just begun, and more conversation ensued. Towards midnight Mrs. Wilberforce, quite unaware of the exhaustion of her hosts, got out her drawing materials! Here my recollections of my mother's narrative of this interesting episode come to an abrupt close – memory will help me no further.

(from Mrs. Curtis' "Memories of a Long Life")

The Derbyshire County Records Office also provides an example of twentieth century involvement in slavery. The family papers of the Gells of Hopton contain records from Philip Gells' time on the board of the British South African Company (1899-1923). The papers clearly indicate that the company knowingly tolerated the use of slave labour by African subcontractors outside direct British rule for a number of years before eventually taking a stand against it.

Sources & Further Reading

- John Barnatt & Ken Smith (1997) "Peak District: The first popular introduction to the archaeological remains of the Peak District" English Heritage & Batsford Ltd, London
- John Collis (1983) "Wigber Low Derbyshire: A Bronze Age and Anglian Burial Site in the White Peak" The Dept. of Prehistory & Archaeology, University of Sheffield
- J B Crisp (2007) "Siward Barn in Derbyshire" Parwich & District Local History Society Newsletter Issue 28 pp. 101-14
- Mrs. Curtis of 'Uplands', Ledbury (1912) "Memories of a Long Life" by, (Privately printed)
- David W Galenson (1986) "Traders, Panters and Slaves: Market Behaviour in Early English America" Cambridge University Press
- B W Higman (2001) "Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" West Indies Press, Kingston
- B W Higman (2005) "Plantation Jamaica 1750-1850" West Indies Press, Kingston
- Richard K. W. Hill & Angela Shackleton Hill (1988) "South Peak Archaeological Survey 1986-1988"
- Richard Hodges (1991) "Wall-to-Wall History: The story of Royston Grange" Duckworth: London.
- Philip Morgan & Sara Wood (1978) "Domesday Book, Derbyshire" General Editor John Morris, Phillimore Edition
- David A E Pelteret (1995) "Slavery in Early Medieval England: from the reign of Alfred until the twelfth century" The Boydell Press, Woodbridge
- William D Phillips (1985) "Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade" Manchester University Press
- Anton Shone (2006) "The search for Lutudarum, evidence and supposition" Derbyshire Miscellany, Vol. 17 part 5 pp. 106-116
- Gladwyn Turbutt (1999) "A History of Derbyshire" Vol. 1, Merton Priory Press
- Daniel Vitkus, Editor (2001) "Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England" Columbia University Press, New York
- Frances Wilkins (2007) "Bittersweet: A Story of Four Jamaican Plantations" Historic House Association, London



Christmas Quiz 2008
With Mulled Wine & Mince Pies
8-30pm Thurs. 11th Dec 2008
at the Sycamore Inn
All welcome