

Wilberforce Institute Blog Archive



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The Modern Slavery Act: some progress, but huge challenges remain

Posted on March 27, 2023



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Following yesterday's anniversary of the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, Drs Daniel Ogunniyi and Zahra Shirgholami reflect on its impact and effectiveness eight years on.

Yesterday marked the eighth anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act (the Act), which gained Royal Assent on 26 March 2015. Adopting the legislation was arguably a watershed moment and a re-enactment of the anti-slavery spirit of the early 1800s, when the UK Parliament adopted the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act (1807), outlawing the British Atlantic slave trade. The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, however, did not mark the end of slavery. Slavery has

since mutated and taken on different complex forms. An estimated [50 million](#) people are trapped in modern slavery today. The Act was, therefore, adopted in response to the growing exploitations in the UK, which were not clearly captured in a comprehensive legislation.

The Act consolidated the existing offences of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, and trafficking in one piece of legislation. Following its adoption, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the national framework through which cases of modern slavery are identified and referred to the support service, was extended to all victims of modern slavery in England and Wales.

Referencing the Act in 2015, [Theresa May](#), then Home Secretary, declared that ‘this landmark legislation sends the strongest possible signal to criminals that if you are involved in this vile trade you will be arrested, you will be prosecuted, and you will be locked up. And it says to victims, you are not alone – we are here to help you’. However, to what extent has the legislation fulfilled its promise? How has it fared in terms of criminal prosecutions and convictions? Have victims obtained justice compared to the pre-Act era?

To implement the Act effectively, the office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) was established, whose mandate is to encourage good practices in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of the offences under the Act, along with the identification of victims. However, there is currently no Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner in the UK – no appointment has been made since April 2022, when the previous Commissioner, Dame Sara Thornton, completed her term. By failing to appoint a Commissioner, Ministers have been [accused](#) of undermining modern slavery protections.

In terms of the victim support mechanism, [NRM data](#) from the third quarter of 2022 alone suggest that some 4,586 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office, amounting to a ten percent increase compared to the preceding quarter in 2021. The figures from the third quarter of 2022 represent the highest number of referrals recorded since the NRM began in 2009. This may be evidence of better awareness of modern slavery among first-responder organisations or illustrate that the number of cases has risen within the UK. Considering the broader issue with the dysfunctionality of the NRM system, as noted by [Dame Sara Thornton](#), the latter is likely to be the case.

Some successes have, nonetheless, been recorded, particularly in the criminal justice domain. For instance, in August 2021, some [3,335](#) trafficking investigations were conducted compared with 1,845 in June 2020. Also, 332 traffickers were convicted in 2021 compared to 197 in 2020. These relate to trafficking offences alone. Again, these may not necessarily suggest the efficacy of the Act in tackling crime, as the NRM data has shown an increase in the number of victims over time.

Since 2015, multiple reviews of the law have also been done, which focused on two overlapping issues of victim protection and enforcement. In 2016, the then Home Secretary commissioned Caroline Haughey's [independent review](#) of the Act, which found pockets of good practices but raised significant concerns regarding the policing and broader enforcement response. For instance, the training of police officers, investigators and prosecutors was patchy and sometimes non-existent. The quality and quantity of intelligence about the nature and scale of modern slavery were inadequate, hindering the operational response. Such shortcomings triggered the government to set up the task force on modern slavery in September 2016 to coordinate policy and operational responses. Nonetheless, the police service inspection conducted by [HMICFRS](#) in 2017 concluded that while legislation against modern slavery has been strengthened, no concerted overall response from the police service has been provoked.

Further, Section 54 of the Act, the transparency clause, requires businesses with over £36 million turnover per year to produce an annual statement for each financial year on what steps (if any) they have taken to address modern slavery within their operation, including their supply chains. The transparency clause, intended to eliminate exploitative work within supply chains, is based on the idea of naming and shaming. It highlights the role of the consumer in pressuring companies to address modern slavery risks in their supply chains. However, the value of this approach is contentious. For example, a recent [study](#) has shown that consumers could either be largely apathetic and indifferent to others' work conditions, unaware of the Act, or do not know how they could play a part in it.

The transparency clause in the Act did move the policy response from being entirely criminal justice-based to one shared between criminal justice and corporate responsibility. Still, a robust compliance mechanism, as noted by [Broad and Turnbull \(2019\)](#), rather than maintaining a light-touch business approach, is needed.

The government's action to outlaw modern slavery is further questionable, considering the creation of what could be deemed a hostile environment towards migrants in mechanisms such as the Immigration Act 2014 and 2016. Migrant workers are continually marginalised and excluded from support in government strategies. The great concern is whether the government will shift its focus from creating a hostile environment for (undocumented) migrant workers to implementing strategies that can address all forms of labour exploitation. Until this happens, modern slavery will be used as a mask to reinforce an anti-immigration agenda, overlooking broader issues of modern slavery beyond cross-border trafficking and the growth of a hyper-flexible labour market.

Ineffective regulation and minimal political will to enforce the existing laws limit the extent to which labour exploitation and modern slavery can be addressed. As the [National Audit Office](#) commented, unless the government establishes effective oversight of modern slavery, it could not tackle modern slavery or demonstrate it is achieving value for the resources being used. It is worth noting that, in May 2022, the government announced plans for a [new modern slavery bill](#) to strengthen *'the protection and support for victims of human trafficking and modern slavery and to increase accountability of companies and other organisations to drive out modern slavery from their supply chains.'* It remains to be seen whether the new bill would consider the numerous academic and non-academic critiques to fit its purpose and accomplish its goal.



W. E. B. Du Bois: A forgotten hero

Posted on March 21, 2023



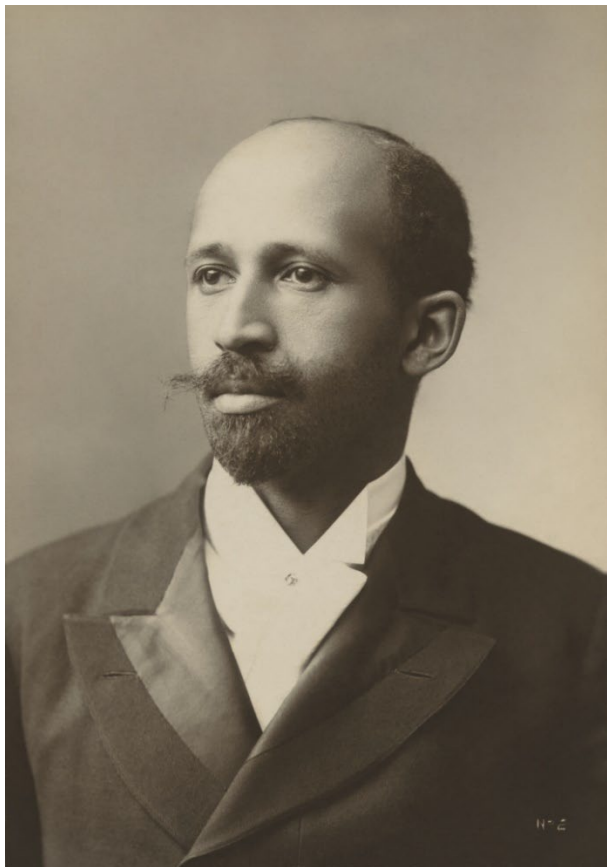
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In recognition of this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, commemorated today, Dr Nicholas Evans talks about the life and work of W.E.B Du Bois, who fought tirelessly against racial discrimination for a fairer society.

On 21 March 1960, one of the most painful moments in the decades-long struggle against racial segregation in South Africa took place. At [Sharpeville](#), on the outskirts of Johannesburg in the northern part of South Africa, 69 innocent people were killed at a peaceful demonstration against the imposition of so-called '[pass laws](#)' blighting the everyday lives of all non-white South Africans during Apartheid. Such was the universal condemnation of the massacre that the United Nations has since adopted today as [The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), a day that we at the University of Hull's Wilberforce Institute observe as we strive for a fairer world.



Du Bois was born in 1868, three years after the end of the US Civil War and the ending of slavery in the United States. Whilst brought up in the more tolerant state of Massachusetts, much of his life centred upon trying to realise the freedom most assumed had been won with the end of the war. Educated at Harvard University, he was the first African-American to hold a doctorate and later the first to secure an academic appointment at an American university. He quickly rose to become an intellectual titan who spent his career opposing prejudice.

Rather than fighting an armed struggle, Du Bois used writing as a tool to secure black suffrage, proving to his harshest critics the cultural and intellectual abilities of African-Americans and thereby destroying racial stereotypes popularised during the [Jim Crow era](#). An educational polymath, he mastered history, economics and sociology, literature and public policy. His most famous works were [The Souls of Black Folk](#), [The Philadelphia Negro](#) and [The Negro](#). All revealed the triumph of African-American people despite entrenched race-based inequalities in the so-called 'land of the free'. Rather than perpetuating victimhood, he sought to raise awareness of black achievement in the face of overt racism.

Outside of academia, the civil rights pioneer played a key role in many grassroots organisations campaigning for greater equality in America. These included being one of the founders of the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) that sought '[to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination](#)'. Internationally, he attended the second meeting of the Pan-African Congress in Paris where he persuaded delegates that resolutions should ensure Africa is ruled by Africans. Throughout, his campaigning sought to promote black capabilities during the harsh conditions of Jim Crow legislation in America, and European imperialism overseas, and he was widely revered during his lifetime as a truly gifted scholar. Prevented from attending the ceremonies

marking Ghanaian independence in 1957, because anti-McCarthyism resulted in his passport being taken from him for eight years, he decided to move to Ghana once he was free to travel again. Upon his death four years later, he was given a Ghanaian state funeral.

When our Institute opened in Hull's Old Town in 2006 we rightly added Du Bois' name to our Names On The Wall, which bridges the city's Mandela Gardens and the world's oldest slavery museum – the [Wilberforce House Museum](#). His plaque reminds residents and visitors alike of those who have led campaigns for greater freedoms. In 2007, some of our community were able to visit [Du Bois' final home](#), now a museum, in Accra, to pay homage to his work fighting racism.

And so on this International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we salute all those, past and present, who, like Du Bois and the protestors at Sharpeville, campaign to make the world a fairer place. We ask you to pause for a moment and remember the figures who inspire you in fighting for a fairer society. They may not be intellectuals like Du Bois, or former victims of Apartheid, however racism tragically remains a barrier to a fairer world in most societies. It is dispiriting that 63 years after events at Sharpeville, and now 29 years after multiracial elections signalled the beginning of multiracial democracy in South Africa, racism remains 'unfinished business', a scourge on the lives of so many men, women and children.

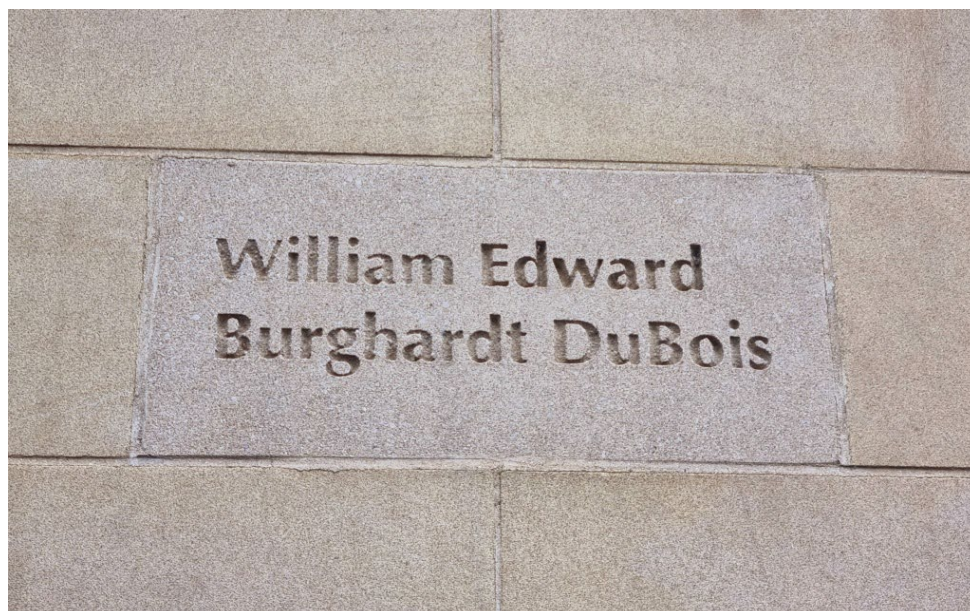


Image: The memorial to W.E.B. Du Bois on the wall at the Institute.

Imperial History and the American Revolution

Posted on March 16, 2023



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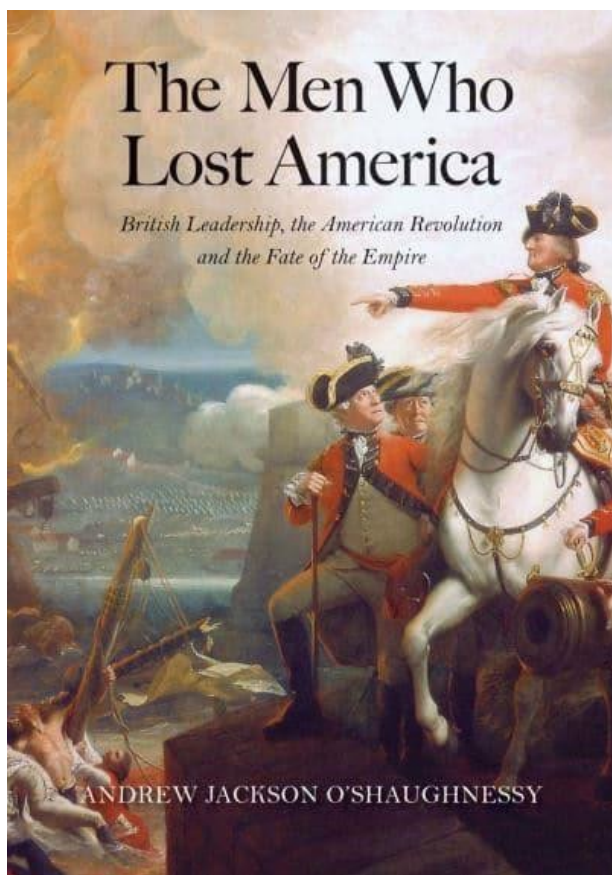
In today's blog, Professor Trevor Burnard reflects on the recent workshop held at the Wilberforce Institute on the subject of the American Revolution and imperial history.

On 3 March, the Wilberforce Institute hosted a small and highly successful workshop to consider how the American Revolution was, in the words of the keynote speaker, Stephen Conway, of UCL, an event usefully seen through an imperial perspective.

The American Revolution is an important event in not just American history but in the history of the world. One of the ways in which it has an enduring importance is its role in redefining the British Empire in the late eighteenth century so that by the nineteenth century British imperialism was different to what it been in the previous century. We sometimes think of the empire with America as the first British Empire. Even though historians have been anxious to show that imperialism did not change all that much after the loss of the

American colonies (to become the United States of America), it is clear that it was an event of truly historical importance in the history of imperial Britain. At a stroke, a major part of the population of the British Empire – including most of the people of that empire who were White Protestants and who thought of themselves before 1776 as Britons living overseas rather than foreigners to British customs and practices – departed the empire. The American Revolution was the first successful settler revolt in history, a counterrevolution against actions by the imperial government, which American Patriots considered tyrannical. It was also very much an imperial event, being part of a whole set of policies enacted by Britain after the Seven Years' War (1756-63) to reconfigure a new and greatly enlarged empire.

Now is a good time to connect imperialism with the American Revolution and see the links between them. Imperial history has suddenly come back into favour after having been considered in the second half of the twentieth century as irredeemably old-fashioned and irrelevant. That has changed in the twenty-first century. As Krishan Kumar argues in *Visions of Empire* (2017), 'the study of empires, for all their faults, engages current beliefs in multiculturalism, diaspora, migration and multinationalism.'(p. 3) In addition, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 is getting closer, encouraging us to rethink the American Revolution in the light of contemporary matters and an ever-changing historiography.



The workshop was designed to engage with the connection between this event and British imperialism, which is the subject of a forthcoming book by Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute, and Andrew O'Shaughnessy, former director of research at Monticello and professor at the University of Virginia. Andrew, who is currently a fellow at the Wilberforce Institute, will be applying his great knowledge of the imperial dimensions of the American Revolution to this joint effort. He published [*The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire*](#) in 2014.

Trevor and Andrew were joined by scholars from France, Germany and Britain, who presented papers on military aspects of imperialism in the American Revolution and participated in two workshops on the wider European contexts of the War of American Independence and on recent trends in the writing on empire and revolution.

The workshop was extremely stimulating, and at times provocative, and served as a first event in the four-year lead-up to the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution under the auspices of the British Group in Early American History. It is also part of America2026, a large-scale European grouping of scholars who are determined to see the American Revolution as an intrinsic part of European and European imperial history. Andrew will continue the involvement of the Wilberforce Institute with America2026 on 10 March at a seminar in Paris on 'Transnationalismes, Crises and Révolutions'.



[John Trumbull](#)'s painting, [Declaration of Independence](#), depicting the five-man drafting committee of the [Declaration of Independence](#) presenting their work to the Congress. See https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War.

‘Migration and Modern Slavery: Voicing the Journeys’ Conference, 27-28 March, 2023

Posted on March 9, 2023



The ‘Migration and Modern Slavery: Voicing the Journeys’ two-day conference aims to bring together leading academics and practitioners to explore issues of modern slavery and migration through the voices of those on migratory journeys. It will pay particular attention to their journeys, their treatment on arrival at their destinations, and how survivors of modern slavery and practitioners can help to improve these aspects of survivors’ experiences.

To practically implement obligations imposed by international and domestic laws, criminological and socio-legal research, along with policymakers and legislators, must be aware of victims’ backgrounds, lived experiences, and needs. Research and practice must be informed by insights from individuals with experience of modern slavery and those who may be vulnerable to exploitation. Each person affected holds crucial qualitative evidence that academics, policymakers, and practitioners must listen to and incorporate into their work.

This conference will therefore explore the following key issues:

- The importance of engaging survivors with precarious immigration status;

- National and international legal obligations and slavery vulnerabilities;
- How to minimise risks of modern slavery within supply chains;
- How to develop multi-agency strategic partnerships to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders including those with lived experience.

Over the course of the two days, attendees will hear from academic and professional experts and will be invited to engage in discussions to help better understand the correlations between migration and modern slavery, and to share best practice in supporting those who are subject to these processes.

Confirmed Speakers:

Day 1: Academic focused day

- Keynote speaker, [Dr Cristiano D’Orsi](#), University of Johannesburg – ‘The New Slave Trade: Migration and Modern Slavery in Africa’
- The [Subedi Essay Prize](#) talk and presentation

Day 2: Practitioner focused day

- [Dr Alicia Heys](#) and [Andrew Smith](#), University of Hull – ‘Using survivor voices to inform practice’
- [Dr Zahra Shirgholami](#), University of Hull – ‘Global labour exploitation and plausible deniability of multinational corporations’

Workshops:

Day 1:

- Migrant workers’ voice: Minimizing risks of modern slavery within supply chains through inclusive and innovative approaches.
- Climate Change and Modern Slavery: What Role for Human Rights Law?

Day 2:

- A panel discussion with audience questions led by Professor Simon Green. What can trauma-informed approaches offer to the victims of modern slavery and migration?

- Using survivor voices to inform practice. How policy, sharing best practice, and survivor voices can impact the quality of support.

To sign up for this conference please click [here](#).

About the venue

This two-day interactive conference will be held at the Wilberforce Institute located on High Street in the old town of Kingston Upon Hull. The Wilberforce Institute makes up part of a small but unique museum quarter that includes the Wilberforce House Museum, birthplace of William Wilberforce, famous abolitionist and campaigner against the transatlantic slave trade.

There are various large public car parks located a few minutes' walk from the building. If you travel by train, you can enjoy a 10 to 15-minute walk through the centre of Hull taking in either Queens Gardens and the statue of Wilberforce, or if you prefer, you can make your way past the Marina and through the cobbled streets of the Old Town. The full address is The Wilberforce Institute, Oriol Chambers, 27 High Street Hull, HU1 1NE.

Food and drink

Lunch and refreshments will be provided on both days, and we will be hosting a conference dinner on the evening of 27th March, the cost of which will also be covered. Please let us know in advance if you have any specific dietary requirements, and/or would like to attend the conference dinner by emailing Sophie and Megan (sophie.blanchard@hull.ac.uk; megan.white@hull.ac.uk).

Travel Bursaries

We are able to offer funds to cover national and international travel and accommodation on a first-come first-served basis. If you would like to take advantage of this offer, please contact us to let us know an estimation of your travel costs and if you would like accommodation.

Please email sophie.blanchard@hull.ac.uk for further information.

Event notes

This is a two-day event which is suitable for academics and practitioners. However, Day 1 is more academic focused, and Day 2 more practitioner focused. Please feel free to attend either one or both of the days.

Day 1 will begin at 11:00 with registration, tea or coffee and close around 17:15 for drinks and then dinner for those who wish.

Day 2 will begin at 09:00 for tea or coffee and close around 16:30.

Building Access

The University of Hull has increased accessibility to Oriel Chambers by including a platform lift to gain access to the building's ground floor area. However, fire safety measures mean that in the event of a fire alarm activation this platform and the main lift cannot be used. At present therefore, the Institute can only be deemed accessible to anyone that is able to use stairs to perform a safe exit. However, we are working with the University of Hull Estates and Health and Safety teams to ensure that, as a listed building, and where reasonably practicable, further improvements will be made within the parameters of the planning regulations for future events.



Hearing the Voices of Ukrainian Children and Young People

Posted on March 2, 2023



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In this short blog, Dr Alicia Heys reflects on her current role in supporting UNICEF's 'Hearing the Voices of Ukrainian Children and Young People' programme in Poland and Bulgaria.

On February 24th, 2022, the Russian Federation escalated its conflict in the Donbas region to a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As a direct result, current estimates by the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \[UNHCR\]](#) state that approximately 7 million Ukrainians have been internally displaced, with a further 7.2 million Ukrainians having fled to neighbouring countries. This includes approximately 15,000 unaccompanied minors. In addition to these vast numbers of refugees and the increased risk of human trafficking and child sexual exploitation and abuse, the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of](#)

[Humanitarian Affairs](#) [OCHA] estimates that approximately 1 million children are at risk of being affected by conflict-related mental health issues.

In response to this ongoing crisis, the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office of the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] initiated the 'Hearing the Voices of Ukrainian Children and Young People: Child Helplines Responding to the Ukraine Crisis' programme, to be implemented by [Child Helpline International](#).

This programme had three objectives:

1. To improve and maintain the capacity of child helplines to ensure quality services for young people in need of care and protection, with a particular focus on children affected by the Ukrainian conflict;
2. To raise awareness among the public, with particular focus on Ukrainian children and parents of the existence of child helpline services for children and families; and
3. To ensure the inclusion and amplification of children's voices and generate evidence to influence policymaking through reliable national and regional data collection, analysis and sharing.

However, a scoping needs assessment revealed that few counsellors working for national child helplines had received training relating to the Ukrainian war. Indeed, most counsellors did not have experience or training regarding humanitarian emergencies as a whole, nor in several of the most pressing issues emerging from conflict, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings, especially as this relates to children.

As a Lecturer in Modern Slavery at the Wilberforce Institute, and a specialist in the connection between contemporary slavery and conflict, I am supporting this programme by delivering training to counsellors who work for these helplines in nearby countries. I was in Poland from February 8-10, and in Bulgaria from February 28 to March 1. I conducted extensive research on the links between conflict and human trafficking in my doctoral thesis, and am situating this research within the specific context of the Ukrainian conflict to increase participants' knowledge and help them identify and respond to risk when they are supporting children through the helplines. This training will help them to better understand some of the issues that Ukrainian children and young people

contacting their helpline are most at risk of, as well as to recognise some of their associated indicators.



Thomas Clarkson and voluntary enslavement

Posted on February 23, 2023



Dr Judith Spicksley

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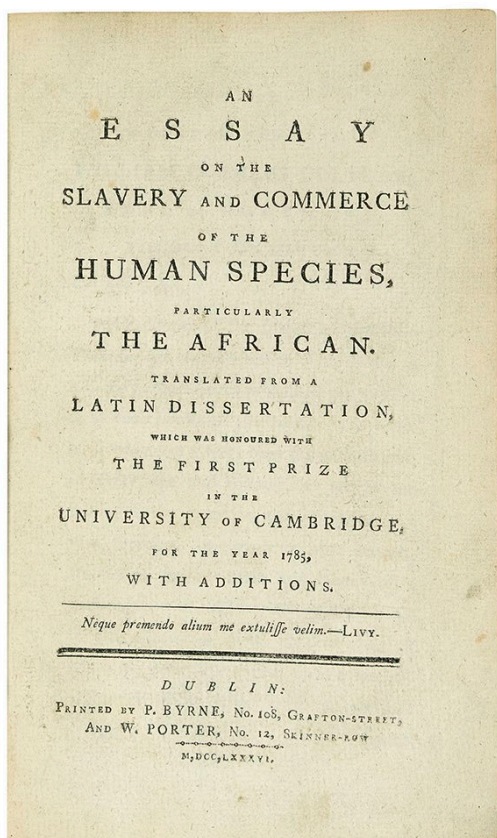
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In this blog, Judith reflects on a little-discussed aspect of the writings of [Thomas Clarkson](#), British abolitionist and leading campaigner against the transatlantic slave trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – his support for voluntary enslavement.

In an [earlier blog](#) I looked at two ceremonies of voluntary enslavement in the medieval period, one in England and the other in Scotland. Here I consider a further discussion of this practice in the work of Thomas Clarkson, which may surprise some readers. Clarkson, a leading light in British abolitionism, was a founder member of the Society for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, established in 1787, and a driving force behind it. His obsessive desire for abolition appears to have developed during his time at St John's

College, Cambridge. After graduating with a BA in Mathematics in 1783, Clarkson, who stayed on to train for the priesthood, entered and won the undergraduate Latin essay competition in 1784. His success encouraged him to try his luck again the following year, a decision that was to change his life, and the lives of many others.

The question for the senior bachelor's Latin essay prize in 1785 was decided by [Peter Peckard](#), the newly appointed vice-chancellor of the University. Peckard, who had been the master of Magdalene College since 1781, had developed an interest in, as well as an opposition to, the transatlantic slave trade.



Like many people, Peckard had been horrified by the [Zong](#) incident, also in 1781, when a captain had thrown 133 slaves overboard so that he could reclaim their value in insurance. Once again Clarkson was successful, and having won the prize, had his essay translated quickly into English for the Quaker bookseller [James Phillips](#), who became a close associate. It appeared in 1786 as [An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African \(London, 1786\)](#). Clarkson gave up the idea of a career in the church and threw himself into the fight to abolish the slave trade.

This story of Clarkson's winning essay is well known and frequently told, but there is rarely any discussion of the question set by Peckard. Yet this was the thing that interested me. Peckard chose as the title, *Anne Liceat Invitos in Servitutum Dare?* which translates into English as 'Is it lawful to make slaves of others against their will?' Peckard did not appear to be concerned with the question of whether slavery was wrong *per se*, only if it was wrong to enslave someone *against their will*. This suggests that he believed slavery – when undertaken consensually – would be lawful.

Moreover, this is clearly the position to which Clarkson was responding, as his opening gambit reveals.

He began his essay by describing ‘a general division of slavery, into *voluntary* and *involuntary*’. The voluntary he further divided into two classes:

for, in the first instance, there was a contract, founded on consent; and, in the second, there was a choice of engaging or not in those practices, the known consequences of which were servitude. (Essay, 6 [italics original])

Even though Clarkson accepted that the two classes of voluntary enslavement were distinct – those reduced on the one hand by ‘the contingencies of fortune’ and on the other by ‘their own imprudence’ – he still saw both as voluntary. Those who knew the punishment for a given offence was slavery had in his view made a choice to commit the offence, and therefore to suffer the consequences.

The experience of these two classes, however, was quite different. Those who contracted for their own slavery were able to regulate the conditions of their subjection.

We may observe of the above-mentioned [‘fortune’], that their situation was in many instances similar to that of our own servants. There was an express contract between the parties: they could, most of them, demand their discharge, if they were ill used by their respective masters; and they were treated therefore with more humanity than those, whom we usually distinguish in our language by the appellation of Slaves. (Essay, 4)

Those who became enslaved through ‘imprudence’ as punishment, on the other hand, were:

in a far more wretched situation, than those of the former; their drudgery was more intense; their treatment more severe; and there was no retreat at pleasure, from the frowns and lashes of their despotick masters. (Essay, 5)

Closer to what we might think of as slavery, Clarkson nevertheless referred to those who were enslaved through imprudence, as well as those through fortune, as ‘servants’, in order to distinguish them from what in his mind was the real

villein of the piece – the illegitimate *involuntary* slavery he associated with the transatlantic slave trade.

Again it was not the idea of involuntary labour that Clarkson sought to challenge. As meted out to ‘delinquents’ by European states in a variety of public works, slavery, in which ‘only the idea of *labour* is included’, was entirely acceptable. (*Essay*, 105-6) What he did not accept was the idea that people could be reduced to items of ‘property’, because this in turn reduced them to the status of a ‘brute’, and so was ‘a contradiction to every principle of nature’. (*Essay*, 106) Moreover, he believed that the notion that men were property had a lot to answer for.



Commerce in men, according to Clarkson, was not only ‘founded on the idea that men were *property*’, but it was this commerce that had been the origin of involuntary slavery. (*Essay*, 31) And this, he argued, was the slavery on which the transatlantic trade had been built. Clarkson claimed that ninety percent of African slaves had either been privately kidnapped or seized without good cause on the authority of a prince. Received against their will by ‘fraud and violence’, they were subsequently sold to the highest bidder in direct

contravention of divine law. (*Essay*, 94-6) This for Clarkson, was the ultimate form of slavery, and had to be brought to end.

But if Clarkson’s *Essay* kick-started the process that eventually led to the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, it also helped to undermine the idea that slavery could be voluntary. The decision of Clarkson to position voluntary slavery within the language of service, and conceptualise it as a contractual arrangement or a socio-legal obligation, served to separate it from the property-based model of the involuntary slave that we are now familiar with. Discussions of Clarkson’s *Essay* today rarely include any reference to voluntary slavery, at

least in part because it is difficult to imagine slavery as anything other than involuntary – surely no-one would choose to reduce themselves to the status of property unless it was the least worst alternative? Then again, perhaps they didn't. For Clarkson, it seems only those taken *against their will* as commodities were property. Other forms of slavery, based on punishment or agreement, had an impact on the social status of those concerned, but did not reduce them to property.

Meet Dr Zahra Shirgholami

Posted on February 16, 2023



Dr Zahra Shirgholami

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We are delighted to welcome Dr Zahra Shirgholami, our second new member of staff to the Wilberforce Institute, to extend and strengthen our modern slavery research. She will also be teaching in the Law School. Here Zahra explains what drew her to modern slavery research and what she will contribute to the Institute.

What drew you to modern slavery research?

To make a long story short, I have a background in engineering. But I was always passionate about social issues as a person who felt the bitterness of injustice and oppression in her home country of Iran. So, in 2018, I shifted my focus from engineering to social science.

Tell us about your professional background

I have researched modern slavery and governance issues in various contexts over the last four years. During my PhD research, I tried to broaden an understanding of the dynamics of apparel value chains facilitating the persistence of modern slavery and corporate practices. I have also been examining the nature of labour exploitation and modern slavery along with related policy and law enforcement mechanisms in the UK. I also worked with [Pact](#), an international non-profit organisation, to map and analyse the relevant national and international modern slavery legislation in the mineral supply chain of the Democratic Republic of Congo and United Kingdom (DRC-UK).

How does your background inform your current work?

These experiences taught me that much remains to be done to address the fundamental institutional misalignments and governance gaps and, ultimately, to tackle modern slavery. Yet, considering the UK, the political discourse supports a hyper-flexible labour market along with a hostile environment for migration, making it challenging for individuals to access their fundamental rights. Nonetheless, my research could pave the way for addressing modern slavery by unravelling the unknowns about it and providing robust evidence on how it could be best prevented. I also have a teaching position in the Law School which aligns well with my research interests.

What do you think are some of the misconceptions about modern slavery?

As Emily Kenway well said in her book, [The Truth About Modern Slavery](#), we sometimes should ‘unknow’ what we know about modern slavery, to understand it. For example, it is not a migration issue and it is not an exception.

What is something people do not know about you?

I think they know all they should know!

Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance Updates 30 January 2023

Posted on **February 9, 2023**



Andrew Smith

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The [Modern Slavery Guidance for England and Wales](#), which has recently been updated to reflect many of the changes introduced through the [Nationality and Borders Act](#), came into effect from 30 January 2023. Here Andrew Smith lays out in detail important information about those changes for anyone who is working in this area.

It is worth saying there are numerous updates of great significance to the Modern Slavery Act. Rightly so there are grave concerns about the changes to the Reasonable Grounds [RG] threshold, time limits on evidence gathering at Conclusive Grounds [CG] stage, and disqualifications. I know colleagues around the country are working hard to disseminate all known information about these policy changes to their partnership areas and networks. These changes will have

many expected and undoubtedly even more unknown impacts on how first responders are able to quickly identify and refer potential victims of modern slavery.

The changes to the Reasonable Grounds threshold and the evidence required, along with the inevitable period of adjustment for first responders, could certainly have an impact on how quickly and effectively local authority child National Referral Mechanism [NRM] decision-making pilot areas are able to suitably refer, and then safeguard, young people they suspect are being exploited. Regardless of any future NRM decision-making processes, it is important young people and adults across the county continue to be supported away from exploitation and those that would do them harm.

The changes to time limits on evidence gathering also mean there is now more onus on First Responders to give as much information and specific evidence as possible when submitting a referral. The online NRM referral [form](#) has been updated to reflect these changes to ensure first responders include all relevant information when gathering evidence before submitting the referral.

Clearly, there is also the urgent need for all organisations to reflect these changes in any first responder training across the country. Training is not only an investment in the professionals we trust to identify and refer potential victims but is vital to ensure we are fulfilling our moral and legal duties to all people that have suffered or are suffering trafficking and exploitation.

It is definitely too early to make any firm assertions on what these changes will mean for the wider anti-slavery system in the UK, but what is clear is that implementing blanket changes based on hostile immigration control will have disastrous consequences for many genuine victims who are unable to 'evidence' their traumatic and life changing experiences.

Summary of changes extracted from [Section 49 Statutory Guidance](#):

1. Changes to the Glossary – *Added* 'Additional Recovery Period', 'Bad Faith' (p.13), 'Nationality and Borders Act 2022', 'Public Order' (p.16), 'Public order disqualification', 'Public order disqualification request' (p.17) and 'Victim of Human Trafficking or Slavery (VTS)' (p.18). *Updated* 'Reasonable Grounds Decision' and 'Recovery Period' (p.17).

- Definition of human trafficking – ‘transferring or exchanging control over’ has been added to Action under the definition of human trafficking (p.21). Sec.2.25 is new and sets out that abuse which happens on route and is not connected to the purpose of travel does not necessarily constitute as trafficking (p.24). Sec.2.26 is new and sets out the definition of sexual exploitation in relation to the Slavery and Human Trafficking (Definition of Victim) Regulations (p.24)
 - Indicators of modern slavery – Sec.3.7 is new and sets out that when determining if someone is a victim of modern slavery, regard may be had to the person’s age, family relationships and physical or mental disabilities, which impair a person’s ability to protect themselves.
 - Reasonable Grounds Decision – The Reasonable Grounds Decision threshold is no longer ‘suspects but cannot prove’ and is now ‘based on objective factors but falling short of conclusive proof’. Sec.7.4 and 7.8 are new (p.61).
- The section on Making a Reasonable Grounds decision has been completely updated (p.129-174) and now means that a victim’s own testimony alone is no longer sufficient for a +RG decision. There needs to be additional information or evidence, such as medical, witness or expert statements or police reports submitted. Country reports or travel records will not be enough in themselves. Types of evidence are listed at the bottom of p.130-1.
- ‘The relevant competent authority will take reasonable steps to gather all available information before making a decision within the 5-day decision-making timeframe’. Where there is insufficient evidence provided, the competent authority can question if the RG threshold is met.
- The RG section now includes information on inconsistent and incomplete accounts, including a list of circumstances for why there might be a lack of detail or reasons for delayed disclosure, in order for the competent authority to assess credibility. If the individual had multiple opportunities to raise information ‘and fails to do so until action is brought against them, such as an Immigration Enforcement removal direction, then this should be weighed in the balance with all other evidence and may damage their credibility.’

- Sec.14.50-14.81 are new. Sec.14.83 has a new line added: ‘It is not necessary to prove that an offence has taken place, or for there to be an ongoing criminal investigation to find that an individual is a victim’.
- Recovery Period – The recovery period was reduced from 45 days to 30 in the previous iteration of the guidance.
- Sec.8.20 has been edited to include that the recovery period will not be observed where a public order or bad faith disqualification apply, or it’s been decided not to provide an additional recovery period (p.69) [does not apply to children]. Previously the guidance said a recovery period will not be observed where ‘grounds of public order prevent it’.
- There is a new sec.14.86-14.127 on Making an Additional Recovery Period, including a table showing the decision-making framework (p.136-147). In most cases, a victim will not get a second recovery period if they have had a +CG and made a new NRM referral for exploitation that took place before the first RG decision was made. This is different to if victims are re-trafficked after the initial NRM referral.
- Evidence Gathering at Conclusive Grounds stage – When making a CG decision, the competent authority can now ask a victim or their legal representative for information to be provided within (a minimum) of 14 days and send a reminder for this after 7 days.
- If this deadline can’t be met, the victim or legal representative can request an extension. This should be requested along with evidence for why the information can’t be provided and an updated timeframe for when it can. The competent authority will then use the criteria listed in the guidance when deciding whether to grant the extension. A CG decision will be made on the basis of the information available to the competent authority.
- Sec.14.138-14.142 and 14.144 (p.150) are new. Consideration minutes and case records: Lines 5-8 of sec.1.174 are new, as is line 5-10 of 14.177 and line 5-9 of 14.178. The public order and bad faith points in the list in 14.207 are new.
- Public Order Disqualification – Updated section p.166-176. For *definition of public order see glossary p.16.*

- Where the public order disqualification applies, the victim will not have access to a recovery period or support, protection from removal, a CG decision, or Temporary Permission to stay as a Victim of Human Trafficking or Slavery.
- This can apply to victims currently in the NRM who received their RG decision before 30 January 2023 (individuals in Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract [MSVCC] accommodation who receive a disqualification are provided with 9 working days of move-on support).
- Disqualification requests can be raised by the Competent Authorities and the Foreign National Offender Returns Command where removal or deportation action is being pursued and the victim meets the public order definition. Disqualification requests can be raised by Competent Authorities where a British citizen is in detention or on licence or a British citizen has presented with challenging behaviours in modern slavery support, and it has been identified by the competent authority that the individual meets the public order definition.
- The disqualification decision should be made within 30 working days of the disqualification referral wherever possible. First Responders must always make an NRM Referral or a Duty to Notify, even where the individual is likely to meet the public order definition.
- There is a new Public Order Decision-Making framework table on p.172, which includes information on criminal exploitation, child referrals and threatening behaviour in MSVCC support. 'A second pair of eyes review will take place on all public order disqualification decisions resulting in a disqualification'.
 - Bad Faith Disqualification – New section p.177-183 updating the previous section on improper claims.
- 'An individual may be considered to have claimed to be a victim of modern slavery in "bad faith" where they, or someone acting on their behalf, have knowingly made a dishonest statement in relation to being a victim of modern slavery'.
- Decisions to disqualify individuals on grounds of bad faith may be made for all cases referred into the NRM before, on, or after 30 January 2023, even if a +CG decision has been made. The disqualification may only be applied where an individual has received a +RG decision.

- Where the bad faith disqualification applies, the victim will not have access to a recovery period or support, protection from removal, a CG decision, or Temporary Permission to stay as a Victim of Human Trafficking or Slavery. Any RG or CG decision will be revoked.
- Children (those under 18 at the time of the RG decision) are exempt from disqualification on grounds of bad faith.
- The consideration of whether to apply the bad faith disqualification will be triggered by evidence from the First Responder, or from within the Competent Authority where evidence of bad faith arises during the CG decision-making process. Where First Responders have concerns about an individual's credibility, they should indicate this on the referral form.
- Individuals will be given the opportunity to provide explanatory evidence once the decision maker has communicated their intention to apply the disqualification. Credible explanations for gaps in evidence or a lack of credibility are listed on p.180. A second pair of eyes review must take place on all bad faith decisions resulting in disqualification.
 - Temporary Permission to Stay for Victims of Human Trafficking or Slavery (VTS) – p.217 Non-European Economic Area [EEA] and EEA nationals will automatically be considered for a grant of VTS if they do not already have the right to stay.
- Victims will need a positive CG decision to be considered for VTS
- Additional guidance is [here](#)



MODERN SLAVERY

A NATIONAL AND GLOBAL PROBLEM

MODERN SLAVERY

Meet Dr Daniel Ogunniyi

Posted on **February 2, 2023**



Dr Daniel Ogunniyi

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Over the last few months, we have been delighted to welcome two new members of staff into the Wilberforce Institute to extend and strengthen our modern slavery research. Here the first, Dr Daniel Ogunniyi, explains what drew him to anti-slavery research and what he will bring to the Institute.

What drew you to anti-slavery research?

Well, I will say serendipity and a deep interest in social justice. Early on, I was fascinated by questions around vulnerability and childhood issues. My interests would later develop specifically around child labour and the silencing of marginalised groups in society. I imagined that a law degree might help mitigate vulnerabilities if effectively mobilised. So, as a first step, I enrolled to study law. After completing this degree, I quickly realised I had zero interest in the everyday life of a lawyer. I then decided on pursuing an LLM in international

law drawn by the prospects of working at the UN or becoming a career diplomat. Again, my PhD would later refocus itself around child labour and child trafficking. I am glad the research directed its own course. This was the start of my journey into the anti-slavery space.

Tell us about your professional background

My background is quite varied. Before joining the Wilberforce Institute, I held various positions at the UN and in many universities around the world. In particular, I worked at the UNICEF Office of Research in Florence, Italy, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, Netherlands, Centre for Human Rights in Pretoria, South Africa, Redeemer's University, Nigeria, and the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham among others. My work with these organisations mostly revolved around researching international law in relation to modern slavery, children's Rights, and humanitarian law. However, the OPCW was quite a unique one – it had no direct link to modern slavery. It nevertheless offered me a chance to work with lawyers from different legal traditions. As the nature of the role involved international diplomacy and the rendering of legal advice to states parties and the secretariat, it offered me a chance to see international law in action, which also shapes my thinking about anti-slavery governance today. Given the physical proximity between the OPCW Secretariat and the Peace Palace where the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is based, I enjoyed frequenting the ICJ library to do research. The diverse experiences have been quite rewarding.

How does your background inform your current work?

Oh, there is a strong link between my background and what I now do at the Wilberforce Institute and Hull University. I firmly believe that Modern slavery can be eradicated through effective implementation of the law at different levels. Given my law background, I mostly look at modern slavery eradication through the prism of the law and how legal reforms could improve antislavery governance on the ground. Of course, antislavery governance becomes complicated when there are no prohibitions of elements constituting modern slavery. So, part of my work is to understand domestic implementation or lack of it in different countries. Of course, I do also hold a teaching position at the Hull Law School, which aligns well with my academic and professional background.

What do you think are some of the misconceptions about modern slavery?

There's quite a few of them. That slavery belongs to the past and is non-existent in the modern world or that slavery happens in some distant country at the end of the earth (this thinking is particularly widespread in western countries). It is interesting to mention that based on data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the majority of victims seeking support in the NRM system are UK nationals. Some also view slavery purely from the perspective of *de jure* ownership or when victims are shackled. These views are somewhat inaccurate and slavery in the modern sense could take more subtle forms.

What is something people do not know about you?

I am a bit of a runner and a keen boxing and UFC fan.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945

Posted on **January 26, 2023**



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For [Holocaust Memorial Day 2023](#), Dr Nicholas Evans reveals the story behind one of the less familiar names on our wall – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

When the Wilberforce Institute opened in 2006 the rear of our home at Oriel Chambers, facing Hull's Mandela Gardens, included the names of 18 key figures from across the world who fought for human rights in different times and places. Whilst some needed no introduction, such as Nelson Mandela, Sylvia Pankhurst, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., a couple have perpetually left visitors to our Institute and the surrounding Hull Museums asking for further information. One of the entries on the space entitled 'Names On The Wall' that people most often ask about is that of [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#), a German Lutheran pastor who died a month before the end of the Second World War. For Holocaust Memorial Day this year we highlight aspects of his life that justify his inclusion in our list of freedom fighters – he was executed because of his opposition to Nazism.



Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau, Poland, then part of Germany, in 1906. A German Lutheran theologian, he studied in both Europe and America, but was especially influenced by his time in the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York. Upon returning to Germany in 1931, his career as a scholar and cleric was dramatically affected by the coming to power of the Nazis in 1933. Two days after Hitler's installation as Chancellor he spoke out against the Nazi leader, appealing to fellow Christians to oppose Nazism, and producing one of his most memorable quotes "[We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself](#)".

Alert to the dangers of Hitler's rhetoric and Nazi influence on the German Evangelical Church, Bonhoeffer appealed for racial justice and founded his own seminary that was opposed to Nazi influence. When this was closed by the Gestapo, he found himself unable to officially speak or write out against the evils of the Holocaust.

Prevented from leaving Germany, he instead became part of the resistance movement fighting against Nazism within Germany, but was arrested in April 1943 for his involvement in Operation 7, a scheme that managed to smuggle fourteen Jews on deportation lists from Germany to Switzerland on visas; he was imprisoned awaiting trial. In February 1945, during the final days of Nazism, he was sent to the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp,

before ultimately being stripped naked and executed at the Flossenbürg concentration camp on 9 April 1945, four weeks before [Victory in Europe](#) [VE] day. His influence continued beyond his death, however, with adherents including Dr Martin Luther King Jr. citing his writings and his attempts to bridge ecclesiastical divides to champion freedoms. Later declared a twentieth century martyr by many churches, a statue of him was added to the [exterior of Westminster Abbey in 1998](#).

Holocaust Memorial Day has been marked on 27 January in the UK since 2001 as a day to remember all victims of genocide because it was the anniversary of the Russian liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. However I hope this blog is a timely reminder that death and slavery did not end on 27 January 1945. Like Bonhoeffer, countless innocent lives have been ended prematurely by both genocide and slavery around the world before, during and after the liberation of Auschwitz. This Holocaust Memorial Day, I argue, we need more people like Bonhoeffer to make a stand against those tyrants who seek to deprive us of our basic human rights. In very uncertain times, we should not take freedom for granted, but must speak out. [Ordinary people](#) can make a difference!



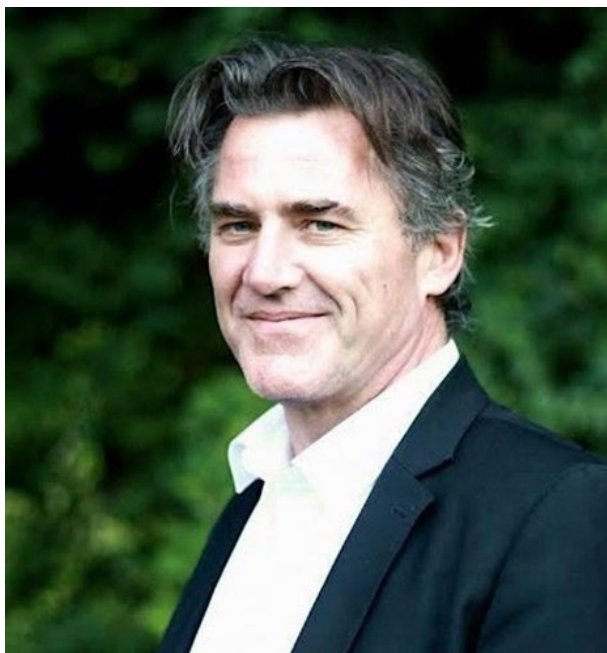
Programme of Public Lectures at the Wilberforce Institute, Spring 2023

Posted on January 19, 2023

As Spring Term beckons, Dr Judith Spicksley, co-ordinator of the public lecture programme for the Wilberforce Institute, lays out the exciting and varied schedule of talks that are on offer this year.

Thank you to everyone who attended our lectures in the autumn term, in person or online. As the new year begins, I write to draw your attention to the public lectures we have on offer this spring. All will take place at the Wilberforce Institute, Oriel Chambers, at 27 High Street, Hull, HU1 1NE, unless otherwise stated. Join us for refreshments from 4.15pm and stay afterwards for a glass of wine and a chance to talk with our speaker. If you can't make it in person, you can join us online. Specific links for each of the talks are listed below. For more details of how to stream lectures, or directions to the Institute, please contact Sophie Blanchard at Sophie.Blanchard@hull.ac.uk The full programme of lectures is also available on the 'Event Programme' tab.

Our first talk is on Wednesday 25 January 2023, 4.30-6pm GMT. As it's a joint venture with the [Cultures of Incarceration Centre](#), it will not be in the Institute, but on campus, in the Wilberforce Building, WILB-LT12. You can also sign up to stream [here](#).



Our speaker is [Professor Steven Sarson](#) of Université Jean Moulin in Lyon, who will talk on ‘A “Cruel War against Human Nature”: Conditional Proslavery in the US Declaration of Independence’. His interests are wide-ranging, from the history of the British Atlantic, to Great Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to the history of America, and Barack Obama.

Professor Sarson began his teaching career as a lecturer at the University of East Anglia, and has since held posts at John Hopkins University and Towson State University in Maryland, and Swansea University in Wales. He is now Professor of American Civilisation in the Department of English at Jean Moulin University, and it is in this capacity that he comes to talk. His abstract is as follows.

*It is commonly believed that the Declaration of Independence promised a future of equality and liberty for ‘all men’, and consequently that the continued existence of slavery contradicted the founding principles of the United States. This paper, however, based on a larger project on history and historical consciousness in the Declaration, argues that some of the document’s logic was consistent with the continuation of slavery. If the ‘ends’ of government were the protection of the life, liberty, property, and ‘Safety and Happiness’ of its subjects, then it was necessary to suppress internal and external enemies. According to Grotius, Locke, and others, that allowed for the enslavement of prisoners of war. And according to the Declaration’s own American history, it allowed for the enslavement of Africans and African Americans. The Declaration’s ‘one people’ had been forged out of the common ‘circumstances of our emigration and settlement here’ that only applied to European Americans. By contrast, Africans and African Americans were a once ‘distant people’ who were ‘obtruded’ on America via the ‘warfare of the ... king of Great Britain’ who then ‘excited’ them into ‘domestic insurrections amongst us’. Enslavement was therefore one of the ‘Guards for their future security’ that ‘one people’ needed against another, at least until that enemy could be expatriated (in line with the belief of Jefferson and others that integration was impossible). Slavery certainly violated ‘the most sacred rights of life & liberty’ and thus troubled Jefferson deeply, but the often-quoted doctrine of *salus populi est suprema lex* (‘the safety of the people is the highest law’) over-rode such concerns and was the basis*

of a conditional proslavery (the very real inverse of William Freehling's 'conditional antislavery') embedded in the Declaration's history and historical consciousness.

For directions to the lecture room or other enquiries about this talk please email Becky Day at R.Day@hull.ac.uk

In February we have what has now become an annual fixture when current and former PhD students come to talk about their research. This year our 'What's going on at the Wilberforce Institute?' event will take place on Wednesday February 15 2023, 4.30-6pm GMT, and will involve two of the students of our Falling Through the Net Cluster, James Baker and Jasmine Holding Brown.



Our Falling Through the Net Cluster students, James Baker and Jasmine Holding Brown

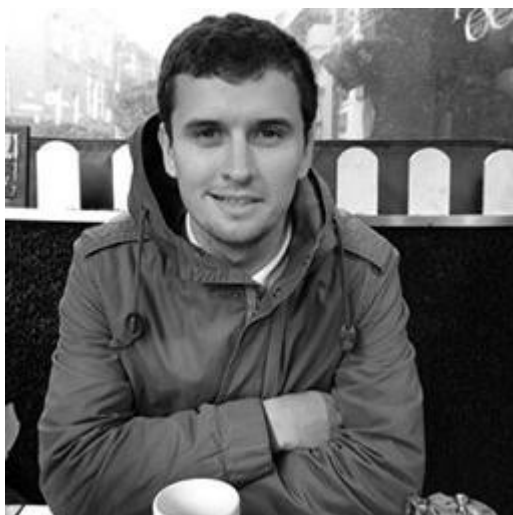
Every year the University sets aside a sum of money to fund clusters of PhD projects on specific topics that align with its strategic plan. This money is distributed via a competition, in which departments and Institutes within the University bid for cluster projects, and are assessed by a panel for their originality, value and strategic importance. In 2018 the Institute was successful in gaining funding for this cluster, which ran from 2019-2022. Its aim was to examine the exploitation of children, and more specifically, how and why children trafficked across borders fall through the web of protections that we expect the family, the voluntary sector, and ultimately the state, to provide.

James' work focuses on the apologies and memorials that followed from the experience of British children forced to migrate to Australia ['Reconciling British Child Deportation to Australia, 1913-1970: Apologies, Memorials and Family Reunions']. Jasmine has examined the treatment of British children forced to

migrate to Canada alongside that of indigenous children [‘Exploiting the Poor, Erasing the Indigenous: The Child Subjects of British Settler Colonialism in Canada, c. 1867 – 1981’] I hope you will be able to come and hear what they have to say.

For directions to the Institute, or any other queries please contact Sophie Blanchard at Sophie.Blanchard@hull.ac.uk, or you can sign up to stream this lecture online [here](#).

For our next public lecture on Wednesday March 15 2023, at 4.30–6pm GMT, we will be welcoming [Dr Dean Clay](#), currently working in the Department of History at Hull. The title of his talk is “‘To Bunco a Yankee’ – The American Congo Reform Movement, 1903-1909”.



Dr Clay taught at Liverpool John Moores University, and the universities of Newcastle and Northumbria before he came to Hull. His research lies in the field of activism, particularly on movements and organisations whose activities transcend national boundaries, with a specific focus on how activists coordinate and the impact of their activism on government domestic and foreign policy.

Dr Clay was a Committee Member of the European research project ‘The Congo Free State Across Language, Culture, Media’ which ran from 2015-18, and is still Editor for the associated website, [Congo Free State](#). It is on this subject that he will be talking. His abstract is below.

The atrocities committed in the Congo Free State (CFS) under the rule of King Leopold II during the age of imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries eventually became one of the greatest international scandals in recorded

history. Of all the participants in the scramble for Africa, engaged by most European colonial powers in the nineteenth century, Leopold II, King of the Belgians, left arguably the biggest and most damaging legacy of all. In April 1884, the United States became the first nation to formally recognise the International Association of the Congo's claim to the territory that would become the CFS. Leopold successfully lobbied President Chester A. Arthur to support his claim, emphasising free trade, humanitarianism, his plan to end the Arab slave trade, and the involvement of Welsh-American Henry Morton Stanley in the project. It was this initial recognition of the flag of the CFS by the United States that later provided the foundations for the American Congo reform movement in the early twentieth century.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the underexplored dimensions of American humanitarian activism on the Congo issue by analysing the reform activities of the American Congo Reform Association (ACRA). The paper will examine the methods that the ACRA deployed in its reform campaign, the transnational dimensions to the campaign through its relationship with the Congo Reform Association (CRA) in Britain, and the impact of its campaign for reform on the foreign policy of the United States government. In doing so, it challenges the dominant historiographical narrative of the reform movement that attributes its success largely to the CRA, instead highlighting the significant role that the ACRA played, and demonstrates the agency of non-state humanitarian actors in directing foreign policy regarding humanitarian issues during the Progressive Era in the United States.

For directions to the Institute, or any other queries please contact Sophie Blanchard at Sophie.Blanchard@hull.ac.uk, or you can sign up to stream this lecture online [here](#).

In April we move away from history towards contemporary concerns. On Wednesday 19 April 2023, at 4.30-6pm BST we welcome [Dr Rosemary Broad](#), Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Manchester. She will talk about 'Women in modern slavery offending'. PLEASE NOTE: This talk will also be held on campus, in the Wilberforce Building, WILB-LT12.



Dr Broad's research includes human trafficking, modern slavery, responses to violence, organised crime, the management of offenders and prison education. She has published in the British Journal of Criminology, the Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, the European Journal of Criminal Policy and Research, and the European Review of Organised Crime.

Dr Broad, who has acted as a consultant for the Home Office in a review of their modern slavery research, also has extensive work experience in criminal justice institutions and remains involved with working with perpetrators of domestic violence in the community. Her talk, outlined in the abstract below, will focus on the women who perpetrate human trafficking and modern slavery offences.

At a global scale, women are represented in human trafficking and modern slavery crimes at proportionately higher levels than almost any other type of offending (UNODC, 2020) and this trend is represented in similar ways at national and local levels. But contrary to the stereotypical narratives surrounding perpetrators of such crimes as foreign national organised criminals, many of the women that become implicated have more complex journeys into offending that require a more diverse understanding. These female perpetrators often have backgrounds of complex vulnerability, marginalisation and responsibility to care for dependent relatives which contribute to their offending as well as framing prior victimisation which also provides the foundation for later criminal involvement. This presentation will draw on over a decade of empirical research to consider the question of how the over-representation of women convicted for these offences can be explained, drawing on theoretical frameworks on women's offending more generally as well as a more specific focus on how policy and practice responses to

human trafficking, modern slavery and migration may contribute to these pathways.

For directions to the University, or any other queries please contact Sophie Blanchard at Sophie.Blanchard@hull.ac.uk To sign up to stream this lecture online please click [here](#).

We bring our spring season to a close on Wednesday 17 May 2023, at 4.30-6PM BST with a talk by [Dr Nicholas Evans](#), the longest standing member of the Wilberforce Institute, and Senior Lecturer in Diaspora History at the University of Hull. The title of his talk is 'Memorialising antislavery in South Africa: unearthing black agency'.



Dr Evans researches migration to, through and from Britain, and has an interest in Jewish history, diasporas and slavery. His latest publication, edited with Professor Angela McCarthy, is [Death in the Diaspora: British and Irish Gravestones](#) (Edinburgh University Press, 2020). This pioneering comparative study of migrant death markers (gravestones and epitaphs) across the British and Irish worlds reflects his more recent interests in death studies and memorialisation.

Dr Evans, whose range of interests sees him regularly invited to give talks at local, national and international level, is well-known to many of you. For this talk, he will draw together his work on slavery and gravestones. His abstract is below.

Following the passing of the British Slave Trade Act in 1807, the Royal Navy assumed the role of ending slave trading by British vessels, and those of other nations, around the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. One of the key centres for this antislavery endeavour was the Cape Station located at Simon's Town, South Africa. Despite the perception that the crews involved in this liberating endeavour were exclusively white, evidence from the oldest surviving naval cemetery in Simon's Town challenges this view. This presentation thereby reveals how people freed from slavery during the nineteenth century played an active role in helping other Africans to maintain their freedom.

For directions to the Institute, or any other queries please contact Sophie Blanchard at Sophie.Blanchard@hull.ac.uk, or you can sign up to stream this lecture online [here](#).

I hope there is something here to draw your interest. If there is anything else you would like to know please get in touch with me at Judith.Spicksley@hull.ac.uk or Sophie at the email address above. We look forward to welcoming you in person or online.

Wrapping up my Treadmill of Conferences: Reflecting on the Hull-Bonn-Leiden Seminar

Posted on December 15, 2022



Jen Nghishitende

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Having attended seven conferences so far in her PhD journey, Jen Nghishitende had considered giving the last seminar of this year a miss, but she was very glad she didn't.

On the 24th and 25th of November 2022 the yearly International PhD Seminar on Slavery, Servitude & Extreme Dependency (Hull-Bonn-Leiden seminar) took place at the Wilberforce Institute in Hull. It brought together three institutions researching slavery and other forms of exploitation. The Wilberforce Institute focuses on research on historical and contemporary slavery, and it is further developing research in children's exploitation. The international Bonn Center for

Dependency and Slavery Studies ([BCDSS](#)) at the University of Bonn employs the interesting concept of ‘strong asymmetrical dependency’ in its research on profound social dependencies such as slavery, serfdom, debt bondage, and other forms of a permanent dependency throughout eras, regions and cultures. The third institute is the Leiden Slavery Studies Association ([LSSA](#)). The LSSA is dedicated to promoting a greater understanding of slavery and post-slavery in any period and geographical region.

In addition to research, these three institutions are committed to organising joint activities aimed at cross-pollination and promoting new avenues of inquiry into the themes of historical and modern cases of slavery, servitude, and other forms of extreme dependency. One such activity is this yearly PhD seminar, which drew in researchers at various stages of their projects from Bonn, Leiden, and Hull and other universities whose research covers any aspect of slavery, servitude, or extreme dependency in any geographical setting and period. As is now the norm, the seminar followed a hybrid online and in-person format to give those who could not make it to Hull the opportunity to attend and participate. This culminated in researchers coming together to share research and fruitful engagement with one another’s work.

While I was extremely excited to introduce the African literary term *Ngambika* and explore and put on paper the cycles of dependence I have seen in my work upon first receiving the call for papers, I later contemplated pulling out of the seminar for various reasons, one of which is that I had become conference-participating fatigued at this point, having presented at about seven conferences and various other seminars so far in my PhD journey.

I am delighted I forged ahead, as I gained so much from this seminar. Not only was I allowed to speak at length about my work – every researcher was allocated thirty minutes to speak, followed by a lengthy question and answer session – but I also gained a wealth of knowledge and made great new connections with those present. Ideas for developing our papers further and suggestions for literature were exchanged.



Twelve brilliantly thought-provoking papers were presented and thoroughly engaged via question-and-answer sessions and over coffee and food. All papers were shared in advance. This allowed people to engage with the written paper and offered a better understanding of what the paper was all about as opposed to merely listening to presentations, which by nature, are compacted. The engagements during coffee breaks and lunch were also fantastic as they gave more opportunities to discuss, get to know one another and share opportunities. During a coffee break, I was pleased to learn from Taynã Tagliati about the [Heinz Heinen Kolleg call for fellowship applications](#), which I share widely here for those who may be unaware of such a call and may be interested in applying.

The wide-ranging nature of the topics covered layers of dependency and other aspects of historical and contemporary slavery. Below I will give brief overviews of some of the papers presented to give context to the research topics covered. However, the papers are works in progress, and I am thus limited in what I can share about them in this blog. Also, I will only share the papers of those who consented to be mentioned in this blog.

Ramona Negrón (Leiden) gave the first paper of the seminar entitled 'The Coymans Asiento of 1685: Organizing Transimperial Trade' in which she assessed how Balthasar Coymans (1652-1686) obtained the Spanish Asiento de Negros of 1685 and how he organised the administration of the contract.

On life histories, the archive, and silenced lives and voices, Amalia S. Levi's (Bonn) paper was entitled 'Asymmetrical Dependencies in Bridgetown, Barbados (17th -19thc.): Enslaved People in Sephardic Households.' Her work centres on the experiences of the community of enslaved people in Sephardic Jewish households in early modern Bridgetown, Barbados, and interrogates archival processes that affect knowledge production about them.

Taynã Tagliati's (Bonn) paper on 'Asymmetrical Relations in Indigenous Amazonia: Towards a De-Westernisation of Strong Dependencies' brought a

refreshing perspective on the western thinking of inequality and dependency. The paper discussed how asymmetrical dependencies in the indigenous context might generate other kinds of sociocosmic relations that do not necessarily lead to inequality. Taynã argued that to grasp the phenomenon of asymmetrical dependency in all its nuances, it is necessary to de-westernise our concepts and imagination about society and (non) human relations.



Universiteit Leiden

Leiden Slavery Studies Association

Starting the second day off was Christine Mertens (Leiden), whose paper entitled 'Clamoring for Control over Free Black Mobility in Virginia, 1782-1806' shed light on the involvement of Virginia's citizens and town officials in developing legislation targeting the movements of free Black people from the 1790s onwards.

Staying with the American South, Marcella Schute's (Leiden) paper (title withheld) discussed how pro-slavery radicals in Louisiana in the late 1850s debated whether to reopen the transatlantic slave trade in the United States legally.

Bahar Bayraktaroğlu's (Bonn) paper on 'Dependency Between Slave Dealers and Slaves: A Case from Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul' interrogated the concepts of agency and asymmetrical dependency by looking at the slave market and slave dealers in eighteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul.

In the last session, we heard from Camilla de Koning (Manchester) and Mary Aderonke Afolabi (Bonn). In this session, Camilla took us through her early findings and thoughts about her research project in her paper titled 'Crown Engagement in Britain's Emerging Empire, 1660-1775.' She plans to examine the British Royal Family's involvement in the expanding British colonial empire as individuals in her more comprehensive research project.

Mary's paper entitled '(Re) presentations of Slavery, Servitude and Dependency in Selected Narratives of 19th Recaptured Africans' closed off this fantastic seminar. In her paper, Mary aimed to uncover how slavery and asymmetrical dependency can be detected in texts, as opposed to actual and physical experiences of slavery.

This seminar was thus genuinely international, taking us through work focusing on comprehensive and wide-ranging geographical localities – Barbados, the Amazon, Trinidad, Britain, Virginia, Louisiana, Korea, Istanbul, and West Africa. It was interesting how all the papers, in their different aspects, incorporated the notion of agency. There was also a heightened interest in understanding formerly enslaved people and their communities by interrogating agency, asymmetrical dependency and several other aspects of their lives.



Jen pictured at the Hull-Bonn-Leiden seminar in November.

Wilberforce Institute Researcher Delivers Climate Change Recommendations in Parliament

Posted on December 8, 2022



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Saphia Fleury talks about her research on climate change and the opportunity it gave her to present evidence to parliamentarians last month.

Influencing government policy is a key aim of academia and a strong motivator for many who choose to study for a PhD at the University of Hull. One effective way to achieve change is by submitting evidence to UK [parliamentary inquiries](#) and [government consultations](#). (Information about inquiries and consultations in Wales and Scotland is accessible via the websites of the Senedd Cymru and Scottish Parliament).

My research looks at how people migrate in the context of climate change and natural disasters and the protection gaps that need filling to protect migrants' human rights. In May, I submitted written evidence to the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Climate Change, which looks at new security threats arising from environmental change. My evidence demonstrated the links between violent struggles and environmental change, from community conflict to wars on an international scale.

As well as having my evidence published on [the Committee's website](#), I was invited to present it in person in Parliament on 1 November. Contributors are frequently asked to speak as witnesses before formal committee meetings, but on this occasion the format was a little different. The [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association](#) invited ministers and MPs from across the Commonwealth to join UK parliamentarians to explore emerging security threats arising from climate change, cybersecurity and other phenomena. The session to which I was invited was chaired by Dame Margaret Beckett and heard evidence from Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti on the UK defence apparatus' approach to climate change, and Dr Stuart Parkinson on the carbon footprint of the military and the threat to climate stability from nuclear weapons.



Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, London, UK. Photo courtesy of Marcin Nowak at [Unsplash](#).

I focused my presentation on the four main drivers of climate-induced insecurity: extreme weather events including flash floods and hurricanes; slower, creeping changes such as drought; pandemics and the spread of disease vectors; and human displacement. On the last point, I described how it can be difficult to ascribe human migration to environmental factors alone, since people leave their homes for multiple, complex reasons for which climate change may be a trigger. Nevertheless, changes to the environment play an increasing role in driving people to seek better living conditions elsewhere and the world has not adequately prepared for the human rights crisis that may ensue.

To this end, I made three recommendations to the decision-makers in the room. First, migration should be prevented at source with a robust disaster response, sufficient funding for adaptation, and protecting and fulfilling people's human rights in situ. Second, accepting that some migration will always occur and can indeed be a positive adaptation measure in itself, people on the move must be protected through safe and orderly migration routes and protection measures, even if they don't meet the internationally recognised definition of a 'refugee'. Third, planned resettlement should be facilitated by governments when changes to the environment render it impossible for people to remain in their community or country. In the latter case, affected individuals should be fully consulted in relocation planning and given support to move to new homes and, where necessary, new livelihoods. By implementing these changes through bilateral and multilateral agreements, governments can help to stem the flow of dangerous, irregular migration that harms the migrants themselves and risks triggering political backlash and community conflict.

The high level of engagement with the issue of climate change by those parliamentarians present was clear from the numerous questions posed during the session. Delegates from small island states and developing nations spoke of the urgent need for adaptation support from high-income countries and the inevitability that some of their citizens would have to be relocated, either temporarily or permanently. The delegate from Belize spoke movingly about an evacuation that was currently underway in his country to move people out of the path of an incoming hurricane. The intensity and frequency of hurricanes in the Caribbean Basin, where Belize is situated, is increasing as rising global

temperatures warm the sea and air. The perspectives of delegates from Commonwealth countries and British Overseas Territories served to remind all present that climate change is not a theoretical, future problem, but a lived reality for millions of British and Commonwealth citizens globally. There has never been a more urgent time for researchers to make their findings heard by those in power.



Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, addressing parliamentarians on 1 November 2022. © Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK. Images Copyright <http://www.tellingphotography.com>

December 2nd – International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

Posted on December 2, 2022



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On the day the UN sets aside for observance of the International Abolition of Slavery, Professor Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull, talks about the history of abolition, the numbers of people currently in forced labour, and the need to continue to combat slavery in the UK and around the globe.

The [2nd of December](#) is an auspicious date for it commemorates an important evolution in human history, the acknowledgement that everywhere in the world slavery is illegal. Making slavery illegal globally came very late. Until the late eighteenth century, hardly anyone questioned that slavery was an important, if occasionally distasteful, institution that generally brought important people

wealth and influence and often, as in the eighteenth century British and French empires, was a source of national prosperity.

France was the first nation to abolish slavery, in 1794, at the height of the French and Haitian Revolutions and then reintroduced it under Napoleon in 1802, meaning that its final abolition was only in 1848. Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807, a hard-fought battle led by both White abolitionists like William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson and Black freedom fighters, such as Olaudah Equiano.

It was a matter of great pride for Britons then and often still that Britain led the way in abolishing the slave trade but it took another generation, until 1838, until slavery was formally abolished in the British Empire and even then slavery continued to exist in British possessions in Africa, South Asia and New Zealand. Nevertheless, as has become clear from protests, especially in the Caribbean, surrounding royal visits and around the relationship of Caribbean nations with Britain, the triumph of emancipation in 1838 obscures the fact that Britain did not give any compensation to emancipated ex-slaves while providing considerable financial help to the people who had owned enslaved people continues to rankle. Demands for reparation for the harm done to people during slavery are increasingly frequent and are enhanced by growing knowledge of just how much British wealth was based upon the labour of African-descended enslaved people, growing sugar and other tropical crops in atrocious conditions.

The reparations movement, gaining momentum in the Caribbean, Africa and elsewhere, and which connects to increasing claims about considering colonialism and the damages of climate change and how they affect the Global South, makes one realise that the historical legacies of slavery remain an important social and political concern. And these political controversies connect us to the reality that slavery, however we define it, whether as coerced labour or human trafficking or sexual exploitation continues to be a growing modern problem.

The number of people in forms of forced labour that amount to slavery is greater now than the numbers who were in slavery when European and American nations abolished slavery in the nineteenth century. It is more also than when nations in Africa and the Middle East formally abolished slavery in the last third of the twentieth century. Fortunately, the number of slaves in the world population of 2022, at around 0.7 percent, is lower than at the height of slavery,

around 1800, when perhaps 5 percent of the world population was enslaved. But the numbers of people in forms of enslavement today remain huge and are increasing.

Britain and a few other places have instituted a Modern Slavery Act to try and combat this scourge, with 12,717 potential victims of modern slavery identified in Britain in 2021. The largest number of people identified as subject to slavery in Britain are British nationals, showing that as in the eighteenth century, slavery is not something happening elsewhere but is happening here as well. On this day of commemoration of something that was a signal advance in human history – the abolition of slavery and its transformation into being everywhere a crime – we need to remember just how much work we need to do to make slavery not just illegal but truly a thing of the past.



The boxes are pictured in Hull's Whitefriargate. Picture: Sean Spencer/Hull News & Pictures

The Ecology of Bondage: Writing the History of Water and Slavery in the Atlantic World

Posted on December 1, 2022



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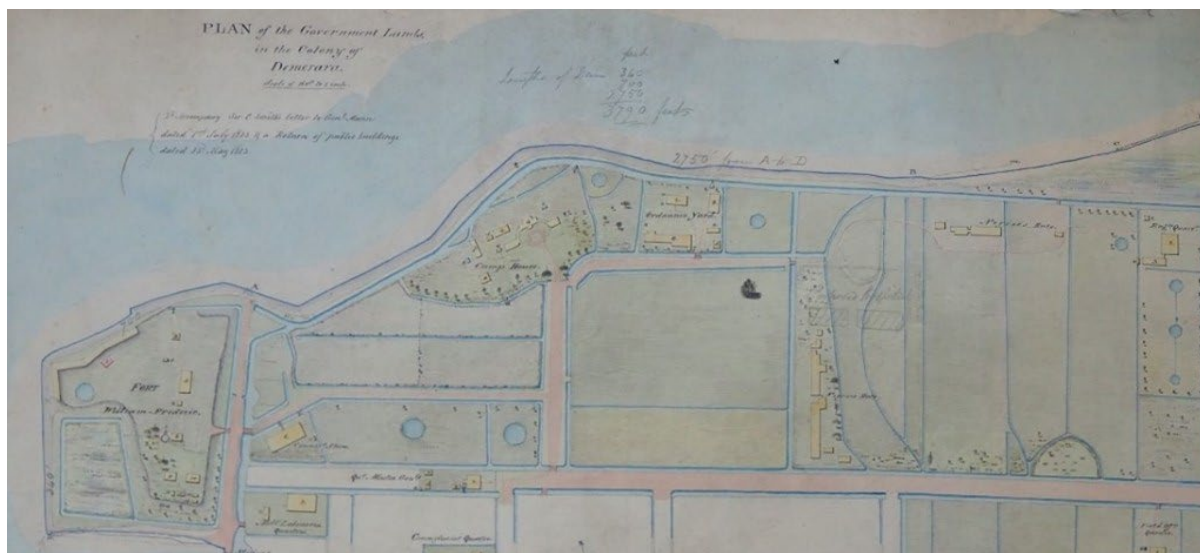
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A significant amount of historiographic attention has been devoted to the ways in which European imperialism and colonialism fundamentally and irrevocably transformed the global environment. The suite of ideas and practices which typified colonial attitudes toward physical landscape, flora, fauna, and ecological processes continue to influence our behaviour in the twenty-first century. This reality has led ecofeminist scholars Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing to propose a qualification for the increasingly widespread concept of an ‘Anthropocene epoch’ defined by the radical changes which human societies have wrought on the natural world. They posit instead that we are currently living in the

‘Plantationocene epoch’: an era defined by the consequences of an economic system which transported plants, microbes, animals and people all around the globe and transformed to unrecognisability entire ecosystems throughout the Americas, Asia and Africa.

It remains the case, though, that there have so far been few academic inquiries into the environmental history of the most infamous sites of plantation agriculture: the slave societies of the Caribbean and mainland North and South America between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Two landmark works published earlier this year seek to redress the lack of overarching studies on the environmental history of plantation slavery and the regions where it flourished. David Silkenat’s [Scars on the Land: An Environmental History of Slavery in the American South \(Oxford, 2022\)](#) describes how ‘slavery more than nature’ created the Southern United States as a discrete ecological zone through the transformations wrought by flood, deforestation and a host of other environmental catastrophes. In [Sea and Land: An Environmental History of the Caribbean \(Oxford, 2022\)](#), Philip D. Morgan, J.R. McNeill, Matthew Mulcahy and Stuart B. Schwartz synthesise decades of research to create a holistic overview of the Caribbean environment before, during and after slavery. We can only hope that these will be looked back upon as the first of many works which represent an environmental turn in the history of Atlantic slavery.

Water sits at the root of almost all environmental processes, and has therefore been a key factor in historical development, though [it is often difficult to disentangle and isolate its impact in historical sources](#). However, despite the often-unacknowledged role of water in histories detailing the development of the transatlantic slave trade, the prevalence and importance of water in the establishment and maintenance of the trade, and its direct impact on those both willingly and forcibly involved in the trade, cannot be overstated. Water not only ensured survival (through its consumption), but facilitated the triangular trade and economic prosperity for its benefactors. Water played a fundamental role in all aspects of enslaved people’s lives, and in the transatlantic slave trade as a whole. From the unwilling conveyance of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas, known as the Middle Passage, to the success of plantation societies, where water was crucial for crops such as sugar, to the transportation of goods from the Americas to Europe, water facilitated the economic growth and success of maritime ports on both sides of the Atlantic.



Alexander Gordon, 'Plan of the Government Lands in the Colony of Demerara', 1823 (The National Archives, Kew, MR 1/941)


From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century West Africa was known as the 'White Man's Grave' due to high mortality rates amongst Europeans. Swampy, marshland areas in West Africa provided ideal conditions for both the mosquito *Aedes aegypti* and the protozoan parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* – twin vectors of yellow fever and malaria, two of the largest culprits of European fatalities in the transatlantic slave trade – to thrive. This fear of disease motivated Europeans to establish plantations in the Americas, and to transport enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to work on these plantations. Africans' seeming ability to withstand diseases which proved fatal to Europeans – due to previous infection during childhood, thus granting resistance, in the case of malaria, and life-long immunity from yellow fever, unbeknownst to Europeans at the time – was used as a justification for their enslavement.

Drought and rates of rainfall in Africa could exert a huge influence on the number of Africans enslaved and transported across the Atlantic. Drought often led to greater interethnic conflict and violence, contributing to higher rates of African enslavement and increased numbers of slaves being exported. Furthermore, drought, rainfall and crop success in Atlantic Africa were key factors in the timing of slaving voyages and could affect the mortality rate of captives transported across the ocean.

Simultaneously, water performed a crucial role on land by dictating the location of plantations and the colonies in which they existed, their prosperity or failure, and the health of those kept in bondage within them. Sugarcane, the premier

crop of the British Caribbean, requires vast quantities of water to ensure its survival and the presence of so much water on the sugar plantations of the Caribbean provided an ideal environment for disease vectors like mosquitoes (carriers of malaria and yellow fever), as well as waterborne pathogens such as dysentery.

Not only did water facilitate the transatlantic slave trade, and impact on the daily lives and lived experiences of those in the trade, it also shaped the development of green-blue areas (land lying within 100km of the coast) on both sides of the Atlantic. From the ports where slaves were departed from, to maritime cities such as Liverpool and Bristol water allowed a number of actors to benefit from the commerce in goods and people through jobs, investment, profit and the consumption of goods produced in the trade. The impact is visible on the landscapes of these places from barracoons where slaves were held, to hospital stations or lazarettos where enslaved people were treated, to the infrastructure and architecture of port cities in Britain where the wealth and prosperity gained from the trade was spent.



The C A R G O
Of the Sloop **H O P E**, Capt. *John Tunnard*,
C O N S I S T I N G O F
About One Hundred
Choice G A M B I A
S L A V E S,
Now performing Quarantine in Rebellion Road,
Will be **S O L D,**
On **F R I D A Y** the 20th Instant,

T H E Public may be assured, that not a single Slave HAS, or SHALL BE, disposed of till the Day of Sale.—The Boy on whom the Small-Pox broke out during the Passage, has been perfectly recovered upwards of *Four Weeks*, and not the smallest Symptom has ever appeared on any of the other Slaves, who are now all in perfect Health.

August 10, 1773. S A M U E L C H O L L E T.

Advertisement in the *South Carolina Gazette*, 16 August 1773 (courtesy of Charleston County Public Library)

Laura's research focuses upon the prevalence, and impact, of disease in the transatlantic slave trade. From the inception of that trade, disease threatened the health and well-being of everyone involved, resulting in high mortality rates amongst enslaved Africans and Europeans alike, during both the legal and illegal periods of the trade. Laura's work explores the transmission of disease in green-blue spaces such as barracoons, slave factories and lazarettos, and emphasizes the significance of water in the transmission of diseases such as yellow fever, malaria and dysentery. Additionally, her work explores how the spread of disease was prevented, or curtailed, through methods such as the white-washing of vessels, and through the utilization of maritime quarantines. Her work will also explore the lived experience of disease, particularly of the enslaved, and how disease was treated by medical practitioners, focusing on green-blue spaces such as ports areas, and on the slave voyages of the Middle Passage. Her research hopes to add to the existing historiography on the production and dissemination of medical knowledge as a result of the transatlantic slave trade. She seeks to shed new light on how Indigenous and enslaved Africans' botanical and medicinal knowledge contributed to developments in European medical understanding in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Fred's research explores the environmental history of slavery and its legacies in one part of the plantation Americas: the colony of British Guiana (present-day Guyana). His work emphasises the role played by both fresh and salt water in the creation of a plantation society, the transformation of the natural environment, and the survival and resistance of enslaved people and indentured labour migrants in the nineteenth century. Standing apart from Britain's other Caribbean colonies geographically, culturally and ecologically, British Guiana represents an important and under-studied place. His research hopes to reveal how water influenced almost every facet of life in British Guiana, and was a space and substance contested by the people kept in bondage there, both before and after the formal abolition of slavery. A plantation system novel in the history of the British Empire shaped, and was shaped by, the volatile natural hydrology of the region, and the watery environment conditioned a particularly brutal labour regime even by the standards of the nineteenth-century Caribbean. Fred shows how enslaved people and their descendants found themselves at the sharp end of ecological crises from drought (which sharply increased the burden

of labour without any form of concession or increased provision from white colonists) to flood (to which enslaved and free African-Guianese communities were always at most acute risk). Enslaved people of African descent and indentured labourers from all over the world frequently found themselves living at the margins of survival, but a few were able to deploy their skill as aquatic labourers to find ways of subverting the plantation system or escaping it altogether.

Laura and Fred will both be presenting their research as part of the inaugural [Centre for Water Cultures Conference](#) on 7 December 2022. Held on the University of Hull campus, the conference, which is open to the public, will include a range of papers from different disciplinary backgrounds demonstrating the myriad ways in which water has influenced human societies and cultures from the earliest times to the present day.

My PhD Data Collection Journey: Field Trip to Malawi

Posted on November 24, 2022



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Data collection is a critical part of primary research. In my study of the impact of child labour bans in Malawi's agriculture on the lived experiences of children, their families and communities, it was necessary to meet the people involved. In this blog, I will take you through my field data collection journey.

Planning the trip

After getting research ethics approval from the [University of Hull's Faculty of Science and Engineering](#), the next step was getting research ethics clearance in Malawi. For someone studying at a foreign institution to be able to carry out research in Malawi, there are two options to follow in order to get ethics approval before collecting data. The first option is applying for and getting

ethics clearance through the [National Commission of Science and Technology](#) where a relevant committee depending on your area of study looks into your application and provides feedback. On the other hand, one can also get research ethics clearance through a local research institution such as universities and organisations. I followed the second option and was attached to the [Malawi University of Science and Technology \(MUST\)](#)'s Center for Innovation and Industrial Research (CIIR). I applied for research ethics clearance from the MUST Research Ethics Committee (MUSTREC), and I got my ethics clearance approval early in January 2022. I have learnt a lot about academic and administrative processes that must be followed when conducting research in a different country from your where your institution is based.

My six months stay at MUST is memorable as I was exposed to valuable research and collaborations within the CIIR. What excited me most was that research the CIIR is skewed towards industry challenges in key sectors of the Malawian and regional economy in agriculture, health and education sectors among others. The set up at the CIIR is identical to my parent institute, the [Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation](#) at the University of Hull. The Wilberforce Institute is well known for its research on historical and contemporary slavery and in recent years, has developed interests in researching children's exploitation, working closely with practitioners in these sectors. Apart from providing me with an office space and internet connection, I was involved in developing the academic progress monitoring system for postgraduate students under the CIIR and in reviewing MUST's postgraduate handbook. I gained valuable skills through my involvement in these activities, and I am grateful to the staff in the CIIR and MUST at large for their support during my stay there.

Field work

After getting all the required clearance and I began talking to stakeholders on the ground to start planning field data collection trips. I first engaged with the [Ministry of Labour](#) who were so helpful and gave me contacts for district labour officers of Thyolo, Mulanje and Zomba Districts where I planned to engage the communities living around commercial tea and tobacco estates. The next stage was to visit the labour offices of each of these districts. My engagement with the labour officers was so enlightening and informed my selection of communities and other stakeholders I needed to talk to.

The highlight of this engagement with district labour officers was at Thyolo District Council. When I met the labour officer for Thyolo, I was informed and invited to the scheduled District Child Labour Committee (DCLC) meeting. To say I got valuable tips on the fight against child labour in the districts might be an understatement. The DCLC meeting drew together all stakeholders in anti-child labour programmes in the district including representatives from the district labour office, district social welfare office, district gender office, district agriculture office, the judiciary, district education office, district youth office, youth organisations, traditional leaders and the NGOs community among others. With the level and clarity of information I got from the meeting, I felt that I gained all I needed to know about child labour in the district, from programmes on the ground, and challenges and steps being taken to ensure all children are protected in the district. Coming at the start of my field data collection, the DCLC meeting energised me and re-invigorated my purpose. It reminded me why it is so important to research about the lived experiences of children, families and communities after children were banned from working in the commercial tea and tobacco estates.

From the district councils, I went straight onto the ground to meet local leaders starting with traditional authorities (T/As), then group village heads (GVH) and then village heads where potential respondents were to be drawn from. Overall, I managed to match or exceed the research targets I had set myself. I had planned to reach 120 survey respondents, I managed to reach 132. On focus group discussions, I had planned to conduct 18 and achieved 18. Finally, on interviews, I conducted 29 interviews out of the 30 I had planned.

Challenges

Let me sign out by highlighting some of the challenges faced during data collection. The biggest challenge was access to research funds. Before traveling to Malawi, I had arranged with my bank to get access to my bank account while in Malawi. Unfortunately, this was not possible, and as I could not access the funds this delayed my field work as I needed the funds to pay field research assistants. The university finance department and my supervisors were so helpful in rectifying the financial hiccup. Another delay of field data collection occurred when some areas became inaccessible by road after tropical cyclone Ana brought heavy rains early in 2022. And as if these setbacks were not enough, I got sick with chicken pox and lost almost 3 weeks research time. Nevertheless,

as I now go through the processing of my data, I am so happy with the volume and diversity of the data I have.



Image: Tea estate road in south eastern Malawi

Source: Mavuto Banda

Richard Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, at Fifty Years

Posted on November 17, 2022



Professor Trevor Burnard

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Following a workshop earlier this year on Richard Dunn's *Sugar and Slaves*, first published in 1972, contributors reproduced their talks for a special issue in the eminent early American history journal, *Early American Studies*, which has just been published. This blog by Professor Burnard was written to accompany it.

Historians are surprisingly poor at honoring the works of the historians who went before them. We are focused on the present, at least when we consider historiographical trends. We tend to relegate historical masterpieces to distant memory. The historical amnesia about the great historians of the recent past has become even more pronounced as we have moved into the twenty first century and as we have dropped from our reading lists many books that have a twentieth

century imprint. Books published before 2000 seem, to us and to our students, just old and out of date.

I remember well a manifestation of this love of the immediate in the historians we read in discussions over dinner in Curacao in the 2010s with Mary and Richard Dunn, Alison Games, Rod McDonald and Michelle Craig McDonald. Mary amused us all by teasing Richard over a comment made at the conference proceedings that day at the Association of Caribbean Historians by an early career scholar, educated mostly in the twenty first century, that Richard was a prominent twentieth century historian of the West Indies, a comment that seemed to suggest that Richard's scholarship had all been done in the distant past. The speaker was referring, of course, to Richard's 1972 masterpiece, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, which is the subject of this blog.

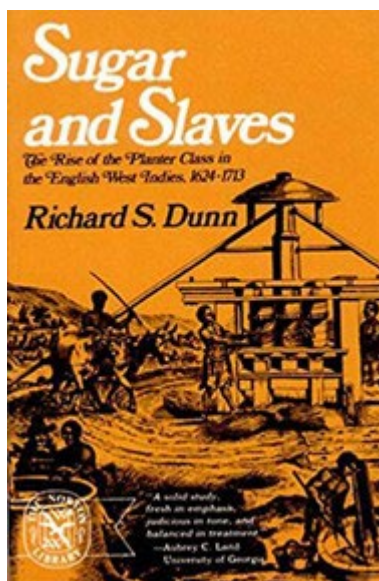


Richard Dunn

Of course, Mary's teasing, while very funny, was utterly misplaced. Richard was far from being an historian whose work had been written so long ago that it was no longer *au courant*. He was an adventurous and forward-thinking historian whose work on the Caribbean is as vital in the third decade of the twenty first century as it had been in the eighth decade of the twentieth century. It is easy to imagine, however, a Richard Dunn whose scholarship might have developed in much more conventional grooves than it eventually did. He had been trained in seventeenth-century Anglo-American history at Harvard and Princeton. In his first decade or so as a professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, he had written books on traditional topics, such as New England Puritans and the religious wars of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One would

have guessed in the mid-1960s that he would have continued in the same way that he started his historical career. Indeed, that seemed to be the case when he embarked upon a project (never completed, though it did inspire some outstanding essays along the way) to write about the Glorious Revolution of 1689-90 in a transatlantic context.

But Richard got waylaid by a document that he had come across, somewhat accidentally, at what was then called the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, London. That document stopped any movement to conventional historical scholarship dead in its tracks. This document was a census of Barbados in 1680. It showed how the transition a generation before to sugar and African chattel slavery had led in Barbados to the growth of the wealthiest ruling class in seventeenth century English America. The long-term result of this discovery, which led to his book on the Glorious Revolution to be put on a permanent back-burner, was the publication of one of the great masterpieces of early American history, written in a protean age of historical writing on seventeenth-century North America. *Sugar and Slaves* is one of the standout monographs of social history in the time when social and economic historians utilizing techniques drawn from French and British scholarship were transforming the landscape of early American historiography. Richard established, among many other findings, that historians writing on seventeenth century English America had to include Barbados in their accounts, along with more familiar stories drawn from Virginia, Massachusetts, and the Ohio Valley borderlands. It was an opening salvo in the conceptualization of a wider idea of early America, encapsulated nowadays in the commonly used hashtag #VastEarlyAmerica.



The impact of *Sugar and Slaves* was immediate and lasting. In my opinion, it ranks with Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), Richard Pares, *A West India Fortune* (1950) and Elsa Goveia's *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands* (1965) as the most significant book on the early English Caribbean in the middle years of the twentieth century.

1973 edition

No other book in the last fifty years, I believe, has approached it in influence, historical esteem and in writerly verve, although Vincent Brown's 2021 *Tacky's Revolt* has won enough prizes to suggest it might join Dunn's work in the pantheon of great works on the history of the British Caribbean during slavery.

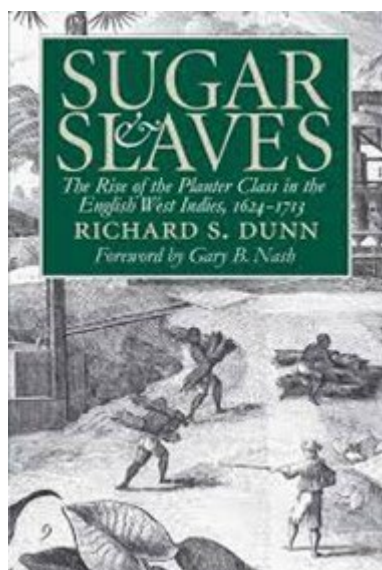
I had been a fellow at the (then) Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies in 1986-7 before taking up a position at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. It was in 1986 when I first met Richard who was the director of the center where I was a fellow. Alison Games, now of Georgetown University, had been a student of Richard Dunn, working on a dissertation, later an important book, on migration patterns in the early seventeenth-century English Atlantic. Barbados had featured prominently in her dissertation and I had begun while at Mona extensive work into the Jamaican archives which led to scholarship on that island. Over the years, we had moved from being deferential students to becoming respectful colleagues of Richard. We had always valued very highly *Sugar and Slaves*, both as a source of empirical information and as a model of how to write about the early English Atlantic world.

It seemed to us that the fifty years' anniversary of the publication of *Sugar and Slaves* was an appropriate time to evaluate it and its influence over time. Thus, we organized a workshop in June 2021 with speakers from Europe and North America who ranged in status from graduate students to emeritus professors. That workshop led to a special issue in the eminent early American history journal, *Early American Studies*, published alongside the publication of this blog, in the fall of 2022. I'd like to thank the new editors of EAS, Rose Beiler and Judith Ridner, for their enthusiastic support of our initiative to consider the arguments in *Sugar and Slaves* after 50 years. The workshop, which was done online, was sponsored by the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull and by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, the latter through the generous leadership of Daniel Richter.

The fact of the conference being online had advantages and disadvantages. It required less organization than a conference in person and cost very little to put on. There was some organization, however, and I'd like to thank Laura Spero and Amy Baxter-Bellamy of the McNeil Center for the many things they did to ensure that the workshop went well – which it did. Doing it virtually allowed for much greater participation than would have been likely for an in-person conference. The total attendance was around 150 people with about 80 people present at each session. On the other hand, we missed the chance to socialize and network with friends, new and old. A stimulating session would be followed by the dispiriting experience of a solitary lunch or dinner.

Alison and I were delighted by what happened at the workshop. It was satisfying on both a personal and an intellectual level. Personally, a highlight of the conference was that Richard was able to attend – he listened attentively to every paper. Richard, aged nearly 93 at the time of the workshop, was not in great physical health and indeed he died relatively soon after the workshop, in January 2022. But if struggling physically he was in great shape mentally and he gave a fascinating and moving speech at the end of the workshop which placed *Sugar and Slaves* in historical context; outlined some of his thinking behind writing the book; and, most interestingly, outlined how this book had shaped his research for his other important book on the British Caribbean (and the American South) which was *A Tale of Two Plantations* (2014).

On an intellectual level, the workshop and the ensuing special issue demonstrated both the lasting power of *Sugar and Slaves* as a mid-twentieth century historical masterpiece and also the ways in which, in part due to its influence, the themes that Richard developed have evolved and transformed over time. As Richard noted, the scholarship on this period of English Caribbean history is notably denser and richer than had been the case when he started his work. Our introduction to the special issue outlines some of the ways in which scholarship on the topics that Richard Dunn brought to historical attention in 1972 has changed over time.



A special feature of the workshop was a session in which close colleagues of Richard – Sir Hilary Beckles, Roseanne Adderly, Roderick McDonald and Nicholas Canny – reflected on *Sugar and Slaves* and what it meant to them and also on how Richard himself had shaped how they looked at early Caribbean history.

2000 edition

Two of these reminiscences are included with this blog as separate blog posts. For me, the opportunity to do homage to a great book, written by a wonderful historian, was the highlight of both the workshop and the special issue that this blog draws attention to. The best way to acknowledge a mentor and colleague, I believe, is to take seriously his or her work. This is what Alison and I have tried to do here for *Sugar and Slaves*, a book that retains its power and vitality, even fifty years after it was first published.

Shakespeare and the language of slavery

Posted on November 10, 2022



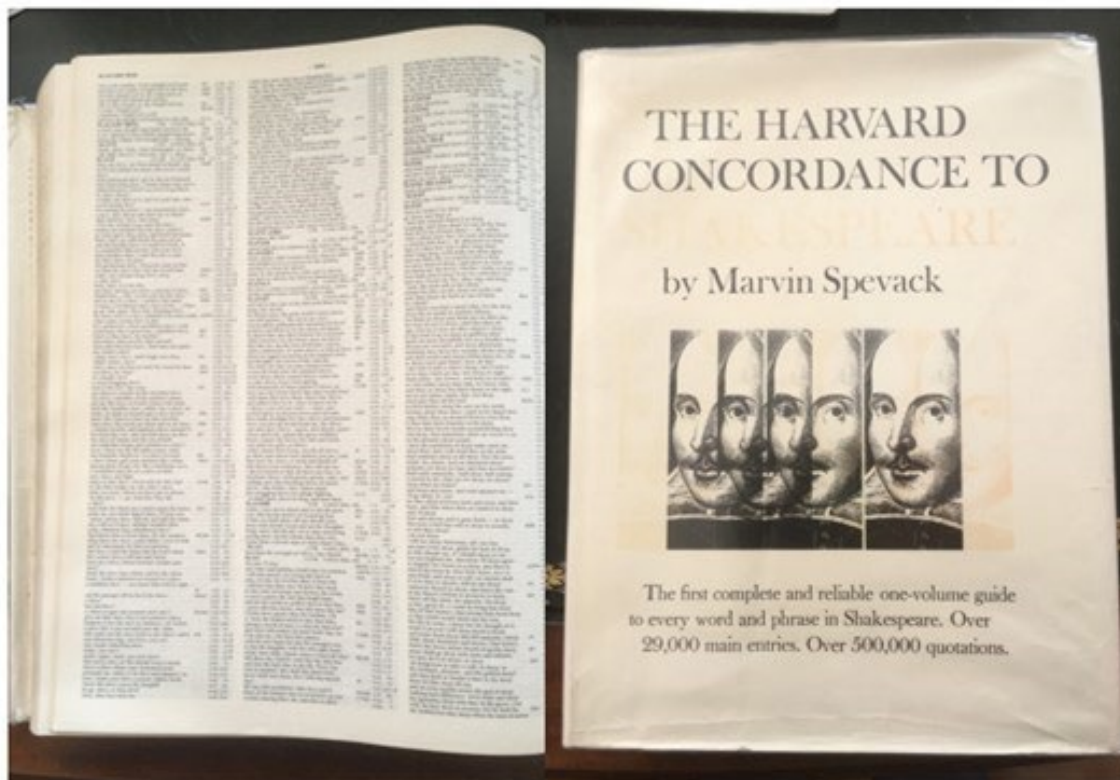
Dr Judith Spicksley

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In this blog, commissioned by the [Folger Shakespeare Library](#) earlier this year, and reworked for this platform, Dr Judith Spicksley argues that Shakespeare's use of the term 'slavery' can tell us a great deal about what the term meant at the turn of the seventeenth century, and what we can take from it today.

During my virtual fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library last year, I examined the growth of the language of slavery in early modern England, and more specifically, the use of that language in the works of William Shakespeare. The research forms part of my broader reassessment of the use of the terms 'slave' and 'slavery' by modern historians to describe institutions of subjection in the past. In searching through a concordance of Shakespeare's plays and poems I found 163 references to 'slave' and 3 to 'bondslave', but there were only 5 occasions in all of his works in which he used the term 'slavery', even though four of his plays were set in Ancient Rome.



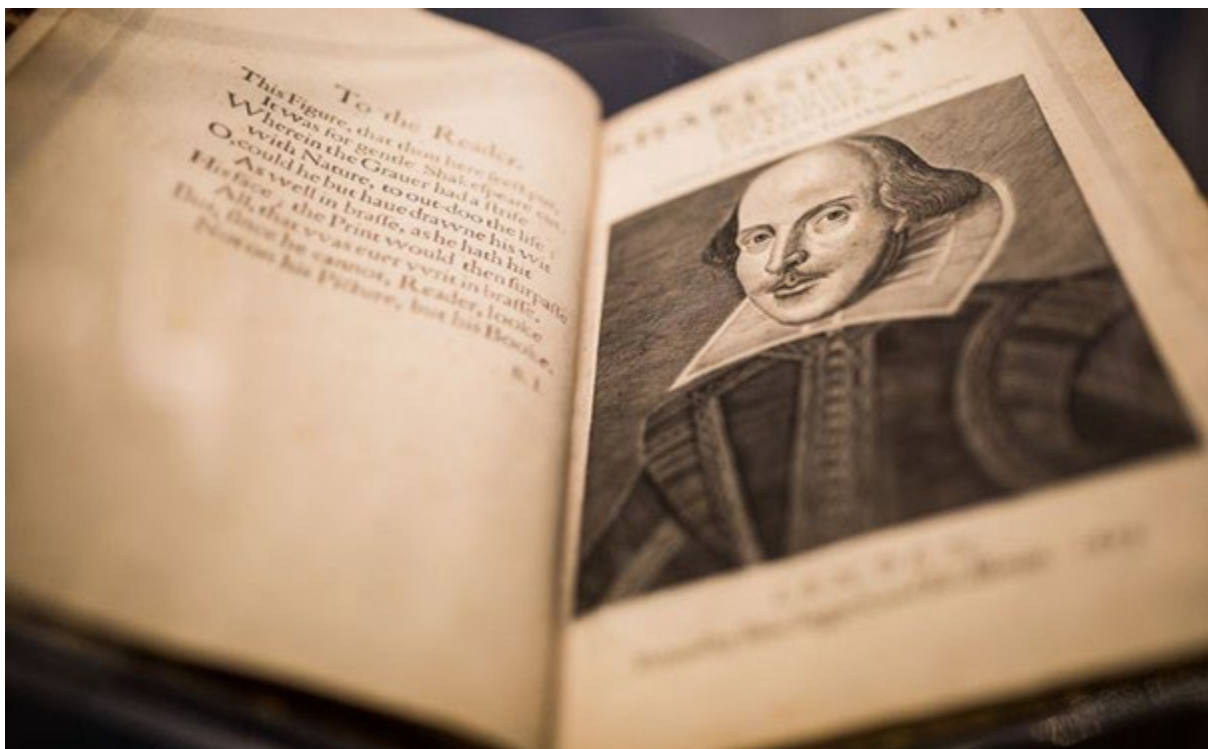
Much of this can be explained by the fact that 'slavery' was a relatively new term. Derived from the medieval Latin term *sclavus*, the English term 'slave' has been around since the end of the thirteenth century, when it was used to describe a captive in the absolute power of his or her captor. Already by then it was associated with the misuse or abuse of power. But the first examples of the term 'slavery' are not found until much later – they only emerge in the sixteenth century. The earliest example I have found so far is not a literal usage either, but a figurative one, dating to 1542 in a pamphlet by the Protestant reformer, Thomas Becon (*A comfortable epistle too Goddes faythfull people in Englande*). There is no sense at this point that he is talking about the institution of slavery as currently understood. In extending the root 'slave' by adding the 'ery' suffix Becon was creating a term that referred to the *condition* in which the 'slave' existed, not his *status* as chattel, and this condition was clearly ignominious. Becon's aim was to demonstrate the absolute power of the Lord, who could transform the various negative conditions of people's lives into their positive counterparts – sorrow into joy, darkness into light, death into life, and 'slavery' into honour.

In his 1551 translation of Thomas More's *Utopia* (*A fruteful and pleasant worke of the beste state of a publyque weale and of the newe yle called Utopia*) Ralphe

Robinson drew on the same portrayal of 'slavery' as a base condition, linking it in this case to menial forms of labour. For Robinson, 'slavery' represented a type of noxious and miserable work – 'all vyle seruice all slauerie and drudgerye, with all laboursome toyle and busines' – fit only for those at the lowest social level.

But the term 'slavery' really came into its own as a critique of abusive or illegitimate forms of power. Europe underwent a major fracturing of religious and political authority in the early modern period, so it's perhaps not surprising to find that the language of slavery provided the perfect vehicle for the airing of religious and political grievances, sometimes brought together in one text. If we look, for example, at Robert Crowley's *The Way to Wealth Wherein is Plainly Taught a most Present Remedy for Sedicion* (1550), we can see that the author turned to 'slavery' to criticise the actions of rack-renting landlords who were oppressing their tenants. But as a good Puritan, the connection between 'slavery' and popery was never far from his mind. He argued strenuously that by not addressing this issue of tyrannical landlords at home English men would risk being 'brought to the lyke slauery that the french men are in'.

If we now turn to the five contexts in which 'slavery' appears in Shakespeare's works, we can see that the Bard also introduced the term when he was intent on providing a critique of power.

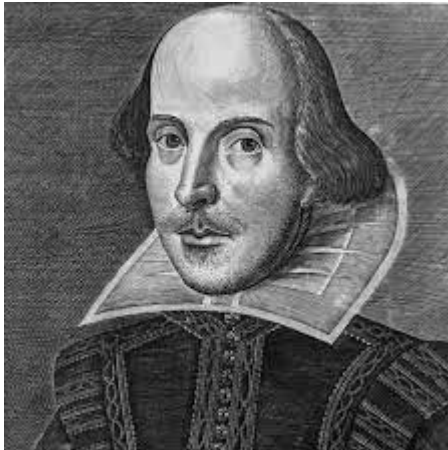


A Shakespeare First Folio, courtesy of The Folger Shakespeare Library
at <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare/first-folio>

We perhaps get closest to the understanding of slavery as we imagine it in *Othello*, in which the eponymous hero is taken captive by the ‘insolent foe’ and sold into ‘slavery’ (*Othello* I. iii). As the sale of people as commodities was condemned in the Old and New Testaments, I take this use of ‘insolent’ to indicate that the foe was contemptuous of rightful authority, making the seizure arbitrary and unjust (Amos 3:6; Revelation 18:13). Moreover, the context draws on a major element in the semantic framing of the ‘slave’ in the early modern period – as a commodity that was to be bought and sold. [John Hawkins](#) is on record as having seized Africans for no other reason than to sell them for profit in the Americas, and by this time details of his activities were already available in print.

A second case of ‘slavery’ that also has biblical signposts appears in *The Tempest*. Here it is the absolute power wielded by the sorcerer Prospero that is under discussion. The shipwrecked Ferdinand, ordered by Prospero to pile up logs, describes the task as his ‘wooden slavery’, a classic reference to the fate of the Gibeonites, whose punishment involved performing the lowliest of tasks as ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’ in perpetuity (*Tempest*, III. i; Joshua 9).

The other three uses are all figurative examples, reflecting the huge conceptual power that ‘slavery’ had come to wield. In *Henry VI Part II*, Jack Cade uses the metaphor of ‘slavery’ to highlight the oppression of peasants living under the tyranny of a self-serving nobility (*Henry VI, Part II*, IV. Viii). The term also appears in *Henry VIII* – thought to have been a collaboration between Shakespeare and John Fletcher – in Act II, scene 2 (a section believed to have been written by Shakespeare). Here the author employed the metaphor, in one of its very popular manifestations, in relation to subjection to a Catholic ruler – the Duke of Suffolk hopes to be freed from his ‘slavery’ to the French king. The final appearance of the term is in [Sonnet 133](#), where the themes are those of a painful and tortuous relationship, in which the speaker is berating the actions of a cruel lover. It is love itself that is here the absolute and arbitrary master of the lover’s fate.



So why is understanding Shakespeare's use of the term 'slavery' important? First it means we have to think again about the development of language – terms have their own histories that change over time. In Shakespeare's day 'slavery' was a social condition rather than a social status; it was only later that the term came to represent the institution of chattelhood we recognise today.

Nevertheless the elements that have become embedded in the institution following abolition – coercion, absolute subjection and arbitrary power – were all prefigured in Shakespeare's use of the term. What this suggests is something fundamental for the historiography of the institution of slavery as we know it – it has not been around for thousands of years. 'Slavery', emerging in the sixteenth century as a condition of drudgery, and a measure of absolute and arbitrary power, is less than five hundred years old.

British Nationals – The Hidden Victims of Modern Slavery

Posted on November 3, 2022



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September saw the completion, publication and launch of an [important scoping study](#) addressing the experiences of British victims of modern slavery and their pathways to safety and recovery. The research was led by [Dr Carole Murphy](#) at [The Bakhita Centre, St Mary's University, Twickenham](#) in partnership with Louise Gleich at [Justice and Care](#). [Dr Alicia Heys](#), modern slavery lecturer at the Wilberforce Institute, and Dr Craig Barlow, Independent Forensic Social Work Consultant & Criminologist and Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute, were co-investigators on the twelve month project. The project was commissioned by the [Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre \(MSPEC\)](#).

The Project

Currently, British nationals represent the highest number of referrals from one nationality into the [National Referral Mechanism](#) [NRM] with year-on-year increases rising from 90 in 2013 to 3,952 in 2021. The percentage of referrals that are British nationals has also risen each year from 2016 until 2020. In 2021, although the actual number had risen again, the percentage had dropped slightly: last year, British nationals accounted for nearly a third of all potential victims (31%). The largest proportion of these referrals in 2021 was for criminal exploitation involving children, representing 55% of all referrals of British nationals, with the majority exploited in criminal activities such as '[county lines](#)'.

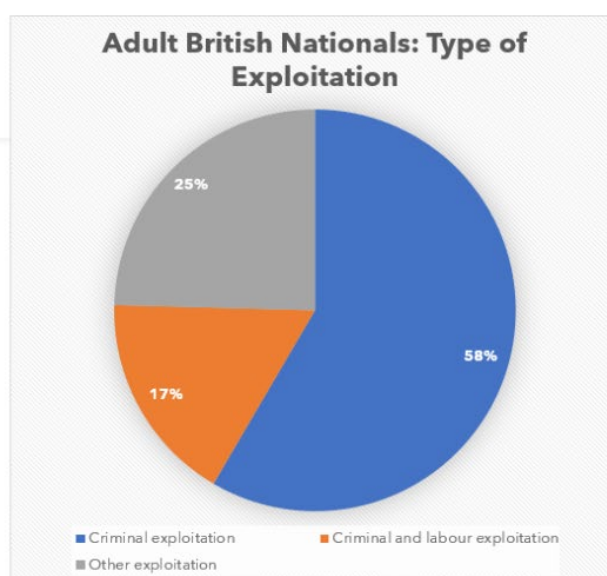
Prevalence of British national victims

Duty to notify statistics 2021:

- 6,411 adults consented to referral into the NRM - 3,190 adults referred through Duty to Notify process.
- 365 British nationals and 37 dual nationality British nationals referred through Duty to Notify

NRM statistics 2021:

- 31% of all referrals were for British nationals (3,952 individuals)
- 75% (2,981 individuals) of British nationals referred into the NRM were children.
- Of the 2,689 children referred for criminal exploitation, 2,070 were single nationality British.



Despite this rise no comprehensive study has been conducted on their specific vulnerabilities or to identify their specific recovery needs. That which exists has been largely focused on criminal exploitation and the 'county lines' phenomenon or sexual exploitation. The project sought to begin to fill this gap.

Research Objectives

- Understand the experiences of British nationals who have been trafficked
- Identify gaps in support needs provided for British survivors
- Compare with findings from other groups
- Develop coherent responses to the specific needs of British Nationals
- Provide an evidence base for improved grass-roots delivery of support for British survivors
- Provide an evidence base to influence policy on the support needs of British survivors

The project resulted in a series of publications, conferences and events culminating in the final report, launched at the House of Lords, and hosted by Lord McColl, on September 6, 2022.

Publications and Conference Papers

The literature review for this project was adapted for a journal article and published at the beginning of September: [A Review of Modern Slavery in Britain: Understanding the Unique Experience of British Victims and Why it Matters – Alicia Heys, Craig Barlow, Carole Murphy, Amy McKee, 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

As part of the research, Craig undertook a critical review of the current criminal and civil legislation and justice system in the UK and presented some of the findings of this review in a paper at the British Society of Criminology's annual conference hosted by Surrey University on June 29. His paper 'British Victims of Modern Slavery: Journeys into Criminal Exploitation and Alternative Interventions' critiqued the current legal and policy response to the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults, building on his [doctoral research](#) and [recent work published with Alicia Keys, Simon Green and Beth Derby](#).

We followed this up with two conference papers in The Netherlands, at the fifth global meeting of the Slavery Past, Present & Future Conference at Webster University, Leiden. We were joined by Professor Simon Green who presented a paper with Craig focusing on child trafficking and criminal exploitation while Alicia and Carole presented early findings from the British Nationals project.

The Final Report

[Identifying Pathways to Support British Victims of Modern Slavery towards Safety and Recovery: A Scoping Study](#) surveyed and interviewed over 50 professionals working with people affected by modern slavery, as well as interviewing seven survivors, to paint a complex picture of systemic barriers creating social and economic vulnerabilities in relation to modern slavery. The lack of awareness amongst services to intervene early and protect British nationals from exploitation was a key feature.

Key Findings

The research points to contextual and societal factors that contribute to British nationals becoming vulnerable to being exploited. A lack of support to access safe housing, family support, mental health, and substance misuse increased vulnerability to exploitation.

- 01 MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**
UK professionals from social services, education, mental health services and the criminal justice system “miss many opportunities” to protect British nationals from being exploited in modern slavery.
- 02 VULNERABILITIES**
Contextual and societal factors contribute to British nationals becoming vulnerable to being exploited. A lack of support to access safe housing, family support, mental health, and substance misuse increased vulnerability to exploitation.
- 03 RECOGNISING VICTIMS**
Professionals who interact with vulnerable British nationals during exploitation often fail to recognise them as potential victims of modern slavery due to misunderstandings about modern slavery and find it difficult to spot the signs of exploitation, which can result in them being treated as criminals rather than victims.
- 04 A CYCLE OF CLOSED DOORS**
British nationals referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) as potential victims of modern slavery, have faced “a cycle of closed doors”, caused by confusion over what support they are entitled to, often resulting in being directed to local authorities rather than to specialised services through the National Referral Mechanism.

Carole Murphy said, “Our research shows that there’s a huge gap in knowledge about the potential for British nationals to be exploited in modern slavery. This lack of knowledge and understanding results in them not being offered the same support as other people...[British nationals] are commonly failed by the authorities, facing what one respondent in this study referred to as ‘a cycle of closed doors’.

“What sets British citizens affected by modern slavery apart from other potential victims is that they have regularly come into contact with social services, schools and education institutions, mental and physical health professionals even before their exploitation starts. Despite this, agencies that are designed to support them regularly miss opportunities to protect them from being exploited.”

Moving Forward

The report recommends implementing a public health approach to modern slavery to prioritise prevention and early identification of British nationals, including reviewing legislative protections for survivors. At regional and local

levels, the report proposes implementing community awareness and resilience programmes and developing multi-agency modern slavery partnerships.

It also advises providing training to frontline professionals likely to encounter potential victims of modern slavery, specifically addressing the experience of modern slavery for British nationals.

Furthermore, it recommends integrating the approach to supporting people who have experienced modern slavery, including improved communication between services provided through the NRM and local authorities, as well as the Crown Prosecution Service in cases of criminal exploitation.

The Impact of the Climate Crisis on Modern Slavery

Posted on October 27, 2022



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Globally, endeavours have been made for the prevention and eradication of modern slavery. [Target 8.7](#) of the UN's current Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] aiming to 'end modern slavery and human trafficking' and the G7 financial minister's recent joint statement condemning the exploitation of people in global supply chains highlight this. Nonetheless, the International Labour Organisation has estimated that just under 50 million people are trapped in modern slavery in 2021. It is well established that global supply chains are hubs for the international exploitation of people. The NGO, [Anti-Slavery International](#), for instance has reported that [16 million people are currently exploited in the private sector with links to supply chains](#). Exploitation is a common feature at all stages in production, from harvesting the initial raw materials to manufacturing and shipping.

The growing challenge of the climate crisis adds an additional layer of complexity to modern slavery and human trafficking globally. Environmental degradation, loss of land, security and livelihoods are set to push millions of people into vulnerable situations that risk exploitation. Moreover, for those already at risk of exploitation, the climate crisis will only add to their vulnerability. Heat waves, earthquakes, extreme flooding and wildfires are just some of the consequences of the ongoing climate crisis. Most often the poorest members of society from low-income countries are impacted disproportionately because of the limited national disaster relief capacity of the State, and the fact that many individuals rely on optimal climate conditions to support their livelihoods. Primarily this is seen in the agricultural sector. As a direct result of this, climate catastrophes will force individuals into situations of desperation, posing an increased risk for them to become vulnerable to exploitation.

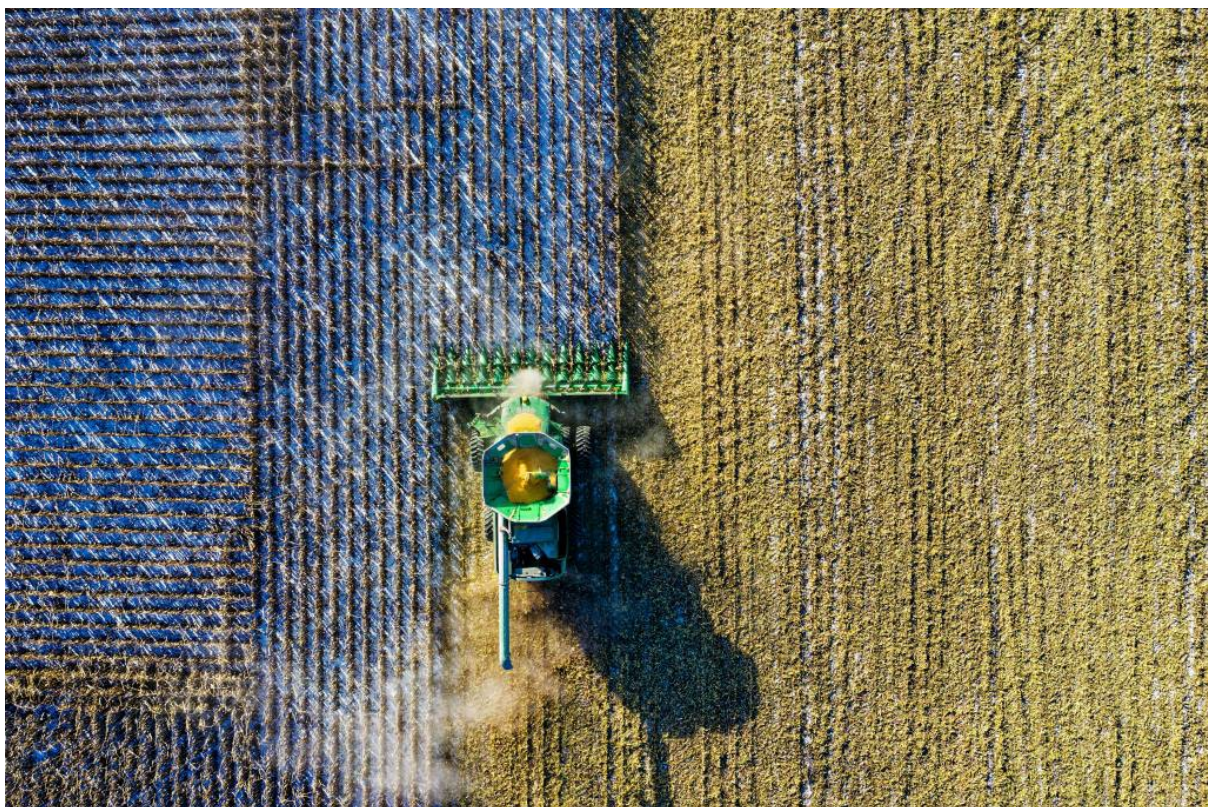


This is a universal challenge that the international community needs to address. The [joint report](#) produced by the [International Institute for Environment and Development](#) and Anti-Slavery International in 2021 cements this, finding that drought in North Ghana has [forced migration to cities](#), and upon reaching these cities, individuals were at higher risk of modern slavery, particularly debt bondage, trafficking and sexual exploitation. Moreover, the 2016 [report of the International Organisation for Migration](#) [IOM] revealed that in India, exploiters tend to recruit before the harvest season or in periods of drought as

these are often the hardest time periods for agricultural workers, ensuring advantage can be taken of them at the peak of their vulnerability.

These brief examples demonstrate that climate change is already exacerbating modern slavery, acting as a driver for vulnerability. On an international level the IOM has stressed the importance of understanding the 'hidden' consequences of the climate crisis, and that it goes far beyond extreme weather conditions. Considering this, responses to modern slavery must include the impact of climate change, particularly in areas with poor governance and insufficient national protections established for potential climate migrants.

However, a lack of corporate social responsibility, the prospect of being involved in a 150 billion dollar economy and a huge consumer demand from the West underscore a lack of willingness by exploiters to amend the appalling human rights violations in modern slavery. This is further compounded by the sophisticated recruitment strategies and desperate situations of vulnerability which foster ideal conditions to help facilitate modern slavery.



International Law prohibits modern slavery, with some forms of slavery even prosecuted as crimes against humanity in the International Criminal Court. However, clear gaps remain in protections against those subjected to modern slavery, as demonstrated by the examples and statistics outlined previously.

Enforcement of norms is unclear, and because of the various components of modern slavery, UN bodies, human rights regulators and other international systems are fragmented, leading to inefficiencies. This is further exacerbated and complicated by the challenges brought on through climate change. Although modern slavery is a feature of the SDGs for 2030, in part due to the UK government launching an international campaign to raise awareness of this issue, many parties seem uninterested and unwilling to initiate change to prevent the exploitation and commodification of people, particularly when the demand is so high in this multi-billion dollar industry.

On a more local level, the University of Hull's 2030 agenda is focused on carving out a more equitable and sustainable world, by addressing inequalities and injustices including exploitation. Moreover, the expertise of the Wilberforce Institute has been utilised by organisations to map out the risks associated with labour and human rights violations by large corporations in their supply chains. The Institute also remains at the forefront of delivering knowledge and conducting research on modern slavery within the UK. However, as Vice Chancellor Professor Dave Petley reflected on last week [in his blog for Anti-Slavery Day](#), there is still much to do.

Telling Stories of the Hidden Colonial Histories of Our Geological Institutions

Posted on October 20, 2022



Dr Munira Raji

Postdoctoral Researcher

Department of Geography, Geology & Environment

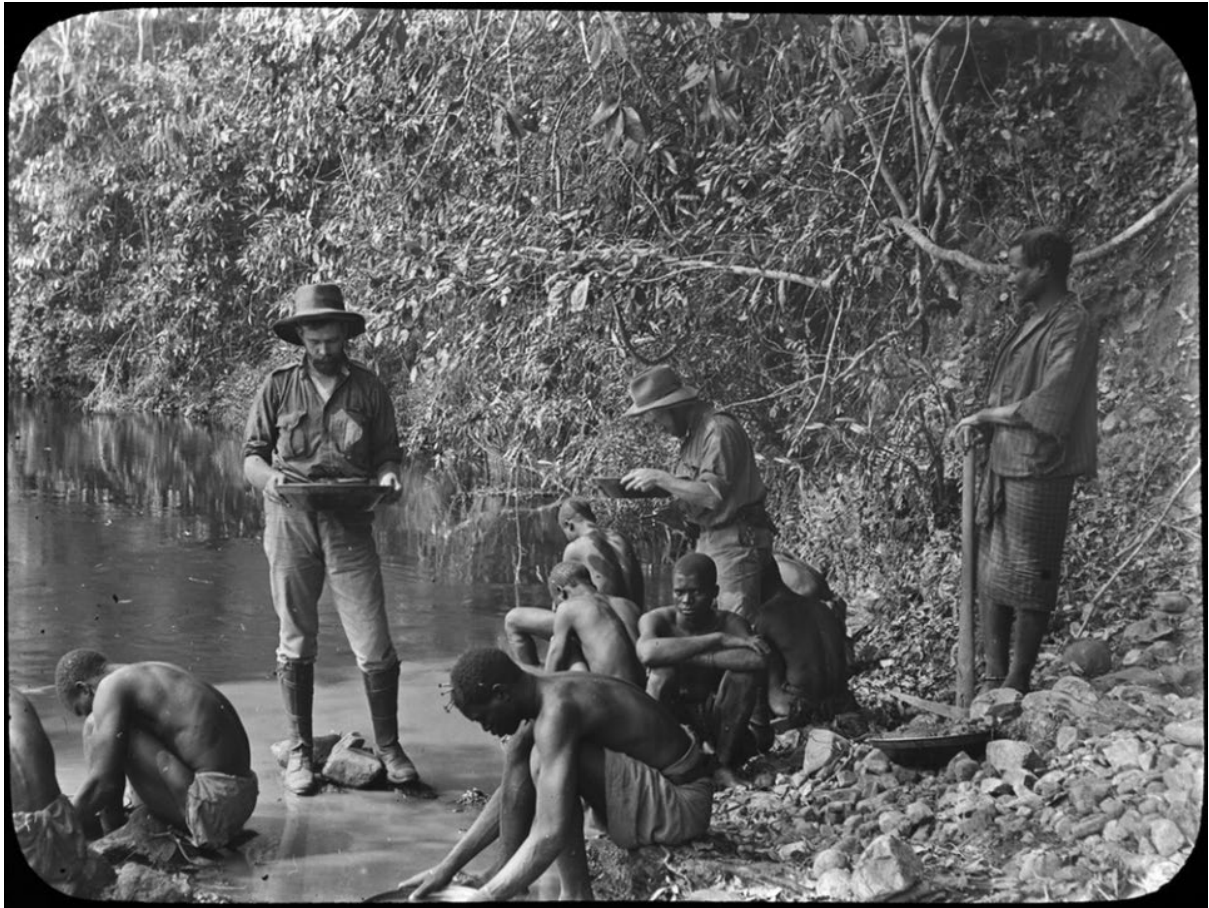
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The '[Decolonising UK Earth Science pedagogy – from the hidden histories of our geological institutions to inclusive curricula](#)' project focuses on exploring the unrecognised knowledge upon which the foundational institutions of Earth Science are built and how this legacy creates modern-day inequity in our discipline. It aims to begin dismantling this inequity by taking a decolonising Earth Science pedagogy and curriculum approach. The project brings a number of institutions together: the University of Hull (Geology and the Wilberforce Institute); the University of Leeds; Queen's University of Belfast; Sheffield Hallam

University; the British Geological Survey; the Geological Society of London; and the Royal Geographical Society.

It was during the late eighteenth century that many of the principles, theories, laws and practices that shape the (Western) academic discipline of Earth Science were established ([Sangwan, 1993](#)). Geology emerged as a specialised branch of science in the colonial state, playing an important role in locating the mineral resources that were needed to fuel growing industrial societies. The foundations of the field, and the institutions that arose during this time, benefitted from, and perpetuated, resource extraction and the knowledge it required, and were essential tools for imperial development and expansion ([Rogers et al., 2022](#)). This project will examine the integral role British geologists played in the quest for industrialisation and the expansion of British colonial rule in Africa and India from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. Exploitable deposits of coal, copper, iron, and limestone's essential smelting flux were vital for the long-term development of steamship lines, railways, and industry, for example. Mineral surveys thus became potent tools in the hands of the colonising British and ensured that geologists worked hand in hand with the most powerful organisations for colonial exploitation.



Left Image: Surveyor and locals panning for gold in alluvial workings. Right Image: Surveyor in dugout canoe. Images downloaded from the British Geological Survey, E.O. Teale photograph collection ©NERC. (Source: Special collections/ E.O. Teale photograph collection 1900s-1930s (mostly Africa))

Geologists recruited through the Colonial Office in London played a significant role in identifying which territories were resourceful. The first Colonial Mineral Surveys started in Southern and Northern Nigeria and Nyasaland between 1906-1909, and the first Colonial Geological Survey was established on the Gold Coast in 1913. At the end of the First World War, the British government promoted and intensified geological surveys in several African territories of the Empire – Uganda, Sierra Leone and Nigeria in 1918, Tanzania in 1925 and Kenya in 1933. Some geologists were heralded for their pioneering discoveries. Sir Albert Ernest Kitson (Fellow of the Geological Society of London, Principal mineral surveyor in Southern Nigeria and Director of the Gold Coast Geological Survey) is credited with the discovery of economically significant deposits of coal in Southern Nigeria and manganese, diamonds, and bauxite in the Gold Coast.



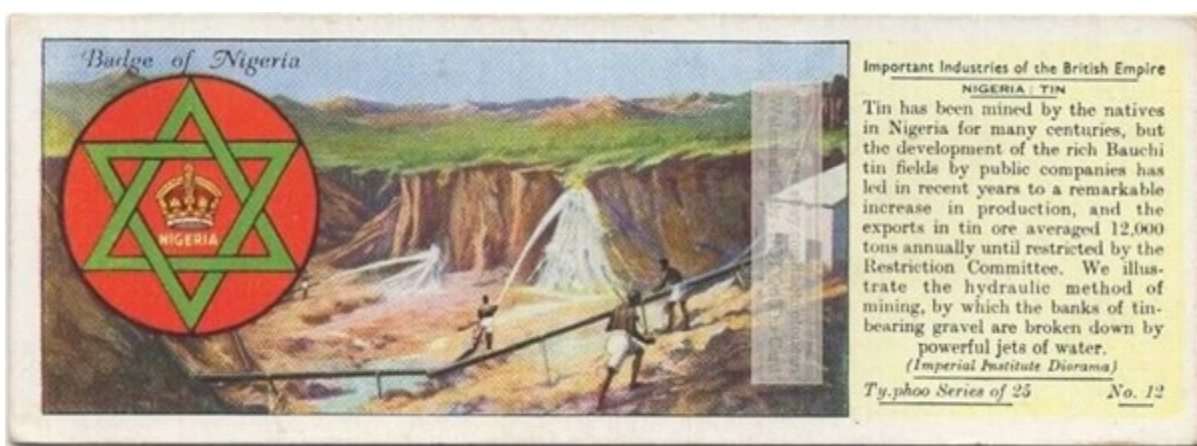
MINERAL SURVEY PARTY ON MARCH, OGUTA DISTRICT, IBOLAND, WITH LOCAL CHIEF AS GUIDE.



NIGER RIVER AT IDDA, IGABALAND. MINERAL SURVEY PARTY LEAVING FOR ONITSHA.

Illustrative photographs of Mineral Survey party with Nigerian locals. Images taken from *Southern Nigeria: Some Considerations of Its Structure, People, and Natural History* by Albert Ernest Kitson, 1913. Source: *The Geographical Journal*, January 1913, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 1913), pp. 16-34. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1778485>

Local people were used as guides, carriers, labourers, and camp guides in mineral jobs that did not pay for their geological expertise, even though our investigations have revealed some local knowledge was cited in reports and publications. However, the first Nigerian to be employed as a geologist in the Colonial Geological Surveys was Okezie, C.N. (BSc), who was not appointed until 1954.



In addition, though local use of these resources may have been extensive, opportunities for the indigenous population to benefit from them were often brought to an end under colonial rule. Following discoveries of gold (the Witwatersrand gold field) and coal (in the Transvaal and the neighbouring Natal colony), 75,500 British citizens migrated to South Africa in search of mineral wealth, and there was a rapid demand for native lands. The result was The Natives Land Act of 1913, which reserved most of the land for White ownership, and forced many Black farmers and landowners to work as wage labourers on land that had previously been under their control. In 1930, after the British geologist, Major John D. Pollet had reported the discovery of diamonds in Sierra Leone, digging for minerals by native Sierra Leoneans was made illegal.

Other colonising European powers practised the use of geology for colonial expansion in Africa and the exploitation of its mineral resources. The Hidden Histories project aims to explore these themes further, uncovering untold stories of using Earth Sciences as a tool of exploitation. It will reveal how local guides and intermediaries underpinned the activities of the colonial surveys and hopes to identify specific instances of where and how local and indigenous geological knowledge was exploited during colonial exploratory surveys and in the construction of the modern discipline of Earth Science. In addition, we aim to make explicit the exclusion of different minority groups in geological exploration and knowledge production. This will support the first part of our project – to decolonise the Earth Science curriculum as it is taught in the UK. The second part will be to develop open-access educational resources that academics can incorporate into their programmes on these themes. A project website with our findings and decolonisation resources is coming soon – watch this space!

Revisiting seafood supply chains with Waitrose

Posted on October 13, 2022



Cristina Talens

Director of Modern Slavery Risk Assessments

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For over 15 years, Waitrose has had a strategy in place for the responsible sourcing of wild-caught and farmed fish. The retailer has placed great emphasis on ensuring they sell only high quality products sourced from known and approved farms (Waitrose's supply chain information can be found on the [Ocean Disclosure Project](#) website). However, these farms (and fisheries) are located across the world and include some high-risk countries with regards to human rights abuses. Some of them have been widely reported in the press, with

headlines focussing predominantly on seafood supply chains in south-east Asia and Central and Latin America. Examples include incredibly long working hours which have led to workers allegedly consuming drugs, such as amphetamines, just to keep going.



In March 2019, Waitrose commissioned the Wilberforce Institute to map out the risks associated with labour and human rights in their seafood supply chains for prawns, scallops, mussels, squid, ray, herring milts and clams amongst others.

The Wilberforce Institute conducted a desk review and interviewed HR personnel and managers from 11 seafood companies in Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Indonesia, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Peru and Vietnam. The aim of this was to understand worker recruitment and management practices and consider the risk that modern slavery and labour exploitation could take place. The 11 sites covered a workforce of 8900 permanent workers and 1100 temporary workers employed on farms, hatcheries and feeding centres.

The interviews provided Waitrose, and their direct UK based suppliers, with an overview of the specific labour and human rights risks affecting the selected seafood supply chains. Below is a summary of the findings which were based entirely on information provided by site managers:

Gender: 95% of the workforce identified on farms and hatcheries and feeding centres were male. It was therefore considered that in the scenarios being assessed, men were at a much higher risk of human rights abuses than women. One of the reasons given for the gender disparity was that farms and hatcheries are remotely located and the tasks performed by workers are more physically demanding. It is notable that at the packhouse, the gender ratio changes with women representing 50% of the workforce. Packhouses are located nearer to local communities and the work is less physical.

Recruitment methods: Most sites appear to use labour agencies for the purpose of recruiting workers, but not for managing them.

2 out of 11 sites (12%) reported that they used labour agencies and/or subcontractors in Indonesia and Vietnam at hatcheries and farms in more remotely located areas.

5 out of 11 sites (45%) reported that labour agencies carried out recruitment, but that they directly employ the workers once they arrive on site.

Hours: It was found that there was often a lack of transparency regarding working hours. This, in turn, often translated into a lack of transparency on worker's wages as it is unclear what hourly wage is being paid and whether overtime premiums are being paid.

2 out of 11 sites (12%) had no transparency on working hours and therefore there was a high possibility that wages were being incorrectly calculated.

5 out of 11 sites (45%) reported excessive working hours and working days. On one site, workers undertook four weeks of work without a day off.

Accommodation: Hatcheries and farms often house workers. The sites are remotely located and accommodation is provided at 7 of the 11 sites (64%). These house hundreds of workers at a time and this is where the risk of forced labour is highest. Processing sites tend to be closer to the towns providing better transport links and communication with the outside world.

Loans: It is recognised by the farms that loans can be of benefit where there is no welfare structure to support the most vulnerable. The loan amount must not

be more than can be reasonably paid back, as this would create debt bondage. Loans were offered in 7 out of 11 sites (64%).

Worker voice: The effectiveness of current worker voice/feedback mechanisms at the farm sites is questionable.

6 out of 11 sites (55%) reported that they had trade unions in place: 4 of these were in Vietnam and 1 in Indonesia. To date, in Vietnam, there is only one representative organisation of workers, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), however in December 2019 the New Labour Code of Vietnam was passed, for enactment in January 2021. In order to observe Vietnam's commitments under the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and ILO Conventions, the New Labour Code recognises the right of employees to set up their own representative organisations. The [2020 ITUC Global Rights Index](#) rated Indonesia as a 5, which means there is no guarantee of worker rights in the country. There is also evidence that arbitrary arrests of union representatives were made there in 2019.

In South America, there was no trade union representation at any of the farm sites. Ecuador and Honduras were both rated as a 5, which means that there is no guarantee of worker rights, whereas Chile and Peru were only slightly better with a rating of 4, meaning there are systematic violations of rights. Nicaragua did not have a rating.

There has been considerable unrest across South America in recent years, and at one site, workers (who are housed in employer's accommodation) were not allowed to contact the 'outside world', which was considered by the farm management as a safety measure but could also be viewed as a forced labour indicator.



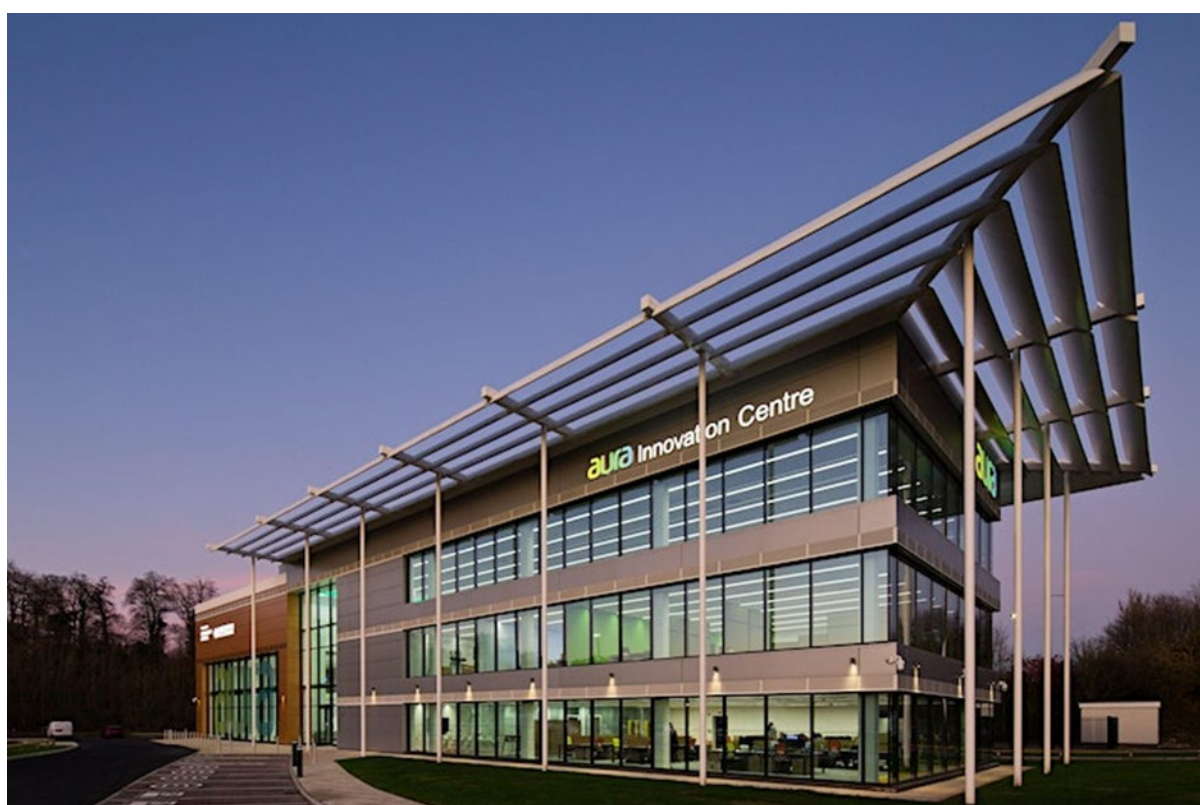
As a result of these risk assessments, Waitrose engaged direct suppliers, sharing the findings of the assessments with them and following up on the individual corrective actions taken at the farm sites. They also issued a call to action for the industry to collaborate on greater transparency within seafood supply chains as the best opportunity to tackle both illegal fishing and human rights abuses within the seafood sector. To this end, Waitrose signed the Environmental Justice Foundation's [10 point Charter for Transparency](#) in 2019. Waitrose also recognised that there was a clear need for further investigation and research into the human rights risks in seafood supply chains, especially at the hatcheries and farm sites which are often remotely located and appear to be high risk. Industry collaboration is required to conduct and fund risk assessments on sites in the highest risk countries and could be supported by experts on modern slavery such as those at the Wilberforce Institute.

Long Term Support for Survivors of Modern Slavery: The Importance of Modern Slavery Champions Within Organisations

Posted on October 6, 2022

Tuesday 11 October 2022, 08.45am onwards

Aura Innovation Centre,
Meadow Road
Kingston upon Hull
HU13 0GD



The Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull, in collaboration with the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership and national partners invite you to our upcoming free one-day conference ‘Long Term Support for Survivors of Modern Slavery – The Importance of Modern Slavery Champions Within Organisations’.

The Global Slavery Index estimates there are 40.3 million people trapped in some form of slavery around the globe today. In the UK, 12,727 people were officially identified as potential victims of modern slavery in 2021. Slavery and trafficking are crimes punishable by severe penalties, yet the problem remains and is growing. Providing long term support to victims and survivors of slavery and trafficking is vital in helping people make lasting and meaningful recoveries, to avoid further trauma and re-exploitation, and in some cases to support prosecutions against their exploiters. Access to support services for victims of slavery and trafficking in the UK is provided through the National Referral Mechanism [NRM]. People who are referred into the NRM are entitled to a range of support services such as accommodation, financial assistance, counselling, or help accessing legal advice.

However, research shows us that there is a distinct lack of understanding of what support people need once they have exited this provision or indeed why they sometimes choose to decline any offer of support in the first place.

This one-day conference at the Aura Innovation Centre brings together new empirical research findings by leading academics, stories from survivors, and experts working in policing and victim support to explore and discuss the importance of having skilled professionals in key positions within organisations who can work with victims to improve their long-term outcomes.

Over the course of the day, you will hear from our expert academic and professional speakers on their research findings and the real-world strategies they use to engage and safeguard victims with a focus on agency and identity.

You will take part in interactive workshops, working with colleagues to discuss and develop new approaches you can apply in your own organisation. The day will end with a panel session giving you an opportunity to pose questions to our speakers.

Confirmed Speakers

[Professor Simon Green](#) and [Dr Nicola O’Leary](#), University of Hull – Reclaiming the Narrative: Victims reframing victimology. Empirical research findings

[DC Colin Ward](#), Modern Slavery Unit, Manchester Police – Safeguarding victims in policing

[Richard Eastwood](#), Justice and Care, embedded in Essex Police – The role of victim navigators

[Major Kathy Betteridge](#), Director Anti Trafficking & Modern Slavery, The Salvation Army – ‘We are not for sale’, the role of the Salvation Army

[Jen Nghishitende](#), University of Hull, PHD research – “Freedom is a constant struggle”: Women’s journeys after modern slavery in the United Kingdom

About the venue

This is a free event hosted by the University of Hull in a unique and state of the art venue. The Aura Innovation Centre is located at the heart of the UK’s Energy Estuary, in one of the greenest business parks in the country – Bridgehead in Hessle, East Yorkshire. On track to receive a BREEAM Excellent rating for its design, construction, and materials sourced through local supply chains, the Innovation Centre is in the top 10% of UK new non-domestic buildings. And, with an A-rated Energy Performance Certificate the AIC outperforms most new, similar buildings.

Registration and Dietary Requirements

Click [here](#) to register for this free one-day event.

Lunch and refreshments are provided. Vegan and vegetarian options are available but please let us know in advance if you have any specific dietary requirements by emailing our interns Sophie and Megan.

sophie.blanchard@hull.ac.uk

megan.white@hull.ac.uk

Programme of Public Lectures at the Wilberforce Institute, Autumn 2022

Posted on September 29, 2022



This year we have moved our lectures to a Wednesday afternoon to avoid clashes with the University teaching schedule. We hope you will be able to join us in our lovely building at 27 High Street, Hull, to hear what our speakers have to say. However, if you are unable to make it to the Institute, specific links for those who would like to stream online will be made available as each talk approaches. These can be found by clicking on the 'Events' tab of our [blog](#).

For more details of how to sign up to stream lectures, or directions to the Institute, please contact Beki Bloomfield at R.Bloomfield@hull.ac.uk

The full programme of lectures for Autumn *and* Spring 2022-23 is available on the 'Event Programme' tab, and I will

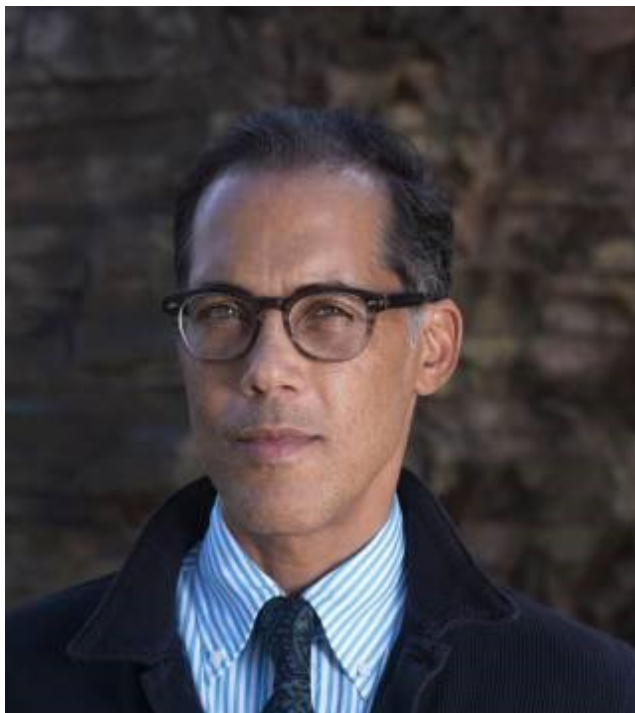
be providing more information about the Spring lectures in our annual programme early next year.

In this blog I want to draw your attention to the three public lectures – on very different topics – that we have on offer this autumn.

We begin, as usual, with our Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture, on Wednesday October 12 at 5.30pm.

For those of you who don't know, the Lecture was created in the early 1970s by Sydney Smith, a well-known local councillor who devoted a good part of his adult life to the city of Hull. Having been first elected to Hull City Council in 1923, he served almost continuously on the Council until 1942, taking on the role of Lord Mayor in 1940. When he retired from the Council some two decades

later, he was made an Honorary Alderman for life. His initial financial bequest was intended to support a four-year lecture series only, but this was converted into a perpetual endowment through a trust fund. If you are interested in knowing more about Sydney and his life you can read Mike Turner's two-part blog, [here](#) and [here](#).



The Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture now kicks off our series of annual lectures, and is the highlight of our annual lecture programme. We are lucky enough to have been able to attract some very prestigious speakers over the years, and this year is no different. Professor Matthew Smith is currently Director of the Centre for the Study of the [Legacies of British Slave-Ownership](#) at University College London, where he is also Professor of History. He worked for several years before that at the University of the West Indies.

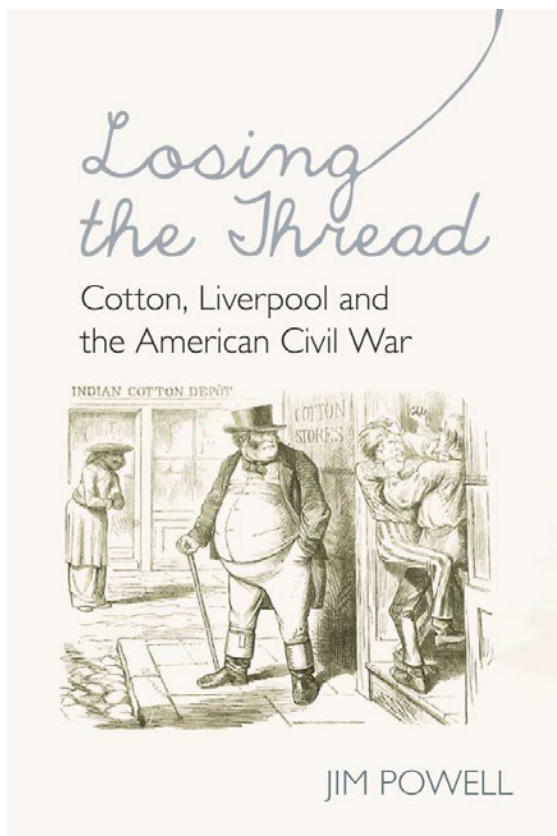
His research is pan-Caribbean in scope with a special interest in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories of Haiti and Jamaica. His publications, which are numerous and wide-ranging, include [Red and Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict and Political Change, 1934-1957 \(2009\)](#) and [Liberty, Fraternity, Exile: Haiti and Jamaica After Emancipation \(2014\)](#) Among his current research projects is a study of the representations and legacies of the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865, and a social history of Jamaican popular music since the 1950s.

Professor Smith was also involved in the ESRC/AHRC-funded project, [Caribbean Foodscapes](#), which led to him becoming the Chair of the Advisory Group for an [AHRC-funded project using historical approaches to research food systems to meet contemporary challenges](#).

In this talk, Professor Smith turns his attention and ours to the pressing matter of teaching slavery, as he discusses 'Righting History: Why Teaching Slavery Matters'. His presentation will address some of the approaches, comments, and conflicting narratives of the history of slavery and abolition that have emerged in public spaces in recent years. This will be framed by a discussion on the history of the teaching of Caribbean slavery since the foundational work of Eric Williams in 1944 and the establishment of the University of the West Indies History department in the 1950s. It will also contrast educational imperatives on teaching slavery in the Caribbean and the UK generally, and the current demands of a younger generation for new approaches to how we teach and talk about slavery in the twenty-first century.

For those of you who would like to stream, please register [here](#).

On Wednesday November 9 at 4.30pm we welcome Dr Jim Powell, Honorary Research Associate in the Department of History at the University of Liverpool, who has been ploughing a very different slavery furrow – he has recently published a study of Britain's raw cotton trade in the nineteenth century.



Taking his title and material from that book, [Losing the Thread – Cotton, Liverpool and the American Civil War](#), Dr Powell will talk about the effect of the American Civil War on Britain’s raw cotton trade and on the Liverpool cotton market. Before the civil war, America supplied 80 per cent of Britain’s cotton. In August 1861, this fell to almost zero, where it remained for four years. Despite increased supplies from elsewhere, Britain’s largest industry received only 36 per cent of the raw material it needed from 1862 to 1864.

Losing the Thread feels very timely, given the current supply constraints that the war between Russia and Ukraine has created. Dr Powell’s book establishes the facts of Britain’s raw cotton supply during the war: how much there was of it, in absolute terms and in relation to the demand, where it came from and why, how much it cost, and what impact the reduced supply had on Britain’s cotton manufacture. It includes an enquiry into the causes of the Lancashire cotton famine, which contradicts the historical consensus on the subject. Examining the impact of the civil war on Liverpool and its cotton market, the book disputes the historic portrayal of Liverpool as a solidly pro-Confederate town. It also demonstrates how reckless speculation infested and distorted the raw cotton market, and lays bare the shadowy world of the Liverpool cotton brokers, who profited hugely from the war while the rest of Lancashire starved.

For those of you who would like to stream, please register [here](#).

For our final talk of 2022, at 4.30pm on Wednesday December 7, we shift gear again, welcoming Dr Lucy Mayblin, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sheffield.



Dr Mayblin is a Political Sociologist. Her research centres on the politics of asylum, particularly in Britain, and has included explorations of the connections between Britain's colonial past and asylum policy today. In 2020 Lucy won one of the Philip Leverhulme Prizes for Sociology and from September 2021 has been working on an archival project on the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees, and a contemporary exploration of the international spread of 'crimes of solidarity' (where citizens are punished for helping irregular migrants).

Dr Mayblin is the author of [Asylum After Empire: Postcolonial Legacies in the Politics of Asylum Seeking \(2017\)](#) which won the British Sociological Association's Philip Abrams Memorial Prize in 2018, and [Impoverishment and Asylum: Social Policy as Slow Violence \(2019\)](#). She is on the advisory board of the [Connected Sociologies Curriculum Project](#).

The title of her talk is 'Criminal assistance: Understanding Crimes of Solidarity'. Over the past 20-30 years a shift has taken place in the way European, and Western states more broadly, understand asylum seeking. Asylum migration has ceased to be understood as primarily a humanitarian phenomenon, and it has come to be thought of as primarily a phenomenon of economic migration. Steps have accordingly been taken to prevent would-be asylum seekers from arriving in their territories, and to limit their rights if they do manage to arrive. This has inevitably led to the illegalisation of movement,

particularly the movement of people who are seeking sanctuary. But the inhospitable actions of states have been countered by moves by a diverse range of citizens and other residents to help 'irregular' migrants. For example, by saving them from drowning in the sea, perishing in mountains or deserts, offering them shelter, food, showers, lifts or other acts of support such as documenting border violence. In response, states are increasingly seeking to criminalise these helpers, particularly by casting them as smugglers. This talk will discuss the emergence of what have been dubbed 'crimes of solidarity', how we can understand this phenomenon, and where the research gaps are in scholarly work on this topic.

For those of you who would like to stream, please register [here](#).

I hope I have whetted your appetite for intellectual stimulation, but if there is anything else you would like to know please get in touch with me at Judith.Spicksley@hull.ac.uk or Beki at the email address above. We look forward to welcoming you in person or online.

‘Forced to Flee: Stories from Hull Refugees’ Exhibition’; Monday 20 June to Sunday 17th July

Posted on June 21, 2022



Isabel Arce Zelada

PhD student, Living with the Consequences of Slavery Cluster

Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

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As well as a [programme of events](#) this week, the University of Hull is hosting an [exhibition of refugee stories](#) in the Art Gallery. This is Isabel's.

My so-called *interest* in the asylum courts in the UK was not born in this country. It was born in the waiting areas of Migrationsverket in Sweden where my mother, my grandmother and I used to sit and wait. Wait for my grandmother's name to be called, wait for the interpreter to come, wait while looking at the people around us who had come from all parts of the world only to be stuck here, with us. Migrationsverket dealt with all the asylum concerns and migration troubles that you might have encountered yourself in Sweden.

They were the ones that at the end of my grandmother's asylum process told her she was going to be put on a plane and removed to Cuba where she would inevitably be branded as a traitor for overstaying her visa and potentially become a political prisoner. My grandmother simply said that if she was put on a plane she would jump out of it, to which the horrified employee of Migrationsverket told her not to threaten them. She calmly said that this was just a fact, not a threat.

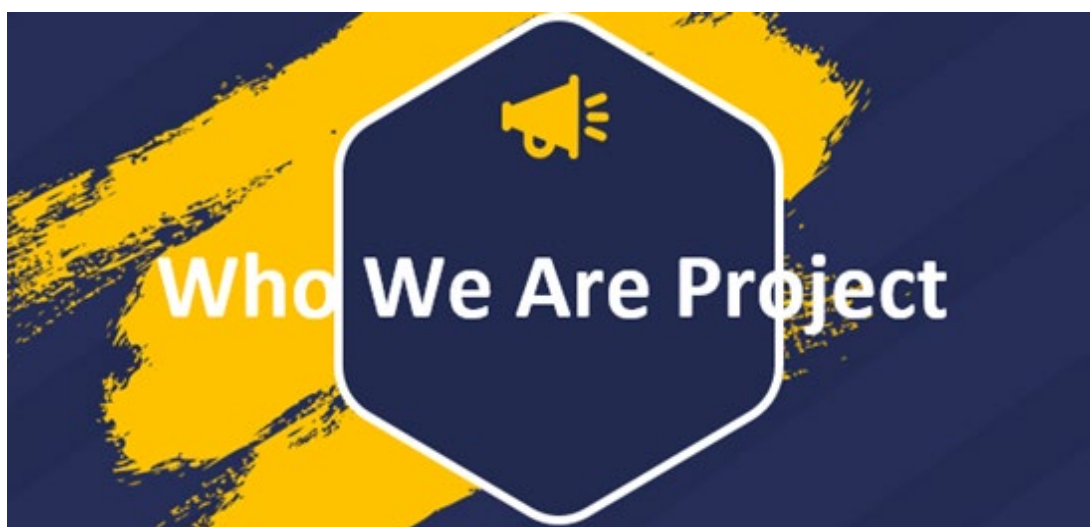


Description from [The Ones We Love Shop](#): 'The Ones We Love Are Enemies Of The State, this line [is] from Antigone as translated by Seamus Heaney [and] is accompanied by an original line drawing by Cult Days. The Alicorn is a spear headed beast of eastern myths, not the delicate creature of [E]uropean stories. Our love[d] ones are targeted by the state, whether for their race, religion,

ethnic origin, or gender expression. We love them and this [is] a mascot for all the fights required to keep loving them.'

When approaching my PhD project I was very aware that while I had experience of an asylum process I did not have personal experience of the asylum process in the UK, which meant that I needed experts in this area. My next dilemma was how to conduct research in a way that would not reproduce the violence and tediousness of the several interviews that people are put through by our immigration authorities. Through the [Critical Border Studies](#) direction towards art, poetry, music and other creative methods to talk about the experiences of migration I started to develop what would result in 11 weeks of workshops with some of the most insightful and funny artists I have ever met. We discussed abstract concepts of home, justice, embodiment, but also of specific experiences with the UK asylum process, finding common ground in the ways that the courts and people had treated us.

One of the themes that was uncovered was the assertion that each person there had *decided* to leave. The threats were there, they were going to die if they did not leave – but nevertheless they had to see how their families were going to survive, keep their kids entertained and tend to their deteriorating mental health until they could find a semi-permanent place to rest their heads. In between recounting hard times there was an ever present humor, a way to keep spirits high in the cruelest environments, a humor that often derailed me and took me places that uplifted me too.



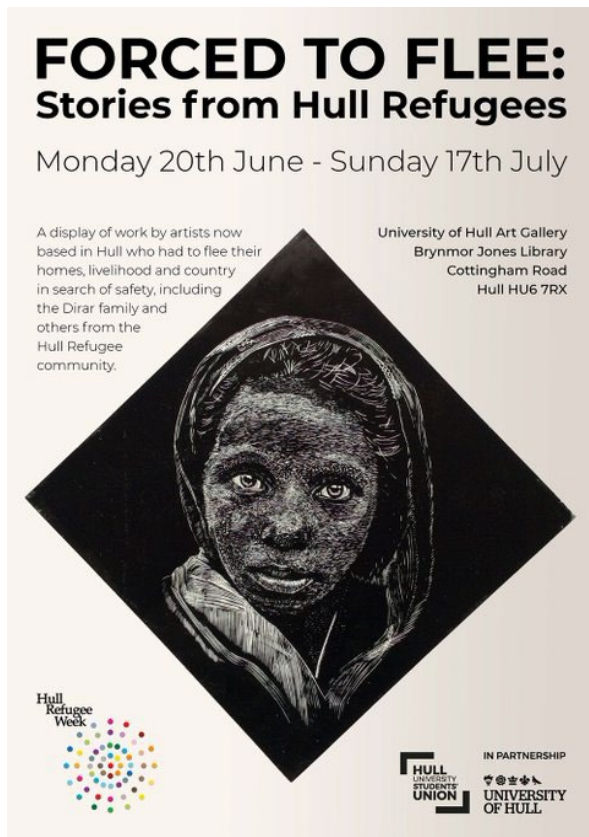
I titled the project *Who We Are* as an attempt to build a space in which we could discuss personal experiences but also where we could create a different kind of

belonging – belonging to each other, in brief moments of time. It was in part inspired by Julie Otsuka's book [The Buddha in the Attic](#) which talks about the experiences of Japanese women migrating to the US as a collective in which each of the experiences is told as a community, highlighting the differences and similarities in their experiences. We were by no means a community from the get-go, but we did have a starting point that unites us: *Who We Are* is intended not only to answer the questions about our migratory existences but also to create a *We* where there is so much division.

In [The Ungrateful Refugee](#) by Dina Nayeri, she talks about the ways in which our stories are used and how this unites our experiences:

Our stories were drumming with power. Other people's memories transported us out of our places of exile, to rich, vibrant lands and to home. They reminded us of the long, unknowable road. We couldn't see yet, fresh from our escape, but other sharp turns lay ahead. We had created our life's great story; next would come the waiting time, camp, where we would tell it. Then struggle for asylum, when we would craft it. Then assimilation into new lives, when we would perform it for the entertainment of the native-born and finally, maybe in our old age, we would return to it, face it without frenzy: a repatriation. (p.6-7)

Only one of the artists already had her own shop and [social media](#) set up. Some had great enthusiasm and drive, approaching the canvases and instruments with confidence, others were cautious, thinking of the prices of the canvases and paint, thinking carefully about what to paint on them. The project was always designed to have a book or exhibition at the end of it, as a way to have something substantial from our creativeness and production in the project. When the University was looking for artists for an exhibition during [Hull Refugee Week](#) it was a great opportunity for us to showcase what we had created and cement the fact that we were all artists in our own right.



To be part of this collective has been one of the great joys in my research and I hope we find ways to keep it alive after this exhibition. If you would want to hear our stories and hear the insightful reflections from people who know about what it is like to be human in the most extreme moral dilemmas come along to this [Exhibition at the Brynmor Jones Library](#). Although not part of the *Who We Are* project, you can also [meet the Dirar family](#) who are exhibiting their fantastic interactive artworks that we had the pleasure of [housing at the Wilberforce Institute in 2018](#).

The Windrush Generation: Lord Kitchener, Multiculturalism & the Windrush Scandal

Posted on June 20, 2022



Dr Cassandra Goptar

Postdoctoral Research Assistant

Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

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Dr Goptar hails from Trinidad and Tobago. Her research focuses on stories of the enslaved and exploring the links between British organisations and historical slavery. In advance of Windrush Day 2022 (Wednesday June 22) she talks about what the anniversary evokes for her.

The Windrush generation refers to persons from Caribbean islands such as Trinidad and Jamaica who arrived in the UK between 1948 and 1971. Aptly termed for the MV *Empire Windrush* that brought 492 passengers to a post-war UK on 22 June 1948, the arrival of the Windrush generation is commemorated on Windrush Day, observed on 22 June.



28th March 1954: The British liner 'Empire Windrush' at port. (Photo by Douglas Miller/Keystone/Getty Images)

As a Trinidadian interdisciplinary researcher who recently moved to the UK in 2019, Windrush Day evokes various feelings for me both personally and professionally. The imagery of 'King of Calypso' Lord Kitchener singing his impromptu 'London is the place for me' on Pathé News as he disembarked the *Windrush* and the multiculturalism that has become embedded in parts of contemporary UK society, instill a sense of familiarity, homeliness, and connection with my 'Trini to d bone' identity.

Lord Kitchener singing 'London is the Place for me'. Original Source: British Pathé

However, in the same breath I can also talk about the colour bars and institutional racism West Indians fought against and continue to fight to overcome here in the UK. Case in point: the Windrush Scandal which broke in late 2017. This scandal involved cases of deportation and detention amongst other life-altering restrictions for the Windrush generation and their descendants.

The 2020 [Windrush Lessons Learned Review](#) requested by the then Home Secretary concluded:

Members of the Windrush generation and their children have been poorly served by this country. They had every right to be here and should never have been caught in the immigration net. The many stories of injustice and hardship are heartbreaking, with jobs lost, lives uprooted and untold damage done to so many individuals and families.

Importantly, it went on to state ‘that what happened to those affected by the Windrush scandal was foreseeable and avoidable... over time those in power forgot about them and their circumstances’.



The discriminatory practices at the highest levels of society in the UK highlights, for one thing, the need for further research and educational output resources on the ever-permeating topic of Britain's legacy of colonialism. Aligned with this need, wider projects on the Caribbean's built environment, stories of the enslaved and enslavers from Hull are currently in the works at the Wilberforce Institute. Efforts are also being made to collaborate with networks in the West Indies to promote cultural and knowledge exchange in the form of digital output resources for schools in both Hull and the Caribbean.

Windrush Day is one that should be honoured for heralding the arrival of almost 250,000 West Indians in the decade following the *Empire Windrush*. However, it also serves as a poignant reminder of the struggles that the Windrush generation faced in their new lives in the UK and the persistent barriers they and their families still encounter today.

For more information on the 2020 independent report on the Windrush Scandal, see the [Windrush Lessons Learned Review](#).

Counting The Cost of Child Exploitation

Posted on June 16, 2022



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This blog takes a look at the recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) publication of statistics for child victims of modern slavery in the UK. This is the first publication of its kind by the ONS and draws on data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), Police Recorded Crime (PRC), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Department for Education's Children in Need Census (CINC), The Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline, amongst other organisations. This ONS [publication](#) seeks to provide a deeper insight into the incidences of child victims of modern slavery in the UK.

There is no one data source that accurately quantifies the number of child victims in the UK. The NRM currently provides the best measure of potential victims, although it is known to be an [undercount](#). In this blog we will look at the

different sources that support the ONS publication, identify strengths and weaknesses of this type of data collection and aim to provide a summary of the data within it.

How many potential victims have been identified?

In 2021, 5,468 potential child victims were referred into the [NRM](#). This shows a 9% increase from the previous year when 5,028 potential child victims were referred. The number of potential child victims of modern slavery in the UK has increased every year since the NRM was established in 2009. However, it can be argued that the increased number of potential victims being referred is not just because there are more victims but because there is increasing awareness and training amongst first responders.

Whilst the numbers went up for the NRM, the number of potential child victims of modern slavery identified by the Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline decreased drastically. In 2021, the helpline received information about 194 potential child victims of modern slavery, which came from calls, web forms, and app entries. This shows a 43% decrease from the previous year when there were 340 potential victims, although the reasons for this are as yet unclear.

Figure 1: Comparison of PRC and NRM figures, April 2016 – March 2021

| Year | Police Recorded Crime child victims of modern slavery | Year | National Referral Mechanism child victims of modern slavery |
|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Apr 2016 to Mar 2017 | 287 | Jan 2017 to Dec 2017 | 2,114 |
| Apr 2017 to Mar 2018 | 679 | Jan 2018 to Dec 2018 | 3,129 |
| Apr 2018 to Mar 2019 | 1,327 | Jan 2019 to Dec 2019 | 4,554 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| Apr 2019 to Mar 2020 | 2,547 | Jan 2020 to Dec 2020 | 5,028 |
| Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 | 3,239 | Jan 2021 to Dec 2021 | 5,468 |

When we compare the PRC statistics on child victims of modern slavery and the NRM figures in each 12-month period we observe there is a significant difference (Figure 1). This difference highlights a worrying gap in the amount of identified cases of potential child exploitation and the policing response to investigating these potential crimes.

What are the ages of the victims?

Figure 2: Age of child victims, 2017-2021

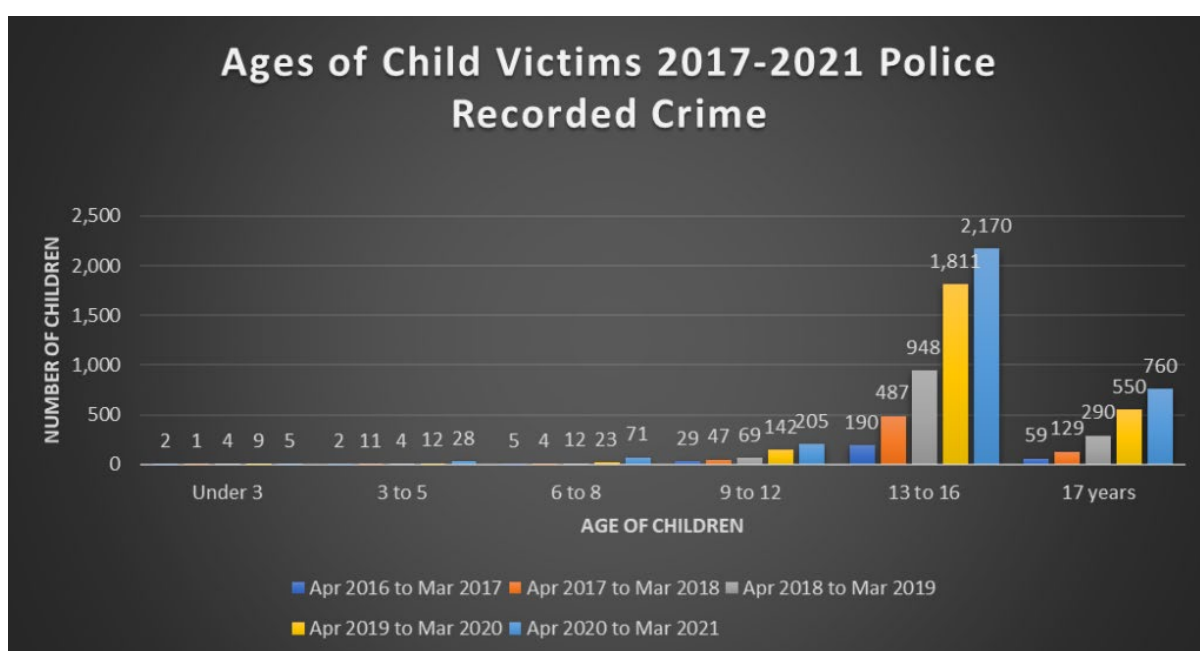


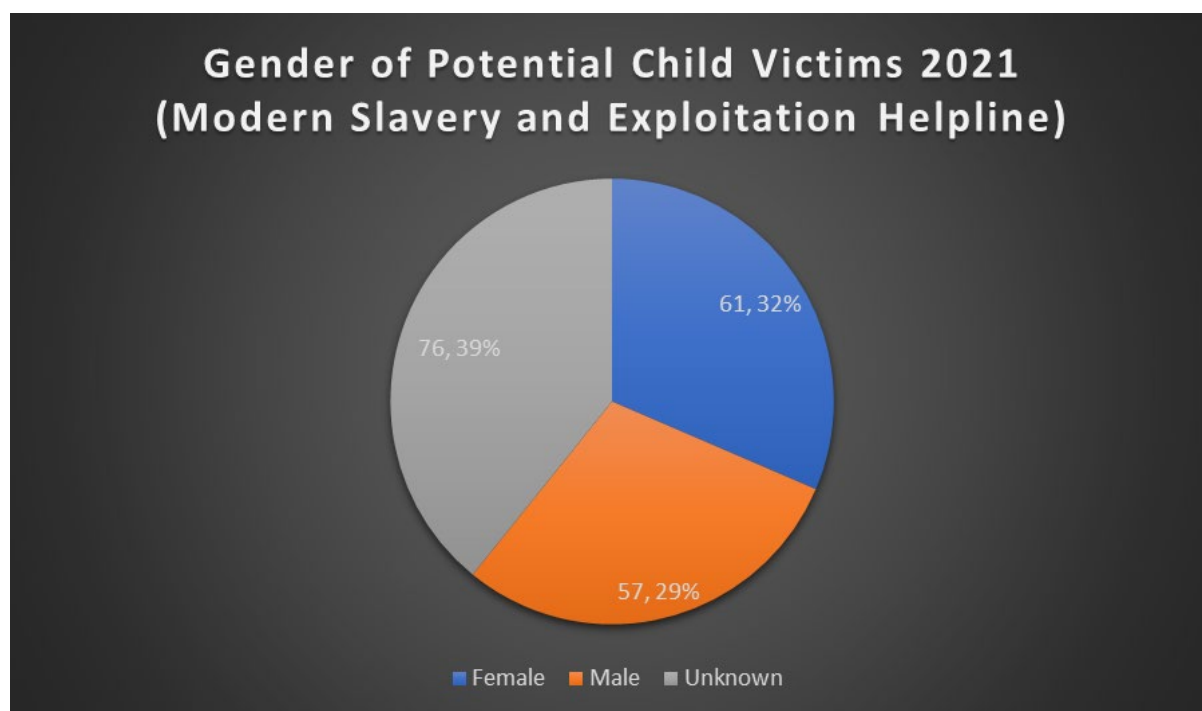
Figure 2 shows the ages of child victims from PRC in England and Wales. The largest age group throughout years 2017 to 2021 are 13- to 16-year-olds. The statistics from April 2018 to March 2019 and April 2019 to March 2020 show the number of victims who were aged 13 to 16 almost doubled.

According to the NRM data for the year ending December 2021, over four-fifths, (82%) of the children who received a positive reasonable grounds decision from the NRM were aged 15 to 17 years old. This could simply be because more 15- to

17-year-olds are referred into the NRM and can be backed up by the PCR graph above which shows 13 to 17-year-olds being the most reported ages.

What are the genders of the victims?

Figure 3: Gender of potential child victims, 2021



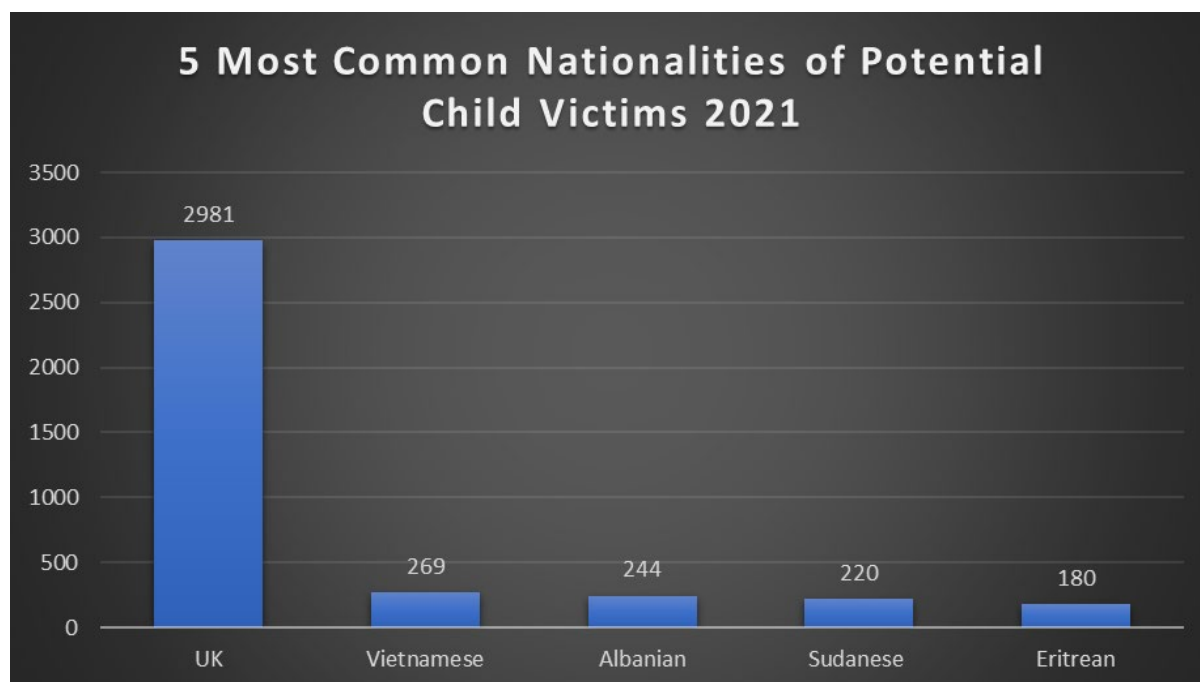
According to the Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline statistics, the most common gender of the 194 potential child victims of modern slavery reported to the helpline in 2021 were female (32%), even though the category of unknown genders is higher than both male and female victims (Figure 3). In contrast, the NRM 2021 end of year statistics appear to show that there were 4,314 male and 1,145 female potential child victims, a total of 5,459, leaving 9 potential child victims of unknown gender. These two contrasting data sets make it difficult to produce any useful overview of the gender of children who are both identified and referred into the NRM and of those that fall outside the scope of the NRM statistics. The ONS publication does not make specific reference to an overview of gender in this way because of this challenge. This is an obvious weakness of collecting and sharing data from multiple different data sets.

In the NRM, of those children who received a positive reasonable grounds decision in 2021, 79% were male and 21% were female.

What are the nationalities of the victims?

When looking at the NRM statistics for the nationalities of the potential child victims, UK nationals are the most commonly identified at 2,981. The five most common nationalities of child victims reflect the [five most common nationalities of adult victims](#), if in a slightly different order (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The five most common nationalities of potential child victims, 2021



What types of exploitation were reported?

The main types of exploitation which have been reported through all organisations have been criminal exploitation (county lines are a significant factor here, especially for males) and sexual exploitation. In the NRM data set males were most likely to have experienced criminal exploitation (62%) and for females it is sexual exploitation (42%).

The Independent Child Trafficking Guardians service (ICTGS) showed that there were 27% more referrals in 2020 than in the previous year (555 in 2020 from 437 in 2019). From the data on exploitation types from October 2018 to December 2019, 379 males and 134 females were referred to ICTGS with a higher number of males who have been criminally exploited (216) than females (17).

Conclusion

Overall, the data that are used and reported within this publication from the ONS are not directly comparable due to the different time periods and the variable recording measures used by each organisation. Some data are separated and cannot be combined and compared with other statistics – not all jurisdictions of the UK are covered by some of the data sources, for example. However, despite the weaknesses and limitations that this report shows, it is a step in the right direction and does provide a somewhat better understanding of the extent of modern slavery in the UK.

In addition, this publication could serve as a useful foundation for gathering data from a much broader set of sources that lay outside the NRM statistics in the future. This would help to give us a far more accurate picture of how many children are being identified as being at risk of exploitation and not just those exclusively referred into the NRM.

The screenshot shows the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Business, industry and trade, Economy, Employment and labour market, People, population and community, and Taking part in a survey?. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Search for a keyword(s) or time series ID'. A purple banner for 'census 2021' is visible. The main content area has a blue background and features the title 'Child victims of modern slavery in the UK: March 2022'. Below the title, there is a sub-header 'The hidden nature of modern slavery makes measuring victim numbers difficult. We have brought together data sources on child victims in the UK from a range of organisations to explore the issue.' and a button that says 'This is the latest release. View previous releases'. At the bottom of the main content area, there are three columns of information: 'Contact: Meghan Ekin', 'Release date: 29 March 2022', and 'Next release: To be announced'. Below the main content area, there is a 'Table of contents' section with a list of 11 items, and a box with 'Print this statistical bulletin' and 'Download as PDF' options.

Award in Memory of Paola Monzini

Posted on June 9, 2022

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Paola Monzini

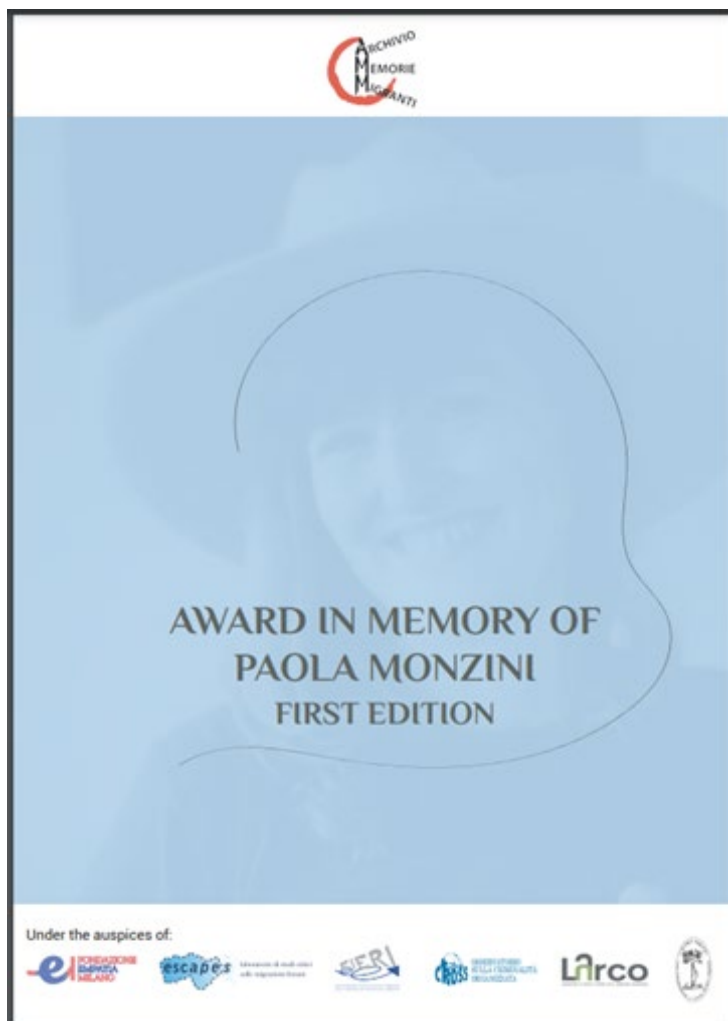
[Paola Monzini](#) ((1965-2017) was an incredibly talented and inspirational woman on many fronts. She was a greatly respected and world acclaimed sociologist who started her working life at the Italian Government's Anti-Mafia Investigation Directorate (DIA *Direzione Investigativa Antimafia*).

Her strategic thinking and negotiating skills were recognised at international level and she became one of the leading experts of the Global Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings at the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in Italy. She was also one of the main authors of the UN Protocol *Against Trafficking and Smuggling of Human Beings*, also known as The Palermo Protocol. This regulatory framework was used to develop national legislation across Europe and more recently in the UK through the

Modern Slavery Act. During her years at UNICRI, Paola developed and implemented numerous multinational and bilateral intergovernmental projects across Europe, Africa and Asia with the aim of improving cooperation to facilitate police intervention, prosecution of criminals, and especially the protection of victims of trafficking and smuggling. She was a passionate advocate for the human rights of migrants and refugees in Italy. In 2016 she was one of the first researchers to interview Syrian men and women arriving into Italy, trying to identify the mechanics of exploitation for organised criminal networks in an attempt to protect refugees during their journeys to Europe.

As a measure of her intellectual and scientific contribution to the study of organized crime, human trafficking and global migration, an international award has been created in Paola Monzini's honour by the friends, family and colleagues of this outstanding researcher. The 'Paola Monzini's Award', launched this year in her memory, will reward the most deserving students and researchers who, over the last 5 years – from 2017 to 2022 – have worked on a Master's thesis or a PhD thesis on these topics in an Italian university or in a foreign university (languages accepted: Italian and English).

Special appreciation will be given to studies and research in the field of human, historical, political and social sciences that focus on migration, human mobility and citizenship policies, privileging a gender and intersectional perspective primarily via qualitative research methods – such as narrative approach, biographical analysis – with a particular focus on the stories of individuals involved in the subject investigated, including with the support of audio-visual tools. Priority topics will include trafficking in human beings, sex work and other forms of exploitation of migrants in the legal and illegal economy, violence and discrimination against migrant and refugee women, forced migration and migrants' journeys particularly across the Mediterranean Sea.



Two cash prizes will be awarded as follows: 1.000 Euros for the best Master's thesis discussed in an Italian or in a foreign university in the last 5 years (starting from the academic year 2017-2018); 2.000 Euros for the best Doctoral thesis (PhD) discussed in an Italian or foreign university in the last 5 years (starting from the academic year 2017-2018). The funds to support the award will be raised through a crowdfunding campaign. Should the funds raised for this award exceed the total amount for the two scholarships, the Scientific Committee reserves the right to either set up a larger number of awards for the current year or to set aside the surplus funds for the awarding of prizes in the following years.

Participants must send their work by 30 July 2022 in PDF format by e-mail to premiopaolamonzini@gmail.com specifying that the work compete for the 'Paola Monzini's Award'. The work, countersigned with the name and surname of the author, must be accompanied by relevant documentation containing the following information:

- Identification of the author (name and surname, telephone numbers, e-mail) and date;
- Domicile and number of identity card or passport or other official identification document;
- Declaration of the original nature of the work submitted, including the specification that the work is not a copy or a total or partial modification of the author's or other authors' work;
- Declaration of the full ownership of the work's rights;
- Declaration of acceptance of all the conditions established by the 'Paola Monzini's Award'.

The Scientific Committee in charge of assessing the works and awarding the prizes, through its Coordinator, will keep participants informed and will communicate the results of the assessment by e-mail and through updates published on the web page dedicated to Paola Monzini, paolamonzini.tumblr.com, the website and social channels of the association AMM – [Archivio delle Memorie Migranti](#) (Archive of Migrants' Memories) as well as the information channels of the associations and organizations that support this award. The submission of the work in itself guarantees the commitment of the author not to withdraw it from the competition.

The recipients of the award will be decided by the Scientific Committee. The winners will be announced and the prizes awarded at a public ceremony to be held by 30 October 2022.

Scientific Committee:

Monica Massari (University of Milan)

Coordinator, Paula Adam (Agència de Qualitat i Avaluació Sanitàries de Catalunya)

Teresa Albano (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe-OSCE)

Luca Ciabbarri (Escapes-University of Milan)

Rino Coluccello (Coventry University)

Nando dalla Chiesa (University of Milan)

Wilberforce Institute Blog Archive

Gianluca Gatta (AMM – Archive of Migrants’ Memories)

Ombretta Ingrassi (University of Milan)

Giovanni Melillo (National Anti-Mafia and Counter-terrorism Directorate-DNAA)

Petra Mezzetti (Fondazione Empatia Milano-FEM)

Letizia Paoli (University of Leuven)

Ferruccio Pastore (Forum Internazionale ed Europeo di Ricerche sull’Immigrazione-FIERI. International Forum for International and European Research on Migration-FIERI)

Vincenzo Ruggiero (Middlesex University)

Emilio Santoro (University of Florence)

Giulio Sapelli (University of Milan)

Rocco Sciarrone (University of Turin)

Cristina Talens (University of Hull)

Collecting qualitative data during the Covid-19 pandemic: Reflections from the field

Posted on June 2, 2022



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My research aims to understand women's journeys after experiencing 'modern slavery' in the UK. Though 'modern slavery' is [understood](#) as an umbrella term encompassing various forms of exploitation, including human trafficking,

slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour, the term is highly contested, and so in my writing, I have decided to place inverted commas around it.

In October 2021, I began collecting data through semi-structured interviews with women affected by 'modern slavery' and practitioners working in the field across the UK. Because there were still high levels of Covid-19 infection, I offered the women I interviewed the choice to talk online or in person. In this blog, I will share some reflections on my experiences of conducting interviews online, and their benefits and drawbacks. The names of the women involved have been changed.



Out of the nineteen women I interviewed, only five decided to be interviewed in person, while fourteen chose [Zoom](#). As soon as I realised that online interviews were the preferred method, I began asking the women why they had chosen to meet on Zoom rather than in person.

Zoom has a reputation as a '[subtly dehumanising technology](#)' with the potential to undermine the trust that is necessary to [building rapport](#). However, in general I did not find it difficult to warm to the women, especially when they learned that I am a mother – a good number of my interviewees were mothers.

When asked why they had chosen Zoom, the first prominent reason the women gave for preferring it was the ability to express themselves freely. Ginger said:

It was more convenient, and I could be free to speak my mind, in my own space where I know that no one can hear me. I felt free to speak with you and also be vulnerable in my telling you of everything that happened.

Naomi highlighted a potentially overlooked aspect – the problem of anxiety.

I prefer zoom. No travelling and it depends on the area anyway where I'm going. I'm a very very quiet person on a normal day so when I'm around people that I don't know or I'm not used to I'm very very uncomfortable. I have anxiety so I'm always conscious when I'm outside.

When participants in such intimate research feel safe to speak, the interview process becomes much easier for both parties and better for collecting quality data. Remote interviews may then be the solution for those who have access to them and consent to use them.

Some women also informed me that the screen provided an essential emotional shield. Selma, for instance, said she would not say she particularly preferred either online or face-to-face interviews. However, in hindsight, she said, 'it was better seeing me upset over the cam than physically.'

Other women also saw online discussions as less embarrassing and raised other issues related to the screen image. Paula had this to say:

online is fine but the travel ... is only because my leg is bad, I think for me and that the things probably we discussed I will find it harder to discuss face-to-face because you wouldn't want to break down and online kind of like allows me to speak. That's my own personal opinion. To speak quite bluntly about a lot of things let's say if we were sitting face-to-face I would start watching your body language and say maybe I'm making her uncomfortable maybe I'm not you know those kinds of things.

Most women indicated that because they could not see most of my body, they could not see my body language. This was important because sometimes body language can act as a disincentive. Similar to Paula, Ruby said:

No hassle of travelling and to be frank, I would not be as open to speaking with you as I am now. I would have been looking at your body language to see if I am making you uncomfortable and then decide based on that whether or not I should reveal more.



As the researcher, I also found distance in the screen as I fought back tears at several points during the interview. But at the same time, I felt powerless. Though I appreciate that when some women become emotional, they want to be on their own to deal with this, in person, I could have offered a tissue or a drink of water.

At the same time, the distance provided by the screen can be a problem. Travelling away from an interview's location can help the interviewer deal with the emotions they accumulated from the interview by putting a physical distance between themselves and its location. However, this was not possible with Zoom. You can press a button or close your laptop once you say goodbye, but the interview stays with you. It lingers.

In addition, I was at a disadvantage in not seeing much body language. Although I could note facial expressions, long pauses, laughter, tears, and sighs, I could not see what the women were doing with their hands and found it hard to notice when they shifted in their seats. Without these important non-verbal cues, I found it difficult to assess their level of discomfort and deliver my duty of care towards them.

In one case, all body language, including facial expressions, was eliminated. I had given all the women the option to keep their camera off during the interview, but fortunately, only one woman decided to do this. Nonetheless, her ability to see me while I could not see her was an interesting experience. Out of curiosity, I asked her at the end why she did not feel comfortable having her camera on; she said, 'I don't know you', which was fair enough.

For those who chose Zoom, the convenience of an online interview was a key factor, and this has been confirmed by other [studies](#). Tiwa indicated that *'it's only because of my busy schedule. I can only afford to do Zoom at the moment, which made the interview faster rather than waiting for a day that I'll be free'*. Others pointed out that they were glad that they did not have to travel to meet me, and spending less was also cited, even though I had informed them that I would be responsible for any costs they would incur. I believe this revealed some empathy for my research costs. I have to say here that I also appreciated the convenience that came with online interviews for me, which saved me time and money. Most importantly, I could complete my research diary immediately after the interview while the conversation was still fresh in my mind.

It was interesting that safety, including contracting Covid-19, was the least cited reason. Only one woman glossed over the issue. One other mentioned safety and said: *'You stay in Hull, will it be easy for you and besides, I haven't met you before so for safety reasons as well.'*

It is, however, also important to note that not everyone prefers Zoom, as Naita's response reveals:

I'm not sure... I would have liked to meet face-to-face, but it was convenient that I could fit the zoom meeting into my schedule also. So, I normally like to meet face-to-face, but it all depends how busy I am.

Despite slight connectivity problems with one or two interviews, my experience of Zoom interviewing overall has been positive. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that there are some drawbacks and while online interviews seem promising and will probably gain more prominence moving forward, we should keep in mind the inequalities that Covid-19 has [laid bare](#) across the world, at individual and government levels. Communities with little or no access to computer technology will, in this online world, be excluded from research. This should remind us that when able to do so, the physical field is still the best place to be, even if it means spending more hours travelling and spending more money to hold interviews to ensure that no one is left out.



As researchers, whenever possible, may we always choose inclusion over convenience. Let us hike deserts, if we must, to reach the rarely researched, technologically out of reach communities. Photo by author.

The Changing Relevance of Empire

Posted on May 26, 2022



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Today we reproduce [Professor Trevor Burnard's blog for the Institute of Historical Research](#), written as he stands down from his position as editor of the Empire to 1783 section of the [Bibliography of British and Irish History](#).

It might be thought that the British Empire and imperialism as a topic of historical inquiry have always been subjects of great fascination for scholars and students of British history. Britain was an imperial nation from the early seventeenth century, with settlement in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. By the eighteenth-century, as Britain embarked upon a series of generally successful wars against France about who controlled the New World and South Asia (the American Revolution being the major exception to continued British imperial success), matters imperial were discussed in virtually every issue of the newspapers that proliferated in the nation and imperial plans were central to the geopolitics of Britain's quest to become powerful in the world. In the

nineteenth century, of course, British global power was signified by the many places of the map that were marked 'red' as belonging to the British nation. Imperialism continued into the twentieth century with both world wars being, as Richard Overy argues for World War II, imperial conflicts.

Nevertheless, the practice of imperial history by professional historians has ebbed and flowed in importance and significance over time, according to fashion and to contemporary politics. As little as a generation ago, imperial history was decidedly out of fashion. Indeed, as Pat Griffin, a leading historian of the American Revolution, noted in an appreciation of the most important mid-twentieth century imperial historian of early America, Lawrence Henry Gipson (1880-1971), whose magnum opus was a massive fifteen-volume history of the British Empire in the Americas before the American Revolution, imperialism was effectively a left-behind approach to history when Gipson finished writing imperial history in the 1960s. When Gipson died in 1971, his approach, marked by an indifference to history from below, an incessant and occasionally grating Anglophilia at odds with a more diverse America, and his deliberately pedestrian prose (chosen out of distaste for the florid over-romanticism of a generation of amateur historians writing at the turn of the twentieth century) was out of step with a Vietnam-era world of decolonization and anti-imperialism. Ironically, perhaps, Griffin wrote this review of Gipson and the end of imperial history in 2003, the year that I began as editor for the Empire and the Commonwealth before 1783 section of the Bibliography of British and Irish History [BBIH].

The same derision towards imperialism was less apparent in British historiography of the 1970s and 1980s but it was still there. It was Europe that was the thing to concentrate upon, after Britain joined the European Economic Community in 1974. The New Zealand historian, J.G.A. Pocock, lamented how 'within very recent memory, the English have been increasingly willing to declare that neither empire nor commonwealth ever meant much in their consciousness, and that they were at heart Europeans all the time.' (J.G.A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject,' *Journal of Modern History*, 47 (1975), 601-21).

Pocock's former colleague in New Zealand, D.K. Fieldhouse, then at Cambridge, was even more despondent about the future of imperial history at this time. He expressed despair over the fragmented state of the field, imploring, 'can the fragments of the old history be put together again into new patterns which are intellectually respectable?' He feared that imperial history might be 'condemned

to share the midden of discredited academic subjects with, say, astrology or phrenology.’ (D.K. Fieldhouse, ‘Can Humpty-Dumpty be put together again: imperial history in the 1980s,’ *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 12 (1984), 9-23.)

We can start to see changes developing in an article by Fieldhouse’s successor at Cambridge, A.G. Hopkins, in 1999. Hopkins thought that imperial history had a future and that it was all that more important as discourses of globalization were taking hold. He proclaimed that ‘what is needed is a fundamental reappraisal of world history to bring out the extent to which, in recent centuries, it has been shaped by the interaction of several types of empire at various stages of development and decay.’ (A.G. Hopkins, ‘Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History,’ *S&A* 164 (1999), 198-243). The most significant historiographical event which transformed the study of imperialism was the five-volume survey of British imperialism in the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, published in the late 1990s. The *OHBE* was a watershed moment, providing an agenda for historical investigation into empire, even if its defiantly anti-postcolonialist stance was off-putting to those more sympathetic to postcolonialism and to a ‘new imperial history’ based around explorations of difference.

What united traditional imperial historians and ‘new’ imperial historians was a belief that imperialism was so wide-ranging as to encompass the whole of eighteenth-century British and British American history. It was about culture as much as power. As Eric Hinderaker wrote in 1996, ‘empire is a cultural artifact as well as a geopolitical entity; it belongs to a geography of the mind as well as a geography of power.’ (Eric Hinderaker, ‘The “Four Indian Kings” and the Imaginative Construction of the British Empire,’ *WMQ* 53 (1996), 486).



Image: George Robertson, View of Fort William estate, Jamaica, 1778, at https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1868-0612-953

And as Kathleen Wilson argues, ‘the eighteenth-century British empire presents us with interconnected and interdependent sites of historical importance, territorial and imaginative, that can disrupt oppositions between metropole and colony and allow us to rethink the genealogies and historiographies of national belonging and exclusion.’ (Kathleen Wilson, ‘Introduction; histories, empires, modernities,’ in idem, *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3).

Studies of empire have abounded since the 2000s because they meet significant parts of the twenty-first century zeitgeist, at least that zeitgeist which existed before the rise of populist nationalism in China, America and much of Europe after 2015. Historical imperialism is an interesting topic in an age of transnational globalization when the borders separating countries and economies seemed porous (a reality that in the Covid era has rapidly disappeared). Imperial history also answered questions about the past which bore on the present – notably the cultural history questions of identity and difference – in ways that histories of nation-states were less able to do. Krishan Kumar explains that ‘empires, for all their faults, show us another way, a way of managing diversity and differences that are now the inescapable fate of practically all so-called nation-states.’ ‘That by itself,’ he argues, ‘seems

sufficient grounds for continuing to study them, and to reflect on what they might be able to teach us.' The study of empires engages current beliefs in multiculturalism, diasporas, migrations and multinationalism and can be a prism through which the 'pressing problems of the contemporary world and even the birth pangs of a new world order' can be addressed. (Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 3, 475).

The BBIH has many works that contribute to this renewed sense that imperialism is important. There are 46,856 entries on empire and the commonwealth, about 16,000 or so which deal with the period when British North America was part of a British Empire. Works on the West Indies, on British India, and on Africa are less abundant but are increasing in numbers. Reading the most recent entries confirms that there has indeed been an 'imperial turn' in British historiography with empire considered vital to understanding the British past as much as its present, and perhaps its future. The study of imperialism and its legacies in the period before 1783 is in rude good health as I give up being section editor for this period in 2022, in considerable contrast to where it was when I started as section editor in 2003.

REF 2021: WE GOT A 4*!

Posted on May 19, 2022



After a longer than usual wait, the results of the Research Exercise Framework 2021, otherwise known as [REF 2021](#), have finally been made public, and we at the Wilberforce Institute are very proud of our success. We got a 4* rating, the highest level possible, for our impact case study, ‘The Wilberforce Legacy: Using historical and contemporary research to meet the challenge of Modern Slavery’.

For those of you who don’t know, the purposes of REF 2021 were threefold:

- To provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- To provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the HE sector and for public information.
- To inform the selective allocation of funding for research.

In short, the government uses the REF exercise to determine how much research funding each higher education institution will receive each year: the four UK higher education funding bodies use it to inform the allocation of circa £2 billion in public funding invested in research annually. The key facts about the REF are available [here](#).

As a format the REF was last used to assess the quality of research in higher education institutions in 2014, so it’s been seven years since any assessment of this kind has been undertaken. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), a

similar exercise which the REF replaced, had from its inception in 1986, taken place approximately once every five years. It had been introduced that year by Margaret Thatcher's government to determine the amount of funding that was to be allocated to individual UK Universities at a time of tight budgetary restrictions. A number of changes to the way in which research is assessed have been made over the years. This included the introduction in 2008 of a four-point quality rating scale, rising from 1* for 'Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour', to the much sought after 4*: 'Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour'.

The REF involved a [process of expert review](#), carried out by expert panels for 34 subject-based [units of assessment](#) (UOAs), under the guidance of four main panels. These expert panels consisted of senior academics, international members, and [research users](#).

Assessors had to review research from three distinct perspectives:

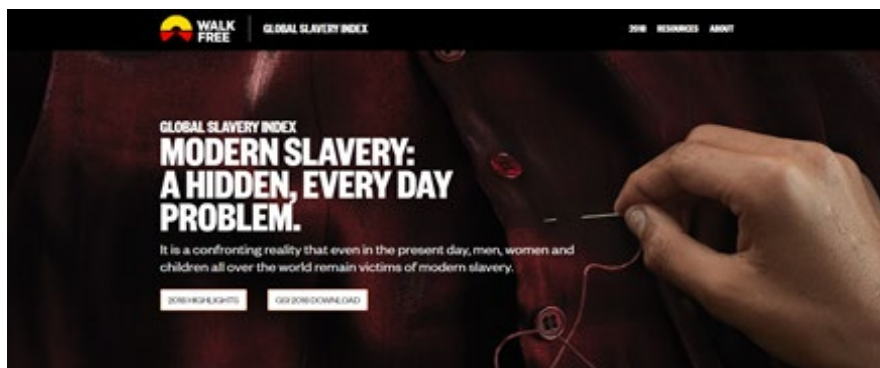
- the quality of the outputs (e.g. publications, performances, and exhibitions)
- their impact beyond academia, and
- the quality of the environment that is provided to support research.

Significantly, the REF was the [first exercise to assess the impact of research outside the higher education sector itself](#). Impact was defined as 'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'. This idea has rightly continued to gain traction: following on from a [review of the effectiveness of REF 2014](#), more emphasis was placed in the 2021 round on the importance of impact. There was also a call for interdisciplinary collaborations to be more widely rewarded.

Both of these metrics play to the strengths of the Wilberforce Institute. First we are by design an interdisciplinary research institute, bringing together history, social science, heritage and law, as we seek to use an understanding of the past to inform our approach to the present. We also employ practitioners who work on issues around social auditing, on raising awareness of modern slavery, and on taking action to prevent it. This means that our interdisciplinary research can have a direct impact.

Despite our small team of people, the 4* rating of our impact case study revealed just how successful our efforts had been in the period covered by the REF

exercise, 2014-2020. The study focused on two particular areas of success. The first concerned the quantification of slavery. The Institute had taken a key role in developing the metrics for the [Global Slavery Index](#) (GSI), which provided the first comprehensive and accessible measure of the extent of modern slavery in 167 countries around the world.



Aimed at informing practitioners and policymakers, the GSI was disseminated around the world, and has been used by governments, researchers, NGOs and charities to support the liberation of slaves and their reintegration into society. In addition, [Professor Kevin Bales](#), lead author of the 2014 GSI, built on its success to develop (in collaboration with the Chief Scientific Officer at the Home Office) a new methodology for calculating modern slavery in the Britain. The Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE) framework resulted in a radical reassessment by the UK Government of the number of people enslaved in Britain. That number – of between 10,000 and 13,000 men, women and children – was roughly four times the figure produced by the National Crime Agency’s Human Trafficking Centre in 2013. Taken together, the GSI and the MSE transformed our understanding of the prevalence of modern slavery in the UK. In doing so, it provided the impetus for a new British Government Modern Slavery Strategy and Bill, and paved the way for the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015.

The second area of success concerned anti-slavery opinion building. [Professor John Oldfield](#), now Associate and Emeritus Professor of the Wilberforce Institute, was instrumental in developing the concept of an antislavery ‘usable past’ that demonstrated a continuous link between the past and the present, through what can be described as an active ‘protest memory’. He used these ideas to develop two Arts and Humanities Research Council funded projects, the web resource [Stolen Lives](#) and *The Antislavery Usable Past*. Together, the Institute’s interdisciplinary team developed new methods of presenting and disseminating information by juxtaposing the experiences of enslaved people

from the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries in an easy to access format. Between 2015 and 2021, the *Stolen Lives* website had 34,000 pageviews and 8,185 views of the 'Repairing Broken Lives' video resources.



Alongside *Stolen Lives* (2015) and the *Antislavery Usable Past* project (2019), the Institute designed and delivered a number of public campaigns to raise awareness of historical and modern slavery, using music, film, teaching aids, exhibitions and web resources. These included the #HiddenInPlainSight campaign (launched in November 2016, which placed 'human packaging' at high-footfall locations), and the #BreakTheChain campaign (launched in London in 2018, using a 'human vending machine'), which drew attention to the 25 million people trapped in forced labour around the world.

These opinion-building initiatives have been adopted by many key stakeholders and have directly informed national public broadcasting campaigns. *Stolen Lives*, for example, has raised awareness of slavery at over 60 different public events and its educational materials have been used in schools across the UK. This resource has also had international impact, most notably in Sierra Leone, West Africa, where it proved the inspiration for an exhibition on modern slavery at the National Museum of Sierra Leone in 2017, the first of its kind. Subsequently, the British Council in Sierra Leone, working in collaboration with the Institute, arranged for the translation of songs from *Stolen Lives* into local languages and used them as resources in its 'Connecting Classrooms' programme. To date this has reached over 30,000 students and helped to raise awareness of modern slavery in Sierra Leone. Finally, and importantly, the work of the Institute was shared with local schools and communities in the Humber region. Performances

from *Stolen Lives* have also been held at Hull's Freedom Festival which attracts audiences of over 130,000.

Academic research is always of its time, and the numbers estimated in the GSI and MSE were very soon out of date. Some of these numbers were included in the *Stolen Lives* project, so that here too, there is information that is no longer current. But other elements of *Stolen Lives* continue to have relevance.

Reflecting recently on the impact of *Stolen Lives* seven years on, Professor Oldfield noted that although he would do some things differently now, much of the content in the collection remains as impactful as it did at its creation. You can of course judge for yourselves by visiting the [website](#).



Professor Oldfield reflecting on the impact of Stolen Lives during the recent workshop, 'Strategies for encouraging children and young people to engage with human rights', held at the Wilberforce Institute on Thursday May 12, 2022.

Receiving a 4* rating for our impact case study 'The Wilberforce Legacy: Using historical and contemporary research to meet the challenge of Modern Slavery', is hugely satisfying, not least because it reveals to us that we can make a difference. But it also reminds us that there is always more to understand about the nature of slavery and exploitation, in the past and the present. Our success in REF 2021 will help us to continue that research.

The Time Travel Adventures of Ara: Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

Posted on May 12, 2022



Channon Oyeniran

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and former postgraduate student of the University of Hull

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Four years.....that's how long it took from the original idea of *The Time Travel Adventures of Ara* (TTAOA) being conceived, to it finally being released to the public. It was March 2018, and at the time I was working for one of the largest organizations in Canada, committed to enhancing the awareness of Canada's history and citizenship. I was having a conversation with a former co-worker and friend, who said she could see me writing a children's book. "A children's book I thought to myself?" "Really" I said to my friend.

But as we continued talking, my mind started to race with ideas and immediately the concept of TTAOA came to mind. Not only did this current book come to mind, but a whole series of books dedicated to time travel, where my then two-

year-old son would star as the protagonist of the series and where he would go back in time and meet iconic Black historical figures in different time periods. Not only would Ara learn more about Black history in Canada, but he would learn about Black history around the world!

After this conversation with my friend and former colleague, I immediately started a Google doc and got all the ideas that were racing through my mind written down. I remember the excitement I felt as I documented my ideas and thought to myself, “Could I really do this? Would people (especially children) like the concept of the book?” It’s not that I was new to the process of writing; in fact, my husband and I co-wrote and released a book titled, [Live Love Learn Grow: A Collection of Quotes With Modern Day Paradigms For Appropriating Godly Values Into Our Lives And Businesses](#) in April 2016. I also wrote a chapter in [Transforming Lives One Story at a Time: Powerful Stories of Success & Inspiration](#) that was released in September 2017. Also, I had watched my husband spend months writing and releasing his latest book, [The Power of Vision: Principles and Practices to Help You Become Extraordinary](#). So indeed, I was not new to the writing and self-publishing process, but this was still a major project, and one that would rely solely on my expertise and knowledge in the subject of Black history.

With my ideas down on paper, and in my opinion, an amazing concept for book one of the series, I tried to set out some time to start writing. However, for me this process was not so easy! I had my two-year-old son, just started a new job, found out I was pregnant with my second son and had many other projects on the go. In the early part of 2019, I had recorded the first chapter of my manuscript but did not have the time to write down what I recorded. So finally in September 2019, I enlisted the help of a close friend of my husband, who is an editor and publisher in Nigeria, and asked him to help me transcribe what I had recorded. He did this and honestly it was the push I needed to continue to write my manuscript despite the busyness of life. Fast forward to 2021 when I finally thought that I would be able to release my book that year. However, this was not to be. After a few setbacks on this book writing journey, I realized that it would finally be 2022 before book one of The Time Travel Adventures of Ara would be released.



It is a humbling experience to write a book. Throughout this process, I've been purposeful in making sure I am honouring and celebrating those whose lives I am writing about (e.g., Harriet Tubman). This journey has also been so fun and rewarding to watch my two sons Ara and Korede be excited about “mommy’s new book” and watch them get excited when looking at the illustrations within the book of themselves and mommy and daddy. That’s always been my main goal from the conception of this book, until now (and it will continue to be): to create stories and content for Black children and Black people to see themselves and to read about their history and read about who their ancestors were and the sacrifices they made.

Being a historian of Caribbean history, Black history in Canada and the history of Black enslavement (thanks to the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull!), it has always been important to me to share all the amazing stories about people of African descent that I learned about on my undergraduate and graduate journey with others, specifically the next generation. There is a gap in learning about all histories in the Canadian education system and I want to ensure that I am doing my part (whether it’s through this book series or my podcast; [BlacktoCanada](#)) to teach children about Black history not only in Canada, but around the world. I believe that if children have the opportunity to learn about different cultures and histories when they are young, then there will be more understanding and empathy and less racism and ignorance.

The Time Travel Adventures of Ara: Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad can be purchased on:

1. OyES: <https://oyeseducation.org/shop/>
2. Amazon (worldwide)

We don't know enough to effectively protect those who experience criminal exploitation

Posted on May 5, 2022



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In this blog, produced for the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre [PEC], Dr Kidd looks at the defence for those who face criminal liability as a result of modern slavery under Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

What do we know about how we protect those who experience criminal exploitation from further harm? People forced into criminal exploitation by their traffickers should be protected from the further harm of being charged for crimes they had no choice but to commit. The UK Modern Slavery Act offers protection for such cases, however, we don't know if it's doing its job effectively.

Criminal exploitation is a growing problem. In the UK in 2021, [6,100 people were identified as potential victims of criminal exploitation](#), 4,155 of whom had experienced only this form of exploitation (figures are collated from the data tables accessible via the [End of Year Summary](#)). This accounts for 48% of all potential cases of modern slavery identified in that year.

People who experience criminal exploitation inhabit an unusual position of being both a victim of modern slavery and a perpetrator of the crimes they were made to commit. This means that there can be confusion amongst professionals around how to best respond to such situations.

Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act offers a statutory defence for those who face criminal liability for a criminal act that they committed as a consequence of their modern slavery or human trafficking experience. It was designed to reassure people that they could give evidence without fear of being convicted for offences they had committed as part of their exploitation.

For people aged 18 or over, the Act states that a person is not guilty of an offence if they were compelled to commit it, if that compulsion is attributable to their exploitative situation, and if a reasonable person in the same situation with relevant characteristics would have no realistic alternative to committing it. Children are not guilty if the criminal act was a direct consequence of their exploitation and a reasonable person in the same situation with relevant characteristics would have also committed the act.

However, even seven years after the implementation of Section 45 with the Modern Slavery Act of 2015, it is difficult to gather an accurate picture of how the defence is understood and used in practice. [The Modern Slavery PEC and the Wilberforce Institute are publishing a review of how this defence has been used so far.](#)

Our review has shown that, to date, there is very limited information available on the use of Section 45. There have been two independent reviews of the Modern Slavery Act which make reference to Section 45, and one report from the Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner which was based on a call for evidence about Section 45



specifically. However, there is a lack of information regarding the commissioning process and methodologies of these reports.

Further, no quantitative data is collected on the use of Section 45, academic involvement in the reviews has been limited, and no one with lived experience was consulted for the reviews. These factors combined mean that producing accurate insights and robust generalisations about how Section 45 is used is impossible. We can't currently generate a true picture of who is using the defence, what crimes they are using it for, or identify and rectify any barriers to success.

There is also a lack of legal clarity regarding how closely the offence should be connected to the modern slavery experience for the defence to be justified, with no clear definition offered within the Modern Slavery Act. Case law continues to develop and challenge how the defence should be implemented in practice. However, without adequate and consistent training for professionals, those who experience criminal exploitation could have truly differing experiences of using the defence, based entirely on the levels of knowledge that the lawyers and judges associated with their cases have on modern slavery and Section 45.

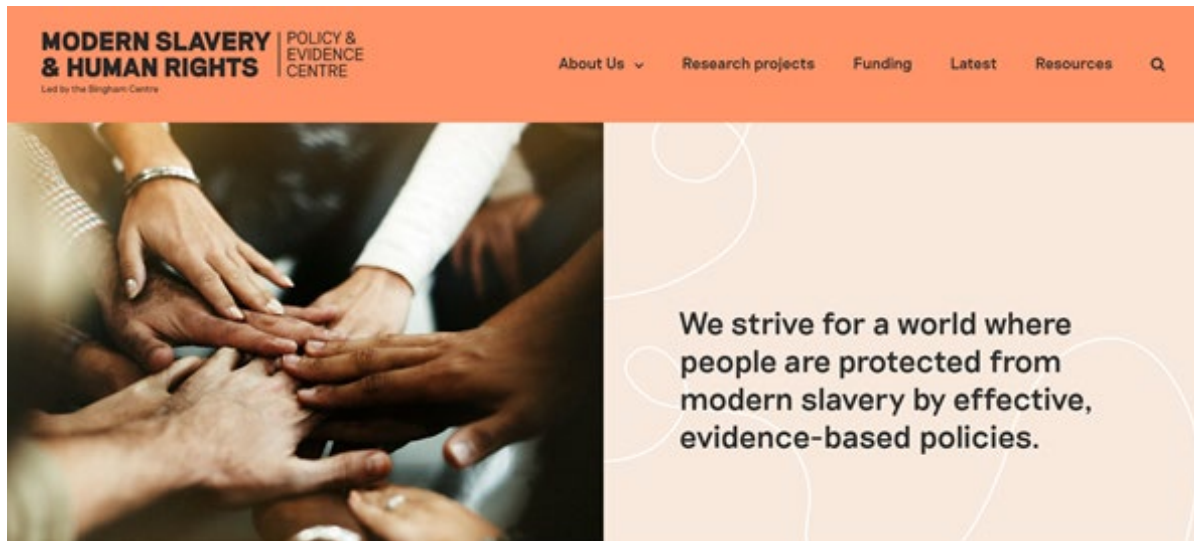
If used suitably, the statutory defence holds real potential to be able to support victims of modern slavery without punishing them for crimes they had no choice but to commit. However, much remains to be done to make sure that becomes a reality.

Based on available evidence, in order to improve both the use and understanding of Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act, reviews of the legislation should offer clarity regarding the commissioning process and methodologies used, so that the reviews can accurately be recreated for future comparisons. They should also incorporate insights from academics working in relevant fields, and always seek the input of people with lived experience.

We need more data to be able to make informed decisions about improving Section 45. As a priority, the Government needs to collect quantitative data on the use and outcomes of the defence in order to understand the types of cases in which it is used, barriers to success, and how it might be vulnerable to misuse.

Finally, it's clear that adequate training for police, lawyers and the judiciary is fundamental if Section 45 is to be used in the way it was intended: to serve the best interests of victims of modern slavery. This training should include insights

into potential bias based on notions of the 'ideal' victim, so that people who were forced to commit crimes as a result of slavery or trafficking can be fully protected from further harm.



ACTion to Combat Modern Slavery: Justice Hub Our First Six Months

Posted on April 28, 2022



Andrew Smith

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Introduction

The [ACTion to Combat Modern Slavery Justice Hub](#) is a [Wilberforce Institute](#) and University of Hull Alumni funded project that seeks to combat modern slavery by using research and knowledge exchange to engage and empower people to create a culture of change for good. Launched in October 2021 with my appointment as project manager Its mission is to use knowledge exchange, education and research to raise awareness of, and compliance with, the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), ensuring it is better understood and enforced by those who have a statutory, legal or moral duty under its provisions. On Monday 28th March we published a special edition of the Wilberforce Institute Modern Slavery Newsletter to mark the anniversary of the Modern Slavery Act which

became law on 26th March 2015. You can view the newsletter online here: <https://universityofhullec.newsweaver.com/eo4xlasxr1/16j2gri0ubh>

Our first six months

Initial work started immediately on formulating a plan to develop our online e-learning CPD modules on key provisions of the Act that will be available to a range of statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. Working with [Lampada](#) we have made good progress in putting together a template of the first three modules which comprise an introductory module, a legal enforcement module and a transparency in supply chains module. We have applied for £50,000 [HEIF funding](#) to pay for these first three modules and associated costs. Content for these modules has been written and we are commencing the build stage with a view for the first module to be ready by June to showcase at our next big event in Birmingham on 30th June 2022, and will offer a deeper insight into slavery and trafficking responses for law professionals and social care staff. The event will include a plenary session on victimology, a CPD session with guest DC Colin Ward from the Manchester Police, Op Challenger task force, then finish with an expert panel that will discuss with our audience how we connect stakeholders to improve responses and how victims navigate the criminal justice system.

On the 16th of October we held our very first [A21 walk for freedom](#) in partnership with the [Freedom Festival](#) in Hull. The A21 walk for freedom is a global movement of peaceful campaign walks to highlight slavery and engage the public. We used this event as a public launch of the Justice Hub in Hull. The event was well attended by over 30 staff, students and members of the public who walked a pre-planned route around famous Hull landmarks talking to the public about the issue of slavery today (www.A21.org).



A21

Walk for Freedom October 2021. Pictured in Queen's Gardens, Hull

Our second opportunity to launch the Justice Hub came internally at the University's knowledge exchange conference in November. Here we used the stage to introduce the Hub to our colleagues and discuss the importance of using knowledge exchange to improve responses to modern slavery and the application of the law that empowers and supports victims. We also used this opportunity to highlight the benefits of connectedness and people power in fighting for social justice. From this conference we have made multiple valuable connections within the University which has resulted in us being able to deliver a significant amount of training to many disciplines.

In our first six months we have delivered sessions on the Modern Slavery Act, globalisation and ethical trading, criminal exploitation, and social justice to

- Child nursing students

- Mental health nursing students
- Business and law students
- English students
- Education students

External to the University we have been working closely with Hull City Council on implementing a new pathway and policy for their housing department and specific training on the Act, how it applies in practice, and how to refer potential victims into the National Referral Mechanism [NRM]. Staying with Hull City Council, we are an integral part of their response to child criminal exploitation and a key panel member of their NRM child devolved decision-making panel as an expert advisor and decision maker. As part of this work, we have delivered dedicated training to child social care workers, youth justice workers and health care workers on referring and supporting child victims. Since October we have collaborated to train over 300 Hull City Council professionals. The current child devolved NRM decision-making pilot in Hull has been extended for another 12 months by the Home Office which is welcome news for professionals working to safeguard young people. As part of this extension Hull City Council has been given a budget for further training and we have been approached to help deliver this. Finally, as well as Hull City Council and University students, we have delivered a wide array of training and workshops to community groups, faith groups, youth justice and Crown Prosecution Services staff, and taken part in a national safeguarding week to deliver sessions to members of the public.

Aside from our direct training and CPD efforts we are also keen to utilise different methods of media to communicate modern slavery knowledge and grow/diversify our audiences. As such we have just aired the first of a new 7-part podcast series that takes a look at key provisions of the Modern Slavery Act. This first podcast introduces the Wilberforce Institute and the Justice Hub, gives an overview of the Act and an outline of the provisions we will be covering in subsequent episodes. You can listen to our first podcast here: <https://youtu.be/wJ8Rlue6ck4>

In May we will be recording a very special podcast interview on tackling difficult subjects with children with Wilberforce MA alumnus Channon Oyeniran, author of *The Time Travel Adventures of Ara*. In this her debut book, Channon brings

Black History to life in a magical way. What starts as a simple journey turns into an extraordinary one through a series of mysterious events that finds Ara transported over a century back in time. What follows is a thrilling adventure and a mission to set enslaved people free (<https://adventuresofara.com/>).



In addition, we have recently become a member of the UK Modern Slavery Training and Development Group. This national group comprises leading anti-slavery sector organisations who come together to work on identifying national gaps in training and brings specialist knowledge together to deliver solutions. I believe this to be a positive move for the Justice Hub that will allow us to influence UK training needs and the use of specialist knowledge to impact practice through legislation and policy.

To conclude

Finally, I am extremely pleased to be able to say that in our first 6 months of operation we have trained a total of 682 people internal and external to the University. I hope you will agree this is a fantastic way to kick off this wonderful project. It reinforces the appetite we know exists among audiences and stakeholders to improve their knowledge so they may provide better services and create lasting social change.

Victims of Modern Slavery in the UK 2021

Posted on April 7, 2022



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Sophie Blanchard is an MA student on the Criminal Justice and Crime Control course at the University of Hull. Her research focuses on the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and her MA dissertation project looks at the effectiveness of the NRM in identifying and protecting potential victims of modern slavery. In this blog she summarises the 2021 Home Office Report on the NRM.

New [statistics](#) have been released, summarising information on people who have been identified as potential victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2021. The statistical bulletin provides a breakdown of the number of potential victims that were referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or via the Duty to Notify process. It breaks down the data in a number of ways, including via the

ages of the potential victims, as well as their nationalities, gender, and type of exploitation they experienced.

The NRM, which was set up in 2009, is the governmental framework used in the UK to identify and support potential victims of modern slavery who have been identified by a set list of First Responders. The Duty to Notify process collects data on adults who do not consent to be referred to the NRM (children are not required to give consent). Combined, these figures give an estimate of the picture of modern slavery in the UK.

The term ‘potential victims’ is used to denote that these are the figures relating to individuals referred into the NRM, or via the Duty to Notify process. These figures are likely to be significantly lower once individuals have been through the NRM’s two-tier decision making process to determine that, on the balance of probabilities, a competent authority believes them to meet the definition of being victims of modern slavery.

How many people have been identified?

In 2021, [12,727 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK](#) were referred to the Home Office, which represents a 20% increase compared to the 10,601 potential victims referred in 2020. The number of potential victims of modern slavery in the UK has been increasing each year since 2014, apart from a slight decrease in 2020, commonly noted to be a result of the national lockdowns in response to the Covid-19 pandemic:

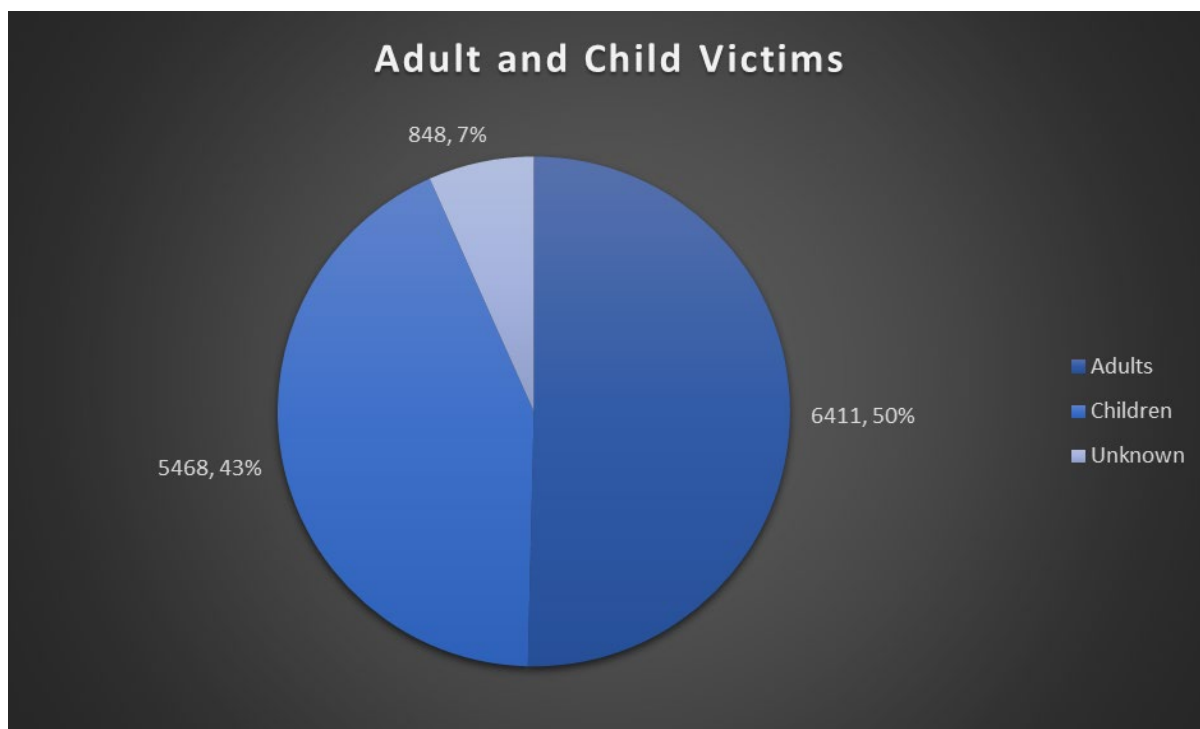
| Year | Number of Referrals |
|------|---------------------|
| 2014 | 2,340 |
| 2015 | 3,266 |
| 2016 | 3,805 |
| 2017 | 5,145 |
| 2018 | 6,993 |
| 2019 | 10,627 |
| 2020 | 10,601 |

| | |
|------|--------|
| 2021 | 12,727 |
|------|--------|

The number of referrals received in 2021 has been the highest since the NRM began in 2009. However, the increase in referrals does not necessarily correlate with there being more victims, but could indicate that First Responders are improving at identifying potential victims. Reports via the Duty to Notify process alone have increased by 47% from 2020 with 3,190 reports of potential victims, which indicates a better awareness of this system amongst professionals.

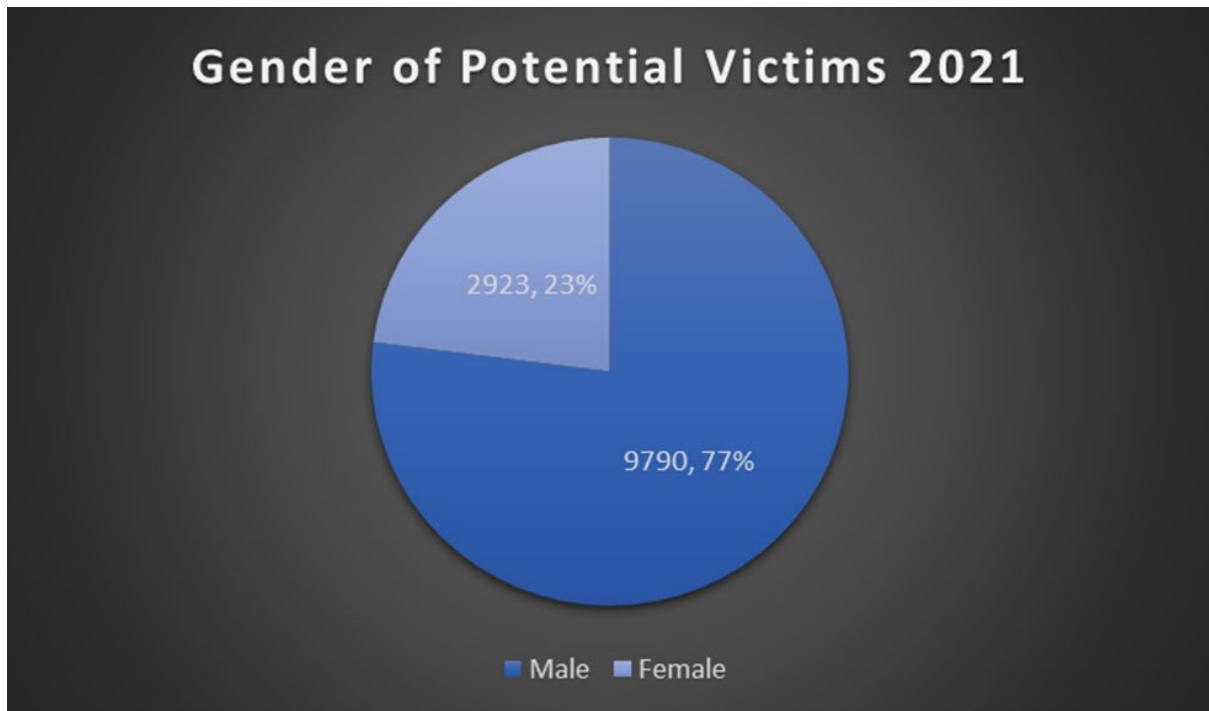
Are the victims adults or children?

Of the potential victims identified, 848 (7%) were of unknown age, 6,411 (50%) were adults, which has increased from 48% in 2020, and 5,468 (43%) were children (minors, under the age of 18). After October 2019, when criminal exploitation was set as its own category of exploitation (where previously it was counted within labour exploitation) which made it easier to identify different types of exploitation that potential victims were being subjected to, referrals indicated that labour exploitation was the most common form of exploitation suffered by adults, while minors (under 18) were more likely to be victims of criminal exploitation. This year's statistics continue this trend, with these still being the most common forms of exploitation for adult and child victims of modern slavery. In 2021, labour exploitation was the most reported form of exploitation amongst adult potential victims at 33%; 2,141 victims. The most referred exploitation for child potential victims was criminal exploitation at 49%; 2,689 cases.



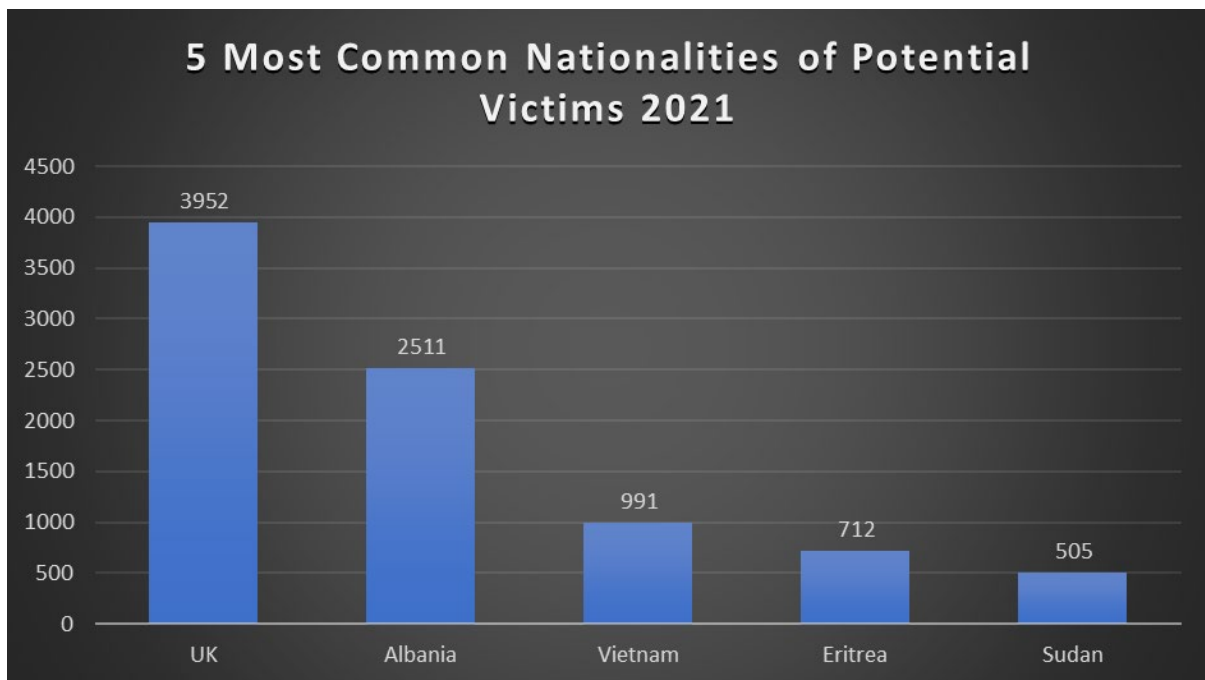
What gender are the victims?

Of those 12,727 identified in 2021, 9,790 (77%) were male and 2,923 (23%) were female. The remaining 14 are categorised under 'Not specified or unknown' or 'Other'. The statistics of genders of victims are similar to the previous years, but male potential victims have been increasing in referrals over the years. In 2021, 75% of adult potential victims (4,812) and 79% of child potential victims (4,314) were male, whilst 25% of adult potential victims (1,594) and 21% of child potential victims (1,145) were female. The majority of female potential victims, both adults and children, were victims of sexual exploitation.



What are the nationalities of the victims?

The most common nationalities of potential victims identified in the UK in 2021 were UK, Albanian and Vietnamese nationals respectively. UK nationals accounted for 3,952 (31%) of potential victims which decreased slightly from the previous year of 34% in 2020. Albanian nationals were the second most referred nationality with 2,511 (20%) which increased from 15% in 2020, and the third was Vietnamese with 991 (8%). Eritrean also had a notable increase in referrals in 2021, which increased from 395 (3%) in 2020, to 712 (6%) in 2021.



What types of exploitation have the victims experienced?

The data tables which provide the breakdown of information on referrals include a summary of the types of exploitation suffered by those identified as potential victims. These include criminal exploitation, labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and organ harvesting. The data summarises the number of referrals for each category of exploitation, including where multiple forms of exploitation were experienced. Looking at cases where only one form of exploitation was experienced, the most common form of exploitation identified in 2021 was criminal exploitation with 4,155 referrals. This has increased since becoming classed as a separate form of exploitation in October 2019, before which it was categorised within labour exploitation, making it harder to identify as a distinct form of exploitation. Labour exploitation made up 3,127 of the referrals in 2021 and sexual exploitation made up 1,266 referrals. However, a concerning large number of referrals, 1,046 cases, were referred under 'unknown or not specified' exploitation which raises concerns over the level of detail provided within the referral forms.

The findings of the 2021 report make for difficult reading. If you have any questions, please contact Sophie at the email address above.

The Professor Surya Subedi Global Essay Prize

Posted on March 31, 2022



Professor Surya Subedi QC, OBE, DCL, DPhil (Oxford), Barrister

Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds

On 22 February, 2022, the University of Hull and the Wilberforce Institute [launched the Professor Surya Subedi Global Essay Prize](#) on Modern Slavery or the Protection of Human Dignity. This prize of £500 will be awarded annually by the Wilberforce Institute for the best original essay in English on the abolition of any form of modern slavery or the protection of human dignity anywhere in the world. The Prize will be awarded for the first time in March 2023.

“Professor Subedi is a world-renowned scholar and a champion of human rights. Through his work as a barrister, and numerous high-level positions in governments and national and international organisations, he works incredibly hard to make a difference to the real life of the people around the world. We are extremely proud to present this prize in Professor Subedi’s honour, to raise awareness of modern slavery at a critical time.”

Professor Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute.

Professor Subedi has published widely on a raft of issues related to human rights and international law, and he has managed to combine this with more practical work in public international law throughout his career. From 2009 to 2015 he was the UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia and from 2010 to 2015 he served as a member of a high-level Advisory Group on Human Rights to the British Foreign Secretary. He was a government nominee for appointment to the position of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2014. He was elected to the Institut de Droit International at its Session in Rhodes in 2011 and made a Membre Titulaire in 2015. IN 2017 he was appointed Queen's Counsel honoris causa for his contribution to the development of international law and to the advancement of human rights.

There can be very few alumni of the University of Hull who have touched the lives of so many people in such a profound way. Over a long career in the field of International Human Rights Law, Professor Surya Subedi has worked tirelessly to encourage and assist governments to work towards establishing independent judiciaries. He has secured the release of journalists from prisons, facilitated the safe return of exiled opposition leaders, improved prison conditions and modified land concessions to mitigate human rights abuses in Cambodia.

Asked if he felt the weight of Hull's connection to causes of human rights, liberty and emancipation while he was studying here, Professor Subedi admitted he did, and that he was inspired by the Wilberforce Museum in particular. His gift to the University will ensure that his name is connected in perpetuity with the advancement of study into the causes for which he has worked so passionately.

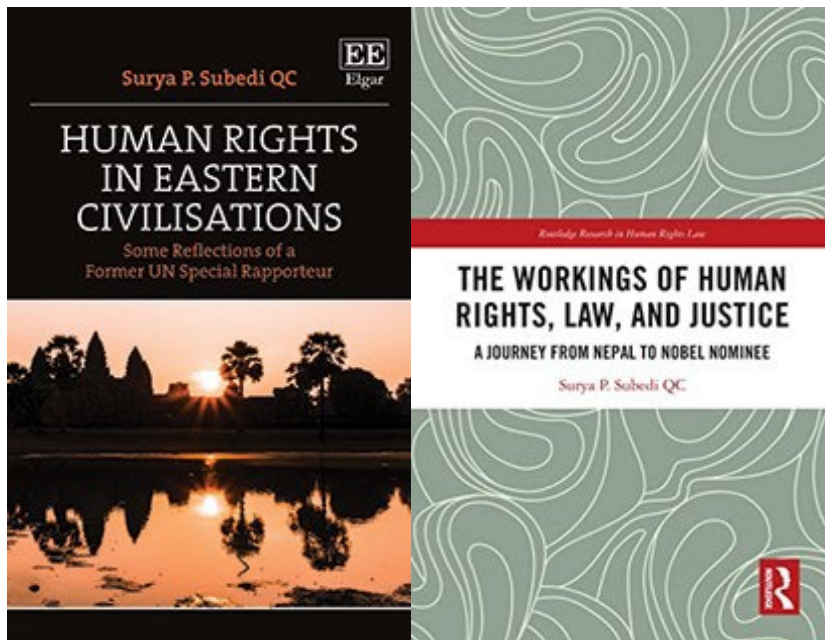
This Prize has been made possible by a generous donation from Professor Surya P. Subedi, who graduated in law from the University of Hull in 1988 and is currently Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds. Born in Nepal, where he first studied law, and where his interest in international law began, Professor Subedi won a British Council Scholarship (now known as Chevening Scholarship) to study for an LLM in International Law in 1986, and chose Hull because it had a good reputation in international law, and was known to have a 'beautiful small compact campus and friendly staff'. Interviewed in 2017, Professor Subedi revealed that he had been advised to choose a 'smaller nice university like Hull' because there 'your professors will get to know you better and you will receive the support and guidance that you will need to do well in your studies'. He certainly made the most of his studies at Hull, gaining a distinction in his LLM, and has never looked back. After a brief return to Nepal,

Professor Subedi enrolled in a doctoral programme in Oxford, after which he entered academia.

The competition is open to any graduate in law and social sciences or humanities from around the world regardless of their nationality. The award will focus on enhancing the employability and profile of early-career academics and will therefore be restricted to candidates below the age of 40 at the time of submission. It must be a single-authored essay and the author must state in the submission that they are the sole author, and they own the copyright in the essay. The essay submitted should have a title which is both concise and descriptive and must be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 150 words in 10-point Times New Roman. It must be an academic piece of work with proper citations and must not have already been published. The length of the essay must be between 3000 and 5000 words, including footnotes following any standard format of referencing such as OSCOLA or Harvard style. The submission must be accompanied by a copy of the CV of the candidate.

The essay must be submitted electronically either in Microsoft Word or in PDF format to the following email address: Wilberforceinstitute@hull.ac.uk The deadline for the first round of essays is 31 December 2022 and the prize of £500 will be awarded in March 2023.

The award will be made to the author of the essay that makes the most exciting original contribution to the relevant field of scholarship and is best-crafted in terms of organisation, style and presentation. By submitting the essay, the candidates agree that if their essay is awarded the Prize, they grant the Wilberforce Institute a non-exclusive licence to publish it online or in any other format that it sees fit. The winning essay will be published on the website of the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull, and the Institute may, at its discretion, choose to submit the essay for publication in a physical or online journal or as part of a collated series of prize-winning essays connected to the award.



Wilberforce Institute Webinar: Indigenous Slavery in the Atlantic World

Posted on March 24, 2022



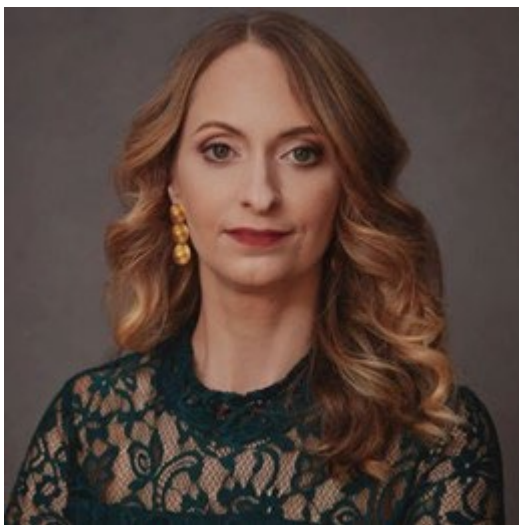
Sandi Brewster-Walker in front of the oldest building in the Montaukett Indian Nation's off-reservation community of North Amityville, Long Island, NY.



Linford D. Fisher



Rebecca Goetz



Brooke Newman

Thursday March 31, 2022

4PM-5.30PM BST

On Thursday March 31 we will welcome four speakers to talk about Indigenous slavery in the Atlantic world. The presenters are [Sandi Brewster-Walker](#), Executive Director and Government Affairs Officer for the Montaukett Indian Nation; [Linford D. Fisher](#), Associate Professor at Brown University; [Rebecca Goetz](#), Associate Professor at New York University; and [Brooke Newman](#), Associate Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. The webinar will consider a number of aspects of Indigenous enslavement in the Atlantic world, from a digital database project known as the *North Fork People of Color, 1641-1827*, to Indigenous freedom suits, to the unfree labor of Indigenous children, and the case of 'Polly Indian', who attempted to obtain freedom for both herself and her enslaved daughters on the basis of Native maternal ancestry.

To register for this event, please click

here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5346536240171086349> After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The issue of Indigenous slavery was overshadowed in Atlantic scholarship for many years by its African counterpart. But such slavery was ubiquitous in the Americas and in the Atlantic World. For native people, the risk of enslavement was constant, and all the major European colonial powers played a role in this enslavement. And while Indigenous slavery varied in terms of its forms and its impact, it not only shaped the colonial world, but continues to affect people in the present.

Our speakers have provided a title and abstract below, but a brief introduction to them, their individual interests, and the theme of their talk is given here. Sandi Brewster-Walker, a descendant of the Montaukett Indians, as well as their Executive Director and Government Affairs Officer, has been writing poetry, fiction, and non-fiction works since her teenage years; she published her first book in 2007. She will talk about a digital database project known as the *North Fork People of Color, 1641-1827*, that brings together datasets relating to the first workforce of the East End of Long Island.

Professor Linford D. Fisher's research and teaching relate primarily to the cultural and religious history of colonial America and the Atlantic world, including Native Americans, religion, material culture, and Indian and African slavery and servitude. In this talk he will present a series of Indigenous freedom suits in British Honduras Belize, in the 1810s and 1820s.

Professor Rebecca Goetz's areas of interest include the histories of religion, race and slavery, and colonialism and empire in the Atlantic World and Indigenous North America. In this webinar she offers another view of enslaved Native People in the archive, focusing down on Indigenous testimonies from the 1570s.

Finally Professor Brooke Newman is a historian of early modern Britain and the British Atlantic, with special interests in the history of slavery, the abolition movement, and the British royal family. She will consider issues of gender, slavery, and kinship in the British Caribbean as revealed in a series of colonial commissions designed to gather information on the administration of justice in Britain's West Indian territories, and increase Crown oversight of colonial law.

Titles and abstracts

Presenter: Sandi Brewster-Walker, Executive Director and Government Affairs Officer, Montaukett Indian Nation montaukett.executive.director@gmail.com

- Title: Unfree Labor of Indigenous Children on Long Island
- Abstract: *North Fork People of Color, 1641-1827* is a digital database project bringing together datasets, which humanize the enslaved, indentured, freed, and free people that became the first workforce of the East End of Long Island. This presentation will discuss the journey and case of the eight-year-old indigenous girl Sarah, the daughter of Dorkas, both born free. Sarah was sold in 1689 by James Pearsall of Southold to John Parker, of Southampton to become his property for life. In 1711, Sarah petitioned the Colonial Governor of New York, Robert Hunter.

Presenter: Linford D. Fisher, Associate Professor, Brown University
Linford_Fisher@brown.edu

- Title: Resisting Race Shifting in Indigenous Freedom Suits
- Abstract: All too often in colonial archives, colonists and administrators minimized or obscured the identity of Indigenous people in an effort to justify their enslavement. Indigenous people, when they were aware of it, resisted this race shifting. This presentation will draw on a few examples, including especially a series of Indigenous freedom suits in British Honduras Belize, in the 1810s and 1820s.

Presenter: Rebecca Goetz, Associate Professor, New York University
rag11@nyu.edu

- Title: Enslaved Native People in the Archive
- Abstract: The Archivo General de Indias, Spain's archive of its colonial activities, was formed ostensibly to refute the "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty towards Indigenous people. Yet contained within it are the testimonies of enslaved Native people, which often describe in excruciating detail the violence of Spanish slaving and slaveholding. This short discussion of Indigenous testimonies from the 1570s examines possible methodological approaches to slavery and this archive.

Presenter: Brooke Newman, Associate Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University bnewman@vcu.edu

- Title: ‘My Mother was an Indian’: Gender, Slavery, and Kinship in the British Caribbean
- Abstract: Beginning in the 1820s, the British imperial government launched a series of colonial commissions of inquiry to gather information on the administration of justice in Britain’s West Indian territories and to increase Crown oversight over colonial law. The commissioners also rendered judgement on the contested legal status of imperial subjects—including enslaved people. This brief discussion focuses on the case of an enslaved woman in Tobago named Polly, also known as “Polly Indian,” who attempted to obtain freedom for both herself and her enslaved daughters on the basis of Native maternal ancestry. Polly’s case offers insight not only into the tactics adopted by enslaved men and women to negotiate for freedom during an era of imperial intervention in the legislative process of self-governing slave colonies but also the extent to which enslavers profited from the confusion surrounding Indian identity.



American Indian Slave Halter. Eighteenth Century, Great Lakes Region. Colonial Williamsburg Collection, 1996-816. Courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

At <https://uncpressblog.com/2012/07/25/excerpt-bonds-of-alliance-by-brett-rushforth/ds1999-49/>

Enjoying a month as a virtual Folger Fellow

Posted on March 17, 2022



Dr Judith Spicksley

Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

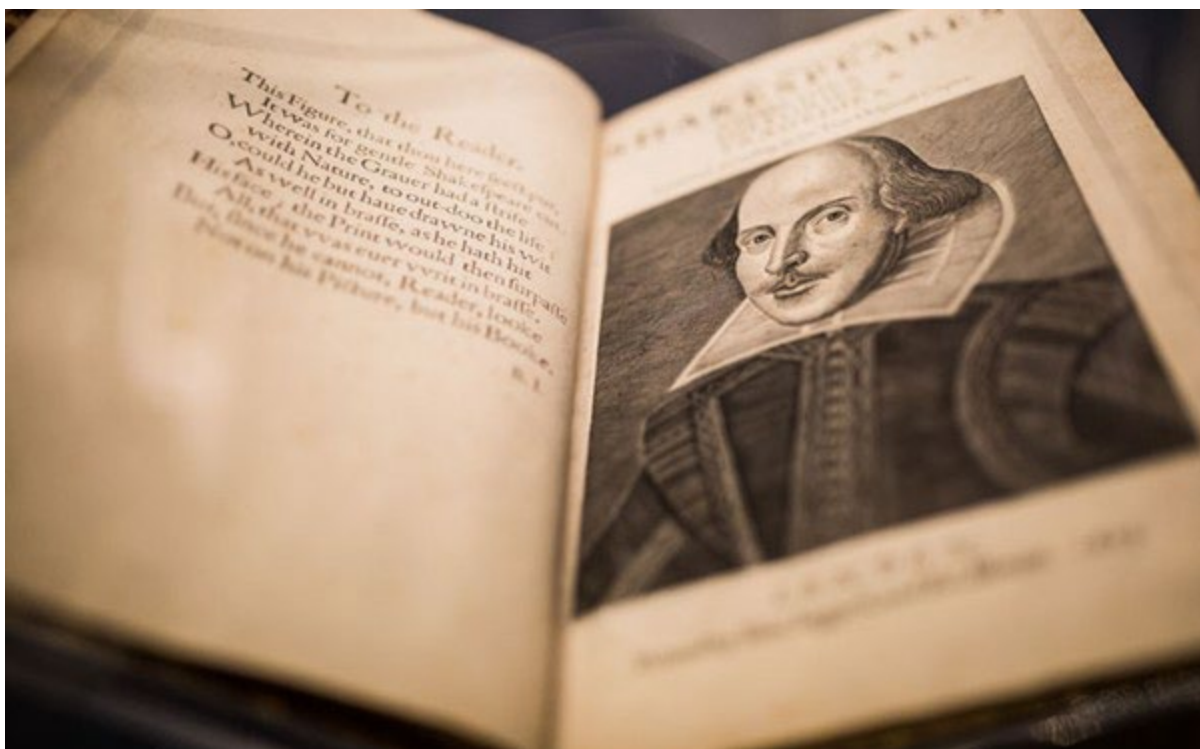
judith.spicksley@hull.ac.uk

In January 2022 I finally managed to take up a virtual Folger Fellowship, and enjoy a month long virtual ‘visit’ to the Folger Library in Washington DC. My original plan had been to hold the fellowship in August 2021, but I contracted Covid-19 at the end of July, and had to take a month’s sick leave to recuperate. The Folger were happy to reschedule, as long as I could arrange it within the 2021-22 fellowship year. Given work commitments, and Institute events, I decided to reschedule for January 2022, when I would have the time to explore their collections.



Folger Library, Washington DC. Image at <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/DC-01-CH15>

The [Folger Library Fellowships](#) are a well-established and much sought after part of the academic 'scene', and are usually held onsite at the home of the Folger Library on Capitol Hill in Washington. The Library was established 'as a gift to the American people' in 1932 by the industrialist [Henry Folger](#) and his wife Emily, with the original design for the building being drawn by the architect [Paul Philippe Cret](#), the French born industrial designer from Philadelphia. Numbering 82, the Library's collection of Shakespeare's First Folio is the world's largest: published in 1623, the Folio included plays that up until that point had never appeared in print, including *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*.



The Folger Shakespeare Folio. Image at: <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare/first-folio>

The Library is dedicated to the study of Shakespeare, his works, and the society he lived in. The founding collection consisted of rare books and manuscripts as well as more recent writings, art, and ephemera related to Shakespeare and the English drama of his age. It included prints, photographs, playbills, promptbooks, paintings, and reference books of many kinds.

But from the start, Henry and Emily Folger understood that neither Shakespeare nor the English drama of his age could be studied in isolation. The Library's holdings were augmented to include numerous items bearing on Renaissance English culture and civilization as well as materials from continental Europe that influenced or reflected English thought and values. Over the years the field of acquisition has broadened further, to include materials on English culture into the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

Fellowships have been offered to support research and writing at the Library since 1935. Usually held onsite, the initiation of a major [building renovation project](#) in 2020 – to expand public space, improve accessibility, and enhance the experience for all visitors – encouraged the Library to consider offering virtual fellowships for research and writing whilst the Reading Room was closed for renovation.



Folger Library Reading Room. Image by David Reeve at <https://www.folger.edu/reading-room-tour>

Included in the Library's collections are a number of electronic resources, some of which are [freely available](#). This includes the [Folger Shakespeare](#), where you can explore all Shakespeare's plays, poems and sonnets online, read plot synopses and brief textual histories, and see selected images from the Library's impressive collection. Usefully there is a [concordance](#) for searching across all Shakespeare's works for specific words, names or places for example, or any other term you might be interested in. I, for example, was keen to examine all the contexts in which the terms 'slave' and/or 'slavery' appeared.

Additional electronic resources are available by subscription to registered users of the Folger. These are normally only accessible onsite at the Library, but a big part of the attraction of the virtual fellowship was the opportunity to access all these resources from my desktop here in the UK. I enjoyed four lovely weeks of largely uninterrupted research mining data related to my topic: the language of slavery in early modern England, and more especially as it appeared in the works of Shakespeare.

Folger Fellows usually get to spend a month in Washington where they can explore the Library (and the capital!) and meet and talk with other Folger Fellows. This year there are nearly forty, and the [breadth of their interests](#) is quite staggering. As things turned out, the global impact of Covid-19 would have made travel to Washington difficult at best, so on balance I got a great deal – a month away from Institute duties, access to all the Library's digital resources, individual online support from the Folger librarian, and an introduction to a new community of scholars, coordinated by the fellowship programme assistant via Slack, the virtual communication platform.

Aside from the missed opportunities associated with a visit to one of America's leading cultural gems, my only disappointment was not having enough time to explore the vast amount of material in the Folger collections. A month flew by in no time! However, I can recommend the experience without hesitation. I would like to thank everyone at the Folger for their help and support, and I am hugely grateful to them for giving me this opportunity. If your research is in this area, and you are interested, why don't you think about applying for a fellowship? This year's competition (again for virtual fellowships) closed in mid-January, but the Folger has big plans in the works for their fellowships when the Folger reopens. You can subscribe to their [Research Bulletin](#) if you would like to keep informed.

Recovering enslaved lives in nineteenth-century British Guiana: reading sources ‘below the waterline’

Posted on March 10, 2022



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My PhD research focuses on the relationship between plantation slavery, indentured labour and water – both salt and fresh – in nineteenth-century British Guiana. It is a joint project between the Wilberforce Institute and the Centre for Water Cultures at the University of Hull’s Energy and Environment Institute, a new doctoral programme which seeks to shed light on the vital relationships between human communities and water both throughout history and in the present day.

Since embarking on my research in September 2021, I have found that water permeates many different kinds of historical source but rarely becomes their central subject. Its trace must often be found in the margins of records outwardly concerned with something different, and it frequently acts as a kind of foundation that conditions the actions and relationships of the people whose lives I am studying. There are two reasons why nineteenth-century British Guiana offers such a fertile ground for this sort of analysis: its great abundance of water, and its unusually rich set of archival records. Central to this documentation is the cache of records from the Office of the Fiscal, an institution founded by the initial Dutch colonists which persisted under British rule after the three colonies which comprised British Guiana – Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo – were captured in 1796.



Detail from *A Map of Part of Dutch Guyana; Containing the Colonies of Essequibo, Demerary & Berbice, in which are Described all the Lands Granted under the Batavian Government. Surveyed in 1798, and 1802, by Major von Bouchenroeder, with Additions* (London: William Faden, 1804). The Atlantic Ocean lies at the top edge of the image, with the River Berbice winding down from the coast in the centre. New Amsterdam, the capital of Berbice where the Fiscal was based, is indicated by a square. Prospect and Vrouw Johanna plantations are respectively indicated by a triangle and a circle.

The Fiscal was the second-ranking official in the colony after the lieutenant-governor, and heard the complaints free and enslaved inhabitants of the colony brought against one another in a court convened for the purpose in the capital. A few complaints of serious crimes like robbery or murder were brought by white planters and managers, but the overwhelming majority were civil

complaints brought by the enslaved against their owners and overseers. These records are not unmediated: the speech of the enslaved was clearly edited by the clerk who transcribed it, in order to fit a preconceived template of appropriate register for the courtroom setting. Many cases involved slaves who primarily communicated using Dutch Creole, in which case a court-appointed translator further influenced the import of their words. Such manipulations of oral evidence were conducted in real time and most changes appear aimed at increasing legibility. Some entries seem hurried, with grammatical inconsistencies suggesting that the clerk was struggling to keep up with the pace of the exchange taking place before him. Meaning was doubtless somewhat altered by such refraction, but the intended message of the enslaved speaker still shines through in most cases. Most importantly for the nature of my research, these records are filled with incidental information about the lives of complainants and witnesses which allow us access to aspects of everyday life in nineteenth-century British Guiana which were not deemed consequential enough to record elsewhere.

An especially revealing example of this can be found through reading two Fiscal cases from Berbice in the autumn of 1824. Guyana, which became independent from Britain in 1966, experiences a second dry season in between its two annual wet seasons (the first stretching from May to August and the second from December to January), and in October and November 1824 the lack of rainfall brought on a drought. The labour regime imposed by managers and drivers upon the enslaved was backbreaking and violent in ideal climatic conditions, and the additional burden required to shepherd the sugar canes through the drought fell entirely upon the shoulders of the enslaved. Managers would brook no excuse for a reduction in output, as their usually distant absentee employers were not shy of replacing overseers they felt were not maximising the ‘efficiency’ of their estates. In turn, enslaved drivers who were responsible for maintaining the punishing pace of work risked losing their positions if the manager felt that they were no longer extracting the maximum value of labour from other enslaved people. This incentivised an intensification of the already brutal workload and system of punishments.

On 20 October 1824, a deputation of ten enslaved people from Prospect plantation, whose names were Vaness, Arance, Rodger, Secunda, Cook, Tambour, Titus, Frederick, Joe and Martin, showed the Fiscal’s investigators around the estate and complained of the harsh new workload imposed over the preceding few weeks. Their main grievance was that, in addition to novel tasks

imposed by the estate's new owners to combat the drought such as deepening irrigation trenches to draw in more water and spending more time watering the young cane due to be harvested in the spring, they were still expected to work until nearly midnight carrying timber from the canalside to the engine house to feed the furnaces. The estate manager, one J. Paterson, responded by claiming that the complainants were particularly resentful because 'some are punt men and others fire men', meaning slaves with respective responsibility for plying the rivers and canals in barges or maintaining the furnaces for which the timber was destined. In an all-too-common outcome the Fiscal sided with the testimony of the manager and declared sanctimoniously that the new tasks were a 'necessity ... without which the manufactory of sugar cannot be effected'; evidently he gave no thought at all to the fact that the material welfare of the enslaved people forced to cultivate the sugar may also be important to the process (The National Archives, CO 116/140, ii, ff. 16-29).

Just over two weeks later, on Friday, 5 November 1824 Piet, an enslaved carpenter on Vrouw Johanna coffee plantation, appeared before the Fiscal in New Amsterdam to protest an unfair flogging for allegedly having incompetently repaired the water mill on the estate. The mill would not grind the recently-harvested coffee, and Piet was punished for this in spite of his protestations that the trenches for feeding water toward the mill were completely dry. When questioned about this, the 'part proprietor' of the plantation, C. Favre, claimed that there was plentiful water, and that Piet was lying. Backed up by the driver who depended on him for his continued higher status, Favre did not have to try very hard to convince the Fiscal of his version of events (The National Archives, CO 116/140, ii, ff. 31-33).



This wrought-iron Christianburg Waterwheel in Linden, Guyana, was constructed in 1855 to power a sawmill. The waterwheel which powered the coffee mill on Vrouw Johanna plantation would have been smaller and almost certainly constructed from wood (image source: <https://tourismguyana.gy/christianburg-waterwheel/>)

As is often the case with complaints brought before British Guiana's fiscals, both matters were dismissed out of hand. While the Fiscal's relationship with the plantocracy was sometimes tense – any planter whose slave complained was automatically fined, and until 1816 the Fiscal was entitled to keep a proportion – the Fiscal was nonetheless a central part of the white supremacist regime. Like many of his forerunners and successors Berbice's incumbent fiscal since 1819, M.S. Bennett, owned several estates and shared the prejudices of his peers. Complaints were declared to be spurious far more often than they were upheld, and the Fiscal regularly sentenced complainants to further brutal punishments. The man identified by the Prospect manager as the ringleader, Vaness, received 45 lashes for insubordination, while Piet the carpenter was sentenced to 37.

The examples I have described reveal the ways in which ecological disturbance of the plantation regime could exacerbate existing tensions. After all, unfair punishment and overwork, along with insufficient food, are some of the most frequent subjects of court proceedings in the colony and drought, combined with the vicious incentive structures created by the plantation economy, meant that the lives of the enslaved materially worsened in all three areas. The drought is not explicitly mentioned in either of these cases, and only passingly alluded to in a third which mentions 'the great scarcity of grass owing to the heavy dry

season' (The National Archives, CO 116/140, ii, f. 51). Instead, it is submerged out of sight. It is only by reading these sources 'below the waterline' that the power of water to motivate so many diverse aspects of life in nineteenth-century British Guiana becomes clear.

Slaves in the Asylum System

Posted on March 3, 2022



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Jeff Morgan, one of our newest Honorary Research Fellows, is a Trustee of the City of Sanctuary Movement and former Medical Officer to Hull University. In this blog he offers his thoughts on attitudes to asylum in Britain.

It has often been claimed that Britain has a 'proud historical record' of welcoming refugees. There are instances when such a boast is justified. It is possible, though, to lift the veil of patriotic smugness to reveal a rather different reality. Thus, it is not too great a surprise that [current attitudes across the UK to those seeking sanctuary are found to be nuanced](#).

In the light of conflicting beliefs, consequent legislative controls and media responses, I contend that the lot of those seeking asylum here now fulfils many of the criteria defining 'modern slavery'.

As far back as 1517, angry Londoners rose up against refugees lodged around St Pauls, where they had sought a new chance in life. [The Evil May Day Riot](#) of that Spring ended with scores beaten and burned out of their homes by over a thousand unemployed apprentices. The fiery preaching of a Dr Bell had lit the fuse. Claiming that foreigners 'eat the bread from poor fatherless children', he beseeched all Englishmen 'to cherish and defend themselves, and to hurt and grieve aliens.'



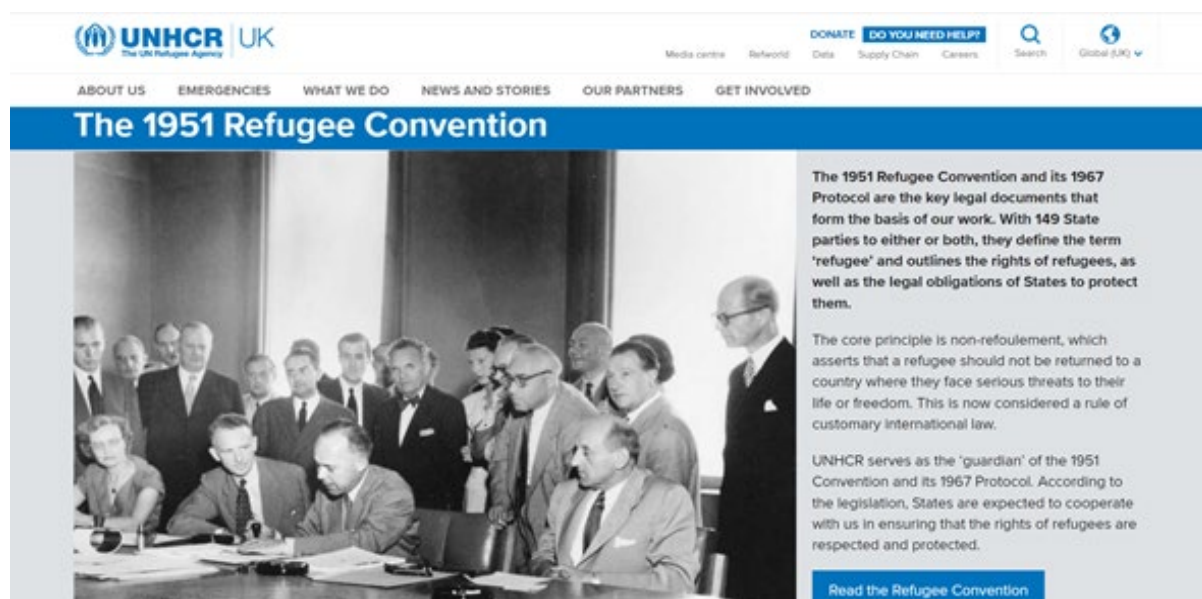
Evil May Day Riots in Cheapside, London, in 1517

In the seventeenth century, King William III floated the idea of free naturalisation for refugees. Sir John Knight, MP for Bristol, thereupon declared: [‘Let us first kick the Bill out of The House – then the foreigners out of the Kingdom!’](#) Mr Speaker did order this particularly xenophobic speech burnt, while its prime victims, the industrious Huguenots, mostly went on to prosper in England. Nevertheless, the English nursed mixed feelings, some offering a genuine welcome to the incomers while others harboured deep resentment.

There are also numerous twentieth century examples in which the attitudes of the British can be called to account. While Britain held the Palestine Mandate (1920-1948) the entry of Jewish refugees into ‘The Holy Land’ was fiercely restricted by our maritime patrols and British agents based in Greek and Italian

ports. Measures intensified once war broke out and the flow of persecuted Jews fleeing Europe swelled. A confidential memo prepared by the Foreign Office & Colonial Office in January of 1940 reveals the objective then at hand 'As it is obviously impossible to touch the main source of the traffic which is in German territory, the objective of the countermeasures must be to prevent the transit and embarkation of parties of Jews in countries bordering on Germany.' (D. Scott Fitzgerald, *Refuge Beyond Reach*, 2019, pp 25-32)

In 1951, in the wake of the enormous wartime displacements, Britain signed the [UN Refugee Convention](#). Its core principle was 'non-refoulement'. We committed never to return an asylum-seeking individual to a country where he/she has a well-founded fear of persecution. Yet years of involvement in the lives of very many sanctuary seekers have led me to a personal perception of the thrust of our nation's Asylum System. In the effort to prove that applicants' well-founded fears have no basis, it would seem that subtle means are employed to configure them as 'lacking in credibility'. Such allegations are frequently based upon matters unconnected with, or only indirectly related to, the main incidents of persecution suffered in their homelands.



UN Refugee Convention, 1951

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work. When a decision is long delayed, however, they can apply for a 'Shortage Occupation'. For the jobs so listed, (famously including 'Male Ballet Dancer', 'Senior Nuclear Waste Engineer' and 'Paediatric Neuro-Radiologist'), they are invariably unqualified. Refused leave-to-remain, they usually fall into destitution and homelessness. Despite the modest payments under Sections 98, 95 and 4, they exist in a state of legal, social,

occupational and psychological limbo. 'Contingency' and 'Dispersal' accommodation can be shifted at short notice to anywhere in the country. A substantial drifting population of hopeless, rootless and unintegrated victims awaits final decisions on status, detention or deportation. Such decisions can sometimes take fifteen years to resolve.

Meantime, individuals lack agency over so many freedoms taken for granted by the rest of us. Their destinies lie totally in the gift of the Home Office. They can choose neither their billets nor control their daily lives. They endure the 'unfree labour' of forced unemployment. They are effectively denied access to education, banking and elements of state healthcare. Their dignity is eroded by institutional disbelief in their accounts of maltreatment, lack of appreciation for their former social or professional positions, achievements, skills and qualities and by the politically-generated 'hostile environment'.

The proposed [Nationality & Borders Bill will tighten the grip of that hostile environment](#). It will add criminality to the burden borne by those who enter by *non-legal* routes. It will demand of terrified new arrivals the full disclosure to British officials of every shameful detail of their torture, because delayed revelations will become inadmissible. For the entire period while their claims are determined they will be confined to substantial 'Accommodation Centres', excluding any understanding of British culture or integration into local communities otherwise willing to welcome them.

Furthermore, I believe that those seeking sanctuary in this country are potentially at risk of exploitation and abuse by those who would take them into enforced servitude 'under the radar'.

It is my contention that those seeking sanctuary in this country have much in common with the slaves of previous centuries. Displaced far from their homelands and robbed of any agency over their present or future existence, they are rigorously controlled over periods of unpredictable duration by all-powerful and uncompassionate authorities.

A silver lining: How Covid forced me to delve deeper into the archives

Posted on February 24, 2022



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Saphia Fleury reflects on the changes that had to be made to her research methodology as a result of Covid-19 and the questions this raised.

The ink was barely dry on my ethics approval form when the first Covid lockdown was announced. Overnight, my research plan – which involved extensive travel and face-to-face interviews with migrants and practitioners – became about as feasible as a voyage to the Moon. The focus of my investigation

was the experiences of children during and after the volcanic eruptions on Montserrat. There was so little information about this period in the archives that conducting interviews with former evacuees had appeared to be the only possible methodology.

Covid forced me to turn the problem on its head and ask why the archival information was so scant. Montserrat is a British Overseas Territory, and its volcanic catastrophe took place less than 30 years ago. Around half of the island's population had migrated to the UK in the later 1990s – up to 5,000 people. Why, then, did British repositories hold so little evidence as to the nature and impacts of the disaster? I am not a historian by training, but my background is in investigative human rights research. I approached the problem as a detective would, casting the net wide to gather all the extant evidence of what happened on the island during the volcanic crisis. This involved extensive scanning of diverse sources including Hansard, newspaper archives, scientific records, government evaluations and Select Committee hearings, MPs' correspondence, orders of service for memorial events, children's poetry, and even self-published autobiographical accounts of the disaster.

I became suspicious when my efforts were frequently thwarted. Key records were missing, or responses to Freedom of Information requests suggested they had never existed to begin with. Even lists of the names of the dead were inconsistent; sources could not agree on who had perished in the disaster. It struck me that this confusion over the identities of the deceased would be unthinkable had the crisis taken place on the British mainland. Following the Kings Cross fire in London in 1987, the British Transport Police spent 16 years conducting painstaking investigations to uncover the identity of the 31st victim. By contrast, the lack of a definitive record of events surrounding the deaths on Montserrat symbolised, for me, a lack of executive interest in the victims of the catastrophe, both living and dead.

This feeling was borne out by my unsuccessful requests to government ministries for official statistics on the numbers evacuated. A former UK Government employee involved in the emergency response on Montserrat helped me to explain the gaps in the statistics, stating that s/he had personally recorded the change in population using information from landing and departure forms:

“From this data it was possible to track the downward movement of the resident population and also small upward trends when Montserratians returned in order to enlist on the government Help schemes for migration to other islands or UK. Nobody requested this information and indeed no-one acknowledged it either. It was distributed to the Governor’s Office, Chief Minister, DFID [UK Department for International Development] and [my] immediate boss in London”. (Anonymous interviewee)

In spite of their efforts, the information recorded by this individual did not appear in any of the official documents I uncovered. I was forced to conclude that poor record-keeping, including failure to record reported figures, stemmed from a combination of disinterest, ineptitude, and possibly also an attempt to hide certain facts from examination, despite, in some cases, the best efforts of civil servants to keep records. A serious charge, yes, but one upheld by further frustrating attempts to uncover the facts. Instead, I pieced together a picture of the evacuation from snippets of information in around a dozen disparate sources. To this day, it appears that nobody knows the true number, or ultimate destinations, of those evacuated.



Image: Island of Montserrat

Crucial to my research was an Evaluation Report commissioned by DFID in 1999 to evaluate the UK Government's response to the crisis. Volume I of the Evaluation Report is available online. Volume II, however, was redacted from the online version; only its contents page remained visible. I made three separate requests to DFID, the Home Office, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the redacted information. On each occasion I was told that Volume II was not available. I traced a retired civil servant who was listed in Volume I as having been interviewed for the evaluation. They provided an ISBN number for Volume II, from a photocopy of the back cover of the report in their personal files. This allowed me to call up a copy from the British Library's Boston Spa repository. It was unredacted. A query to the British Library research service confirmed that I was the first person to request the item, meaning it had not been previously viewed by researchers. It remains unclear to me why Volume II was redacted from the publicly available Evaluation Report, or why the government departments mentioned were unable or unwilling to provide a copy. Interestingly though, the findings of Volume II on the official response were highly critical of both the UK and Montserrat governments. Is this why they were withheld? Or was the omission accidental?

A further piece in the puzzle, which took some eighteen months to trace, was the conclusions to the Coroner's Inquest report into the volcano deaths. I made numerous requests through official channels to government departments and officials, both on Montserrat and in the UK, to access the full report. Most of these were completely ignored. I also contacted numerous individuals, including the former Premier, Governor and Coroner of Montserrat. None were able to track down a copy. The Coroner's concluding remarks were eventually provided via a further FoI request to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), which took five months to fulfil while officials 'reached a decision on where the balance of the public interest lies'. My attempts to access the report in its entirety, which reportedly runs to several hundred pages and includes lengthy evidence and witness testimony, has thus far proved futile. The former Coroner who conducted the Inquest expressed to me his surprise that the report was not publicly available, since: 'one of the purposes of Inquests is to make recommendations to avoid untimely deaths in future [so] their conclusions are meant to be available to all to read'.

Additional records documenting the evacuation and resettlement of Montserratians, held at the National Archives and Bishopsgate Institute, were

opened to the public following further requests which I made in 2021. They had previously been closed to scrutiny.



Image: National Archives, Kew, UK.

The unusual lengths to which I had to go to trace documents related to this study are indicative of the elusiveness of information relating to Montserrat and the volcanic crisis, which suggests at best a deprioritisation of Montserrat by the UK authorities, and at worst a deliberate cover-up of policy decisions towards Montserrat. More positively, the success I eventually had in tracing these records is due to the many helpful individuals who assisted me, both in the UK and Montserrat.

Bringing these varied sources together for the first time allows a new story to be told about the evacuation of Montserrat, one which has remained hidden for almost three decades. The voices of the evacuees are still largely excluded, making this an incomplete picture. Nevertheless, it is thanks to the restrictions imposed on my primary research by Covid that the public now has access to a

broader range of materials to aid future investigations into a significant period in Montserrat's – and Britain's – history.

Facing Unpleasant Facts: Pondering British Slave Trade Abolition

Posted on February 17, 2022



Professor David Richardson

Emeritus Professor and Former Director of the Wilberforce Institute

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As his new book *Principles and Agents: The British Slave Trade and Its Abolition* is published, Professor David Richardson considers the power of ordinary people to effect social change.

In an essay published in 1946, the anti-imperialist George Orwell explained why he wrote. Orwell recognised egoism – the need ‘to be talked about’ or even ‘to be remembered after death’ – as a motivator of writing. He also claimed to have ‘a facility with words and a power of facing unpleasant facts’, going on to point to historical impulse and political purpose as driving his literary endeavours. The impulse included a desire to uncover ‘true facts and store them up for the use of posterity’; the purpose, an ambition ‘to alter other people’s idea of the kind of society that they should strive after’ (George Orwell, *Animal Farm and Selected Essays* (Wordsworth Classics, Ware, Hertfordshire, 2021), 203, 205-6).

Published a year after *Animal Farm*, his masterful attack on the wartime British ally Stalin who he saw as betraying the Russian Revolution, Orwell's essay provided a philosophical rationale for other of his works, notably *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published a year before his death in 1950 and which constituted a satire on the evils of totalitarianism and unrestrained power. But his 1946 essay is relevant to writings on other historical questions concerning the use and abuse of such power, including British imperialism, to which Orwell often alluded, and, more specifically, the story of British abolitionism and transatlantic slavery, about which he appears to have written very little, if anything, yet from which his ancestors seemingly profited (Wikipedia.org). Interestingly, re-interpretations of abolitionism from Marxist or pseudo-Marxist perspectives began to appear at the time that Orwell was writing. They identified abolitionist impulses with wider revolutionary events in America, Britain, France, and Haiti, portraying them as appropriated or betrayed by motives other than the humanitarianism that informed earlier assessments of British slave trade abolition in 1807. In such reformulations, policy decisions relating to British slaving and ultimately Caribbean slavery were driven by calculation of British economic self-interest, not morality, as the nation industrialised. Put another way, British antislavery was integral to a capitalist-driven ideological shift from mercantilism to *laissez-faire* during the Industrial Revolution.

Political interventions to end the slave trade and slavery were, however, not costless. In the British case, as I show in my book *Principles and Agents: The British Slave Trade and its Abolition* (Yale University Press, New Haven CT, 2022), the campaign against the slave trade occurred as British slaving was at its height and when its domination of the Atlantic slave trade was at its peak. The campaign lasted twenty years from 1787 to 1807. Driven primarily by moral values, it was resisted by powerful and well represented pro-slavery interests in Parliament that highlighted slavery's net contribution to the British economy. Such claims find validation in some recent historical research (Klas Ronnback, 'On the Economic Importance of the Slave Plantation Complex to the British Economy in the Eighteenth Century: A Value-Added Approach', *Journal of Global History*, 13, no 3 (2018), 309-27; Ronnback, 'Governance, Value-Added and Rents in Plantation Slavery-Based Value-Chains', *Slavery & Abolition*, 42, no 1 (2021), 130-50). Unsurprisingly, dire economic consequences were predicted for Britain and its slave colonies should the longstanding and legally sanctioned trade in enslaved Africans be abolished. In the end it was not economics but national security issues in the middle of a titanic power struggle with Napoleonic France, and that included the security of the West Indian slave colonies following the

slave-led Haitian revolution of 1791-1804, that accounted for the passage of the slave trade abolition act of 1807. The timing of that act owed more to the geopolitics of war and to fears of slave rebellion than the advancement of capitalist interests.

As my book shows, the humanitarian concerns that first motivated British abolitionism from the 1780s had long roots, developing in parallel with growth of British slaving activity from the 1640s onward. They became enmeshed, in turn, in continuing debates about the nature and political ramifications of Britain's emerging American empire. The issues were aired in scientific, religious, and philosophical writings of the later seventeenth century. And they evolved in intellectual content, as well as in social reach and intensity, in the century before the age of revolutions that began with the War of American Independence in 1776-1783. The process embodied for some a profound disquiet, even anger, at the nation's involvement in enslaving Africans as fellow humans in pursuit of imperial goals. For a nation imbued with a sense of its own people's personal freedom as well as emergent notions of empathy or benevolence, trafficking enslaved Africans for economic gain became an unpleasant, and for increasing numbers, unacceptable, facet of British empire building. Such ideas surfaced in both imaginative literature and the press as well as in religious tracts and philosophical treatises, some of which professed incompatibilities between human trafficking and slavery and notions of human progress and civilised society. Underneath the rising scale of British slaving activity therefore there existed simmering ideological tensions at home over it. These have been largely neglected or, when mentioned, usually seen as of marginal importance before the 1780s.

Those tensions, however, became politicised in the 1770s during the deepening crisis between Britain and its mainland North American colonies. They prompted David Hartley, MP for Kingston upon Hull, to propose a motion in the House of Commons in 1776 condemning the slave trade on grounds of its inhumanity. That was thirteen years before the Hull-born William Wilberforce, MP for Yorkshire and designated parliamentary leader of the formal anti-slave trade campaign, addressed the House on the issue in May 1789. Wilberforce's speech, eulogised by Melvyn Bragg (*Twelve Books that Changed the World* (Sceptre, 2007)), coincided with a huge eruption of extra-parliamentary outrage against the trade in 1787-1792 that forced Parliament first seriously to address and then ultimately to resolve the domestic ideological conflict surrounding it. If, as noted, security issues dictated the timing of the 1807 abolition act, it was publicly articulated

humanitarian concerns over British slaving that inspired, underwrote and drove the anti-slave trade campaign that provoked parliamentary action.



ANNO QUADRAGESIMO SEPTIMO

GEORGII III. REGIS.

C A P. XXXVI.

An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

[25th March 1807.]

WHEREAS the Two Houses of Parliament did, by their Resolutions of the Tenth and Twenty-fourth Days of June One thousand eight hundred and six, severally resolve, upon certain Grounds therein mentioned, that they would, with all practicable Expedition, take effectual Measures for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, in such Manner, and at such Period as might be deemed adviseable: And whereas it is fit upon all and each of the Grounds mentioned in the said Resolutions, that the same should be forthwith abolished and prohibited, and declared to be unlawful; be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the First Day of May One thousand eight hundred and seven, the African Slave Trade, and all and all manner of dealing and trading in the Purchase, Sale, Barter, or Transfer of Slaves, or of Persons intended to be sold, transferred, used, or dealt with as Slaves, practised or carried on, in, at, to or from any Part of the

From May 1, 1807, the Slave Trade shall be abolished.

4 L

Coast

“Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807,” TPL *Virtual Exhibits*, accessed January 31, 2022, <http://omeka.tplcs.ca/virtual-exhibits/items/show/143>.

As a writer and journalist, George Orwell would doubtless have admired the many contributions of eighteenth-century British imaginative literature and newspapers that encouraged people to campaign openly for ‘progressive’ social change such as slave trade abolition in early industrialising Britain. That campaign was a prime example of an emergent mass politics in Britain during the early years of industrialisation and the rapid urbanisation of British society to which it gave rise. It involved a mobilisation of public opinion on an unprecedented scale and one unmatched by any other anti-slave trade movement in history. The movement continued beyond 1807 in looking to suppress slaving activities by other nations. Support for both came from towns and the countryside; it transcended class, gender, religious affiliation, and race. And, while leadership of the movement in Parliament was ultimately critical in delivering formal abolition in 1807, it was the nationwide scale of petitioning against the trade in 1787-1792 and the maintenance of that public support for abolition thereafter that put outlawing the slave trade on the national political agenda and ensured that it remained there even as Britain became embroiled in war with revolutionary and later Napoleonic France in 1793-1815. That support was acknowledged a month before the abolition bill passed in March 1807 when a Jamaican sugar planter resident in Ayrshire, Scotland, observed that ‘the voice of the Country was very much in favour of this Prohibition’ (Alex Renton, *Blood Legacy*, Canongate Books Inc., Edinburgh, 2021, p. 208).

Public support for abolition extended far beyond the campaign’s political leaders that most historical studies focus on. It included hundreds of thousands of people, the mobilisation of whose feelings played a decisive part in defeating the Western world’s largest and most resilient slave trafficking regime in its prime. It was a truly remarkable and historic movement, underscoring the power of ordinary people to effect social change. As an advocate of democratic socialism, George Orwell would probably have rejoiced in that. Within it, perhaps, may also be found inspiration, even lessons, for those concerned by and committed to overcoming today’s unpleasant facts of life such as contemporary slavery, racial injustice, and the climate emergency.

ECHOES Q&A

Posted on February 10, 2022



Professor John Oldfield

Emeritus Professor and Former Director of the Wilberforce Institute

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Now the [ECHOES](#) project has formally ended, Professor John Oldfield reflects on the aims and objectives of the project, its relevance, and its impact.

What was the inspiration for this project and what did you set out to achieve?

The inspiration for this project was what the team regarded as the often problematic ‘silencing’ of Europe’s colonial history and heritage – problematic not only for Europe’s global status and reputation but also for those marginalized by these historical processes, many of them migrants from Europe’s former colonies. By confronting this entangled history, we set out to ‘Europeanize’ difficult colonial heritage. While there are significant barriers to

the creation of a shared European narrative of our colonial past, some of them political or related to different interpretations of the colonial past across member states, we believe that we need to arrive at a more equitable representation of colonial legacies across Europe.

What are the challenges/dilemmas that colonialism presents to official narratives of European heritage?

Colonialism was not an event or moment in time but a process involving the often-brutal subjugation of others – a process that created an unbridgeable gulf between colonizer and colonized. Transatlantic slavery, the treatment of indigenous peoples, the imposition of Eurocentric legal and constitutional norms on colonial subjects; all of these are examples of historical processes that were inseparable from ideas of Eurocentric power and racial (and cultural) superiority. Many of these ideas and attitudes live on – as echoes of the colonial past. The recent COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, exposed deep economic inequalities. It has also exposed worrying Eurocentric tendencies, not least when it comes to the treatment of the pandemic – as witnessed by the suggestion by two French doctors that Africa should be used as a testing ground for the efficacy of vaccines. While this was an isolated incident, research and thinking in this area have led to accusations that the Global South has been all but absent in scientific and/or medical collaborations related to COVID.

Or consider the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, which triggered massive protests across the Global South and beyond, focused on anti-racist and social justice messages, most of them embracing the rhetoric and slogans of #BlackLivesMatter. Here again, these protests – pulling down statues associated with European colonialism (Edward Colston in Bristol; King Leopold II in Belgium; Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town and Oxford), calls for the repatriation of colonial objects, renaming roads and buildings, etc. – were fueled not only by the ongoing presence of monuments of a colonial nature in public spaces across Europe but also by the marginalization and structural racism encountered by non-white communities living in Europe's cities, many of them long-term victims of prejudice and discrimination.



The empty pedestal of the statue of Edward Colton in Bristol, the day after protesters felled the statue and rolled it into the harbour. The ground is covered with Black Lives Matter placards. Caitlin Hobbes, 7 June 2020

at <https://twitter.com/Chobbs7/status/1269682491465576448/photo/1>

How did you go about achieving your objectives – and what did the project consist of in practice? Any approaches that made this project unique?

Conceptually, our starting point was the notion of colonial heritage – what does it mean? What does it stand for? We understand heritage not as a ‘thing’ – a specific set of (white) achievements – but rather as a discourse: a way of thinking and writing about objects and phenomena that constitutes them as ‘heritage’ through formal and informal acts of recognition. So, in effect, we are talking about a much more expansive and inclusive notion of heritage, both in terms of objects and actors.

To this end, we looked in-depth at a number of different contemporary heritage discourses that aspire to restore, renew, rediscover and acknowledge the multiplicity of lives, experiences, culture and knowledge of formerly colonized peoples. Museums, for instance – particularly those like Amsterdam Museum and the Museum of Warsaw, two of our case studies – have been at the forefront of efforts to decolonize their collections, looking afresh at how they interpret familiar objects and/or imagining new ways of telling familiar stories. In the same way, many contemporary artists – particularly those from non-white backgrounds – have interrogated the colonial past in new and exciting ways, offering insights that act as a form of reconciliation and healing.

Citizens groups, too, have challenged official narratives of European heritage, whether through walking tours, performances or cultural events designed to acknowledge different/difficult ‘pasts’. Again, we mapped a lot of this activity in detail, from Bristol to Marseille, from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, from Cape Town to Amsterdam. Indeed, one of our objectives was to give voice to these groups, while at the same time documenting the ways in which their varied interventions have helped to advance our understanding of contemporary heritage discourses. In this sense, our project was multi-vocal, deeply attuned to different types of knowledge, as well as different epistemologies.

What are the key lessons or approaches to emerge from this work?

While recognizing the importance of top-down initiatives, the ECHOES project emphasized the importance of grassroots movements and independent cultural actors – whether artists, curators or heritage practitioners. Such ‘mid-space actors’, we believe, bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge that needs to be incorporated into heritage practices and treated on equal terms

with other forms of knowledge. Our work also stresses the importance of intercultural ‘contact zones’, spaces where actors from different cultural backgrounds and with different resources and power engage with each other on equal terms. This necessarily involves ‘Europe’ opening up to and acknowledging the different modes of transculturation practices by marginalized groups and granting them far more agency. It also involves ‘active listening’, an approach to listening that is based on a genuine interest in the other’s perspective. Listening, we believe, is the primary characteristic of two-way communication. Who does the talking and who does the listening is key to this approach, as strengths and weaknesses are part of the positionalities of ALL diplomatic relations; not just in Global-North and Global South relations but in relations *within* the Global North and Global South. This applies as much to broader debates about cultural co-operation, as it does to the restitution of colonial objects, or the decolonization of museums and galleries.

In what fields might these results have an impact? Why, in the current context of globalization and regional tensions is this work so important?

We see our work having a major impact in a number of related fields, among them history and heritage, political science, museology and curatorship. We also set out to inform current debates around International Cultural Relations, which since 2016 has been the EU’s adopted policy framework, emphasizing (as of 2019) the importance of ‘co-operation with local stakeholders and civil society at all levels’. Our work supports this emphasis, hence the importance we attach to ‘contact zones’ and ‘active listening’ (see above). Indeed, we advocate a ‘new diplomacy’, a kind of reinvigoration of International Cultural Relations that renders the policy/programme fit for purpose. Listening and the ability to foster genuine intercultural dialogue are skills that policymakers and EU professionals at all levels need to exercise routinely. This includes an openness towards integrating a wider range of actors into diplomatic activities and involving them in policy processes.

This work is important for the reasons outlined above. The so-called migrant crisis, COVID and #BlackLivesMatter have all energized debates – across and within Europe – about culture, heritage and Europe’s reckoning with its colonial past. We have also seen how polarized these debates have become; indeed, the use of the word ‘heritage’ itself often gives rise to suggestions that dominant white European cultures are under attack from non-white protesters and radicals. So far from being threatening, we believe that these debates provide an

opportunity for Europe to rethink its relations to its colonial past. ECHOES, in sum, proposes that the history of colonialism needs to find its place in our contemporary narratives of Europe. Crucially, it needs to do so in ways which makes this difficult history a *productive* element in Europe's and the EU's engagement with the wider world, rather than an uncomfortable silence haunting its past, present and future.

What is the long-term legacy of the project?

We hope that the ECHOES project will not only shape academic and cultural debates surrounding Europe's engagement with its colonial past but also have a decisive influence on shaping policy and practice, both within EU institutional activities and programmes. In addition, we hope that Europe and the EU will go further in advocating the acceptance of a multicultural Europe as a precondition for thinking in terms of intercultural relations.



Programme of Spring Lectures at the Wilberforce Institute, 2022

Posted on February 3, 2022



Dr Chloe Wilson, Lecturer in Law, Lincoln Law School and Tom Hammond, PhD student at the University of Hull

We have a packed programme of lectures for Spring 2022, and hope you will join us in our lovely building at 27 High Street, Hull, to hear what our speakers have to say. A general overview of the programme is given below, and specific links for those who would like to stream online will be available as each talk approaches. These can be found by clicking on the 'Events' tab of our [blog](#). For more details of how to sign up to stream lectures please contact Beki Bloomfield (R.Bloomfield@hull.ac.uk). The full programme of events is also available on the 'Event Programme' tab.

We begin with our regular 'What's going on at the Wilberforce Institute' spot on Thursday 10 February at 4pm. This year we have [Dr Chloe Wilson](#), who submitted her thesis in February last year, and Tom Hammond (T.Hammond-2017@hull.ac.uk), who is in the final throes of his dissertation. Chloe's research looked at the identification and treatment of human trafficking victims, while Tom has been examining surveillance, migration and identity in Brexit Britain.

In March we have three public lectures on offer. On Thursday March 3 (4-5.30pm GMT) we are excited to welcome Dr Bruce Ragsdale, former director of the US Federal Judicial History Office, who is coming to talk to us about his recent book, *Washington at the Plow: The Founding Farmer and the Question of Slavery*. Dr Ragsdale will discuss how Washington's management of enslaved agricultural labour expands the more familiar biography of the revolutionary general and first president.

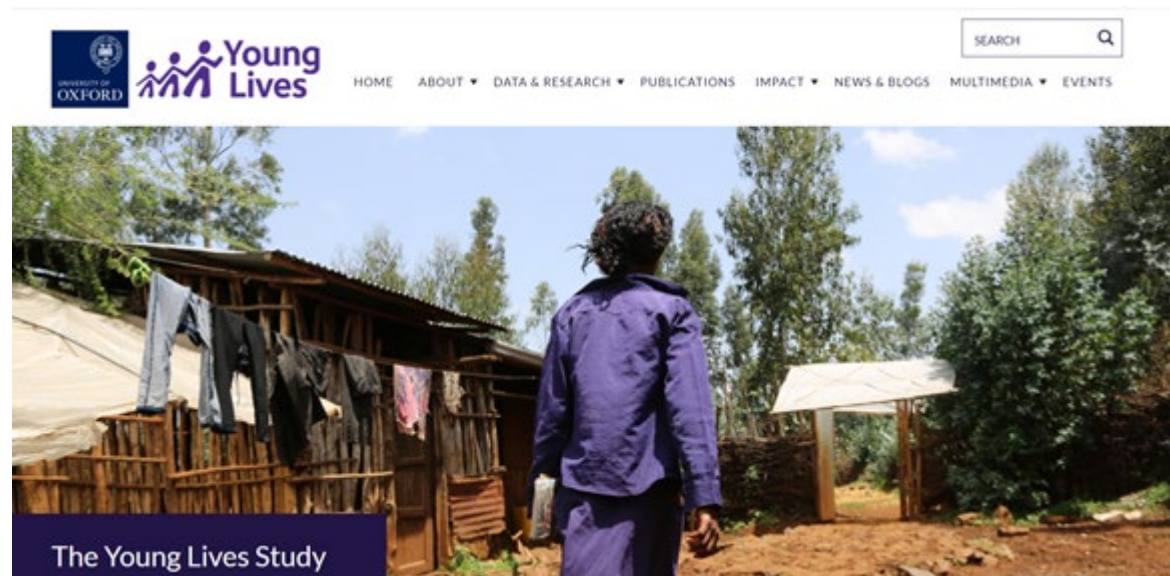
On Thursday March 17 (4-5.30pm GMT) we are delighted to welcome back [Dr Filipa Ribeiro da Silva](#), Senior Researcher at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, who worked as a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Wilberforce Institute between 2009 and 2012. Her current research interests focus on the history of population, labour, migration and trade in Sub-Saharan Africa during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. She has also been involved in the translation of Inquisition materials, recently published as *African Voices from the Inquisition*.

On Thursday March 24 (4-5.30pm GMT) we are thrilled to welcome [Dr Lucy Mayblin](#) (@LucyMayblin) Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sheffield, who will be talking on the subject of 'Criminal assistance: Understanding Crimes of Solidarity'. Dr Mayblin's research focuses on asylum, human rights, policy-making, and the legacies of colonialism, and her latest book, with Joe Turner, is *Migration Studies and Colonialism* (2021). She was recently awarded the UK Philip Leverhulme Prize for her research achievements in the area of asylum and migration.

In April we have two talks. At the first, on Thursday April 7 (4-5.30pm BST), we are delighted to host one of our Honorary Fellows, [Dr Sheryllynn Haggerty](#), who will talk to us on 'Tales of the Enslaved in Jamaica, 1756'. This paper comes from a wider project based on a cache of letters sent from Jamaica to Britain that forms the basis of her forthcoming book.

At the second, on Thursday April 28 (4-5.30pm BST) we are thrilled that [Professor Geraldine van Bueren QC](#), is coming to discuss 'Class Discrimination and Children's Rights'. Professor Van Bueren QC held the Chair of International Human Rights Law at Queen Mary University of London and is Visiting Fellow at Kellogg College, Oxford. She is a member of Doughty Street Chambers and was appointed an honorary Queen's Counsel in recognition of her contributions to national and international law.

Finally, we are excited to round off our programme of Spring Lectures with a talk on Thursday May 12 (4-5.30pm BST) by [Dr Virginia Morrow](#), Visiting Professor at University College London. Dr Morrow will summarise 15 years of research findings on changing trends in children's work from the Young Lives study, an international study of childhood poverty following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru and Vietnam (www.younglives.org.uk).



Seminar Report: Slavery and Servitude at the University of Leiden, 25-26 November 2021

Posted on December 23, 2021



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On 25 and 26 November 2021, we attended a two-day virtual seminar on slavery and servitude across a range of chronological and geographic contexts, as part of a collaboration between the Wilberforce Institute, Leiden University Slavery Studies Association, and the Bonn University Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies. The seminar was organised and coordinated by Professor Damian Pargas, who was originally to host the participants at the University of Leiden. Sadly, the Netherlands entered a Covid-19 lockdown the week before the seminar was due to commence and the event was moved online. While we were

disappointed not to be able to meet the other participants face-to-face, the seminar was nevertheless a highly successful and engaging experience which showcased the diversity and vitality of slavery studies as a discipline.



Leiden's historic Pieterskerk, where the Puritan founders of the Plymouth Colony worshipped for more than a decade before departing for the New World in 1620.

(Image: <https://www.visitleiden.nl/en/locations/2974987658/pieterskerk>)

The seminar was divided into five panels, each chaired by leading scholars such as Jeff Fynn-Paul, Oran Kennedy, Karwan Fatah-Black, Remco Breuker and the Wilberforce Institute's own Trevor Burnard. Contributions from PhD candidates discussed patterns of enslavement and dependency in spatial and temporal contexts as diverse as early modern Moldavia and present-day Qatar, medieval Korea and nineteenth-century north Germany. On the first day of the seminar, as part of a panel on the complex relationship between slavery and freedom during the age of Atlantic revolutions, Lance presented some of his research on the Jamaican Maroons of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His research explores cultural identities within Maroon communities and their relationship with the enslaved and the British within colonial Jamaica. The Maroons at first were runaways, fleeing plantation life, burning plantations and even capturing and freeing some of the enslaved. In response to the growing

Maroon populations in Jamaica, the British went to war with them. However, the British were unable to put them down, so instead they made peace with them in 1739, on the condition that the Maroons put down slave rebellions and return runaways. Using both primary records from British officials and oral histories from the Maroons, Lance gets into the voices of the Maroons in order to understand how they saw themselves differently from the enslaved populations in Jamaica.



This image was created in 1834 and is a depiction of the Anglo-Maroon war that concluded with the peace treaty of 1739. (Image: Illustration by Universal History Achieve, Getty Images, National Geographic.)

On the second morning of the seminar, Fred presented some of his research on the cultural and material roles of water in nineteenth-century Guyanese

plantation slavery. Part of a joint project between the Wilberforce Institute and the new Centre for Water Cultures at the University of Hull's Energy and Environment Institute, Fred's PhD explores how the natural and man-made hydrology of South America's Guiana coast influenced the development of slavery in the area and was in turn influenced by the planters' desire to bend the environment to their own extractive ends. Using a cache of judicial records from the first few decades of the nineteenth century Fred sought to show how enslaved people negotiated their existence in this watery world, adapting to life in constant proximity to rivers, canals, and the Caribbean Sea in surprising and under-studied ways. Case studies included the desire of enslaved watermen on Guyana's rivers to assert their position of relative privilege wherever they could; a free sailor's struggle to regain his freedom after being deceived and enslaved; and the secret, dangerous rituals performed to secure the intercession of a powerful water-spirit.



A nineteenth-century map revealing the extent of hydrological infrastructure in the British colony of Demerara on the northern coast of South America. A contemporary observer described each plantation as 'a complete island within itself, and dammed on all sides' (Image: Detail from Alexander Gordon, 'Plan of the Government Lands in the Colony of Demerara', 1823, The National Archives, MR 1/941)

In spite of the broad range of topics discussed at the conference, spanning the entire globe and over six hundred years of history, several major themes emerged. These included a more complicated relationship between the concepts of 'freedom' and 'slavery' than the simple binary to which they are often reduced, with an array of subtle distinctions, hierarchies, and sub-categories instead

suggesting a continuum of constant negotiation between the two. In addition, consistent areas of focus between the papers included the 'veil' cast over the legacy of slavery in superficially non-slaveholding polities like eighteenth-century Hamburg and Bremen, and the role of water in both micro- and macrohistorical perspective as both a conduit for symbolic/religious meanings and the basis of vast continental empires.

We are both extremely grateful for the opportunity to present and receive feedback on our work in such a collegiate environment, and would like to extend our thanks to Damian Pargas for organising the seminar as well as to all of the other participants and panel chairs for enabling such productive discussions.

Conference Report: Climate change is driving modern slavery

Posted on December 20, 2021



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The University of Hull is in a unique position to consider the effects of climate change as a driver of modern slavery, having two institutes dedicated to the study of these distinct but interconnected topics. On 11 October 2021 the Wilberforce Institute hosted a virtual conference to formulate an holistic approach to understanding this nexus. The event was supported by Anti-Slavery International and co-organised by Chris O’Connell of Dublin City University. Professor Trevor Burnard, the Wilberforce Institute’s director, welcomed the conference as ‘the start of several conversations about climate change and modern slavery’. Hull’s Energy and Environment Institute, a world-leader in researching sustainable solutions to climate change, was also represented at the event by its director, Dan Parsons. Professor Parsons noted how the UK in particular has a ‘moral responsibility to act’, given that as a country it has the

fourth largest total historical cumulative CO₂ emissions, and that much of the nation's wealth has been built on a combination of slavery and high-emitting industrial practices.

Throughout the day, academics, practitioners and people with lived experiences of environmental change and slavery came together to share their research, practical solutions, and hopes for the future. Key-note speaker, the Bolivian Indigenous rights leader Wilma Mendoza Miro, described how various exploitative and ecologically damaging practices are encroaching on Indigenous lands. She concluded that a new approach to policy-making is urgently needed – one which puts human life, not wealth-creation, at the centre of decision-making.

Jasmine O'Connor OBE, the CEO of Anti-Slavery International, described how her organisation recognises the potential of climate change 'to drive slavery on an unimaginable scale'. Anti-Slavery International is pushing for a just and fair transition to a carbon neutral world, which puts decent jobs at the heart of the transition.

Other participants described various exploitative labour contexts around the world, from highly polluting brick kilns in South Asia, to fishing off the coast of Ghana, to deforestation in Brazil. The theme of climate-induced migration and its risks came up numerous times. While slavery is often considered a problem of the past, and climate change a threat in the future, both issues are converging in the present day to create an ecological and human disaster.

The conference concluded with participants signing up to a letter directed at the President Delegate of the COP26 climate change meeting in Glasgow, highlighting the relationship between contemporary slavery, environmental destruction and climate change, and calling for a just transition.

The full report of the conference, including summaries of all the presentations and further discussion of the issues at stake, is now available as a free PDF [here](#)



Caption: [Melbourne Global climate strike on Sep 20, 2019.](#)

Love as Justice: Confronting the Patriarchal Dynamics of Child Abuse

Posted on December 16, 2021



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We have all been socialised to embrace patriarchal thinking, to embrace an ethics of domination which says the powerful have a right to rule over the powerless and can use any means to subordinate them. In the hierarchies of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, male domination of females is condoned, but so too is adult domination of children.

(Feminism is for Everybody by bell hooks, 2000:74)

Long before Me Too became a viral hashtag in 2017, [Tarana Burke](#), a prolific antiracist activist and community organiser, was working at a youth camp when a 13-year-old sought her out and began disclosing her experiences of sexual violence. Feeling ill-equipped to deal with the information she passed it on to someone else. The girl never came back. Burke felt [guilty for rejecting](#) the teenager instead of saying ‘me too’. Burke herself had been turned away from a rape crisis centre without the requisite police referral, and so [developed workshops](#) in Alabama’s secondary schools where she asked female students to write ‘me too’ if they needed help. Expecting only a few responses she instead received twenty ‘me toos’ from among the thirty students. A decade later, Burke’s attentiveness to the transformative power of empathy instigated a global reckoning with the pervasive relationship between male dominance and sexual violence. It led, famously, to the dethroning of some [high-profile predators](#).

Bringing abusers to justice is imperative. But justice for survivors requires resources other than outrage and additional reckonings, perhaps less likely to feed popular predilections for scandal, or the entirely counterproductive [vilification of front-line workers](#) that accompanies the most egregious child abuse cases. The feminist movement, bell hooks suggests, was the [‘first to call attention to the fact that ours is a culture that does not love children’](#), and that child abuse is rooted in the patriarchal systems of dominance that structure society. As a result, children are seen as parental property and denied meaningful civil and political rights. Though caring is, traditionally, the preserve of the feminine, in reality, ‘women are often the primary culprits in everyday violence against children simply because they are the primary parental caregivers’ (hooks, 2000:73). Recognising adult-child relations as patriarchal implicates adults of all genders.

Confronting the patriarchal dynamics of child abuse also requires us to consider the sociological aspects of shame, and how shame conditions attitudes, relationships and practices targeting children. Shaming, hooks argues, provides the foundations for other abuses. It can, for example, be imprinted upon children who fail to perform expected gender roles. Historically, it was affixed to [‘illegitimate’ children](#). It contributes to the conditioning that makes men far less likely to [disclose abuse](#). It is also felt by those who grow up outside of the idealised family unit. There is a reason, as Lemn Sissay notes in *My Name is Why*, that parents use the care system as a threat to discipline their children. It reflects the [deeply ingrained prejudices](#) regarding the looked after and unparented – ‘a child in care is living proof of the dysfunction at the heart of

every functioning family [...] It's a very serious point. It's almost as though a child in care is toxic, but it's [when we look at children like this that the abuse can happen](#)'.

Far too many young people struggle to elicit care or protection from the adult guardians of state resources within, and outside of, the care system. The 'adultification' of children racialised as black denies them [the benefits of being viewed as innocent](#), while children from communities historically mistreated by statutory services are rightly suspicious that the state will act in their best interests. This is the reason why [Gitanmaax members](#) blocked the removal of an Indigenous child in British Columbia in October 2021. In the UK, the struggle for young people to elicit help is compounded by a [decade of austerity politics](#) and short-sighted policy making. In 2012, the problem of child sexual exploitation in Rochdale was addressed, in large part, through the tireless work of Sara Rowbotham, a sexual health worker whose evidence was used to convict nine men. Several of their victims were in state care. Two years later Rowbotham was made redundant. In a [2017 radio interview](#) and on the verge of tears she said, 'it's really frustrating [...] I spent a lot of time thinking it didn't really make much sense. I really thought that there was one point where I was really on top of my game, I knew what I was doing [...] My staff did incredible work with really hard to help young people.' According to research by the NSPCC it takes, on average, seven years for a young person to [disclose sexual abuse](#). It is entirely unrealistic to expect front-line services, now tasked predominantly with [crisis interventions](#), to meet these child protection needs.

Stuart Hall often referred to the [current conjuncture](#), the conditions of cultural flux that open spaces for social change and, he cautioned, posed a danger to the already marginalised. It is worth remembering that in 2014, the coalition government attempted [to privatise child protection services](#) and do away with protections inscribed in the 1989 Children Act. Public and professional outrage [defeated the proposals](#). As England's local authorities, who are responsible for children's social care, face a [two-billion-pound shortfall](#) in 2022, for-profit solutions to this ongoing crisis will likely resurface.

Until recently, I had not really considered the conjuncture my research emerged from in 2019, when I started a project on the mass migration of 130,000 children from Britain to Canada and Australia. Two years prior, in 2017, historic child migration had made headlines when the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) launched its [investigation](#) into the programmes. Gordon Brown

(whose government apologised for the schemes in 2010) suggested its findings amounted to the [worst child abuse scandal in UK history](#): 'bigger than what people have alleged about Savile. Bigger than what people have alleged about individual children's homes.' This acknowledgement is unlikely to have made its way into the public domain were it not for the snowball effects of the Jimmy Savile and '[grooming gangs](#)' exposés of 2012. ([The 'Savile Effect'](#) saw an 80% increase in reporting of sexual offences to the NSPCC). This is the critical conjuncture in which the unprecedented scale and scope of the IICSA first launched in 2014, which has, to date, included 15 separate investigations, and has seen 5,440 people testify to its [Truth Project](#). Within the cultural maelstrom of child abuse scandals that have followed, their findings now less scandalising and more anticipated, no sector and few institutions have been left unindicted in their failures to adequately protect children.

The unavoidable reality that child abuse is endemic to our societies cannot be addressed, solely, through repeated inquiry. Nor can the abusive cultures of institutions shoulder all responsibility. The emancipation of the child requires a fundamental reworking of adult-child power relations. Justice, bell hooks writes, '[is an indispensable part of love](#)', abuse and neglect negate love, but affirmation and care are its foundations. What might 'love as justice' in our relationships with children, and not just our 'own' look like? The 13-year-old who never came back to the youth camp was known as trouble, '[and she was trouble, because she was a survivor](#)'. Tarana Burke did not, at the time, feel qualified to care for the girl who 'clung' to her for help. This is not a criticism. Care work can be incredibly difficult and is highly skilled, but it is vital, and must be properly resourced if we are unwilling to accept that justice for children can only be sought retrospectively. When there are no more Tarana Burkes or Sara Rowbothams left, towards whom do we imagine these children will turn?



Caption: Stuart Hall at the first Women's Liberation Conference Creche, Oxford 1970.

Courtesy of [Women Strike UK](#).

The War That is Asylum: The Duty to Disobey

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Asylum as an institution has existed since antiquity, deeply [interwoven with laws around war, citizenship and political hierarchies](#). There have been attempts [to push its history back to the origins of humanity by rebranding it as solely a humanitarian act of offering shelter](#). However, this can hardly be called asylum as it is missing the main components of rejection and submission. As part of the practices of the western world, asylum has taken on at least two crucial functions – to reject the border-crosser and to criminalize their migration. Not only does this process portray ‘repatriation’ as an acceptable course of action but it also has the ability to push the boundaries of ethics when we are dealing with other human beings.

[The thousands of deaths at the borders](#) of our nation-states are not treated as national emergencies. Instead they are used as excuses to make the [crossing of borders for some even more hostile as a deterrent](#). [Those who do risk their lives to save people crossing borders are now also targeted as criminals](#), as the boundaries of legal-ethical lines are pushed, creating geographical spaces where individuals can be killed with impunity. During warfare the killing of another person is sanctioned by our respective nation-states: no one is going to be shocked to hear that a soldier has killed an 'enemy' while his or her country is at war. Granted, war takes on many disguises, many events are kept hidden from the general public and war crimes, killing civilians for example, are still seen as illegal. But asylum is not a war, we are told, it is humanitarianism.

In this sense asylum is not just the guardian of a geographical border but also the creator of ethical guidelines for citizens. If an asylum case is refused it becomes acceptable to discard the person who was applying for it. But if an asylum claim is accepted the person is entitled to support and advocacy from citizens to show what a humanitarian society we have cultivated. The difference between the two people is one judgement from a court room that might not know or comprehend all of the person's lived experience. Then there are people [seeking asylum in the UK who get stuck in the system for years](#), awaiting a decision or appealing while being required to exist on a lower [income than Britain's 10% poorest households](#).

Carving out the citizen was and is a colonial project, [designed to cement an allegiance between the individual and the nation-state](#). It creates duties for both parties, criminalizing the individual that betrays the nation-state and invoking protests from the nation over civil rights when the nation-state fails to uphold them. In this relationship, however, we invisibilize the non-citizen: the stateless; the asylum seeker; and the Indigenous. These are all excluded from the nation-state project and outside the contractual relationship that the citizen should have. When we speak of radical movements, particularly liberation movements, we need to then ask what kind of radical liberation we are striving for? Are we looking for the full gain of promised civil rights, or for the dismantling of the citizen relationship all together; in other words should we break the monopoly on humanity that the citizen has?

As of today large parts of humanity are citizens, and so the question should also be what are the duties of the citizen in relation to this bordered violence? By law, in Britain, we can still all commit treason, and those with precarious British

citizenship (who have been naturalized or whose parents have been naturalized) can have that citizenship stripped if this is the case. But citizenship duties go well beyond the duties to the nation-state. In fact, the exploration of citizenship duties by [Thoureau](#) and [Walzer](#) focuses on the duty that the citizen has to *disobey*. While we are being fed a notion of morality by asylum courts today, one that claims to distinguish between criminal and victim, it is the citizen's duty to refuse the legal system's monopoly on this judgement. [On the 9th of November 2021, citizens locked themselves to the road that was meant to transport people in detention to another Jamaican charter flight.](#) Whether they are to be tried by the British legal system remains to be seen, but in acts like these the citizen exercises the right to reclaim morality and humanity.

This example is not meant to obscure the constant activism of non-citizens. [Indigenous peoples have a fundamental practice of consistent resistance against the assimilation of the land and their people into the nation-state. Targeted migrants have consistently carved out paths for ourselves geographically, practically and legally to survive.](#) When it comes to asylum, the representative of the Secretary of State will stand (or sit) in court citing the safety and wellbeing of the "public" in Britain as a cause for the person seeking asylum not to be granted refugee status. The duty to disobey these border regimes is also rooted in refusing to be complicit in their violence; disobeying is the only way to acknowledge the humanity of the non-citizen.



Caption: 'Silence is compliance – A protester with a message standing on a window ledge in Whitehall.' Photo courtesy of Alisdare Hickson at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/alisdare/31903348794/>

Fieldwork: a time to learn from the ‘lived experiences of children and families’ in tea and tobacco communities

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Malawi is an agriculture-based economy where tea and tobacco contribute about 70% of total annual export earnings, 60% of which comes from tobacco alone. As one of the countries that ratified the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Convention 138 on Minimum Age of Employment, and Convention 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Malawi Government has put in place policies and legal instruments to operationalise its international obligations and committed itself to combat child labour. According to the Employment Act (2000), the minimum age for entry into employment in Malawi

is 14; however, work in tea and tobacco production is considered hazardous to children, and so the minimum age of employment is pegged at 18.

Agriculture is the single largest employer, sustaining livelihoods mainly through subsistence farming and part-time work locally known as *ganyu* in addition to jobs provided by commercial estates such as tea and tobacco. Over 84% of Malawians [live in rural areas](#) and agriculture employs 85% of working males and 94% of females.

Led by multinationals and supported by the government and its local and international stakeholders (NGOs and UN agencies), Malawi has implemented interventions to keep children from tea and tobacco work since the early 2000s. Children are banned from working in commercial tea and tobacco estates, as work in these sectors is considered hazardous and detrimental to children's growth and development by ILO standards. These bans were and are still predominantly upheld by players in tea and tobacco as a direct response to accountability pressures from consumers in Europe and North America, where most of the tea and tobacco exports from Malawi are destined. Further pressure comes from international organisations and UN agencies such as the ILO and UNICEF.

However, in recent years, reports of children's continued participation, especially in tobacco production, shocked the international community and threatened the country's export earnings and by extension, its economy. In 2019, the US government banned the importation of tobacco from Malawi, which was thought to have been produced using exploitative children's work.

For commercial tea and tobacco estates, and indeed for the country, banning children's work from tea and tobacco – probably the most outbound globally connected value chains in the Malawian economy – lowers reputational risks, which appear to be responding to consumer demands for accountability. However, little is known about the impact these bans are having on the lived experiences of children who no longer have the opportunity to work in commercial tea and tobacco estates.

This is what my study, therefore, aims to examine – the impact on under-18-year-olds of the ban from working in tea and tobacco plantations. I will be asking the following set of guiding questions:

1) To what extent have the universal minimum age policy interventions contributed to the elimination of child labour in tea and tobacco-growing communities?

2) How have the universalised minimum age policies and related interventions influenced the lives of children, their families and their communities?

3) How could interventions relating to child labour elimination in tea and tobacco-growing communities protect and empower children, families and communities?

I have decided to use the following investigative techniques to collect data: I will conduct key informant interviews targeting service providers and community leaders; set up focus group discussions; and create survey questionnaires targeting household members. The study will be conducted in the Southern Region districts of Thyolo and Mulanje (for tea production) and Zomba (for tobacco production).

I am grateful to the [Malawi University of Science and Technology](#) (MUST)'s Center for Innovation and Industrial Research (CIIR) in Thyolo District for offering to host me during the period of fieldwork. Their various capacity-building initiatives will enrich my research experience and further my career development. In addition, the stay at MUST will ensure that I have an office and access to the internet when I am not in the field for reporting and reading. In turn, I will dedicate four hours per week to any work assigned to me by the CIIR.

I now have the ethics approval from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FoSE) at the University of Hull and am in the process of applying for ethics approval with MUST's research committee. Once I get the MUST research ethics approval, I can begin my fieldwork with stakeholder mapping and consultations before field data collection proper begins. With over 60% of research costs secured, I am in the process of applying for the shortfall from the National Commission of Science and Technology (NCST)'s Small Grant Scheme, designed to support postgraduate students in research.

All in all, I am very excited to enter the field data collection phase of my PhD studies. With the support I am getting both at the University of Hull and MUST, I hope this will be successful fieldwork.



Caption: Mavuto K. Banda in Mulanje tea fields, Southern Malawi (Source: Mavuto K. Banda, 2016)

‘This is the first blues I no doubt heard in my life’: The role of African-American GIs in introducing Britain to Blues Music

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On 31st March 2013, the BBC broadcasted a documentary entitled '[Blues Britannia: Can Blue Men Play the Whites?](#)', outlining the rise of blues music in late 1950s and early 1960s Britain. Featuring interviews with the likes of the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards, Jack Bruce from Cream and Mick Fleetwood of Fleetwood Mac, the programme provided several reasons as to why the genre became so popular. Britain already had a well-established jazz culture prior to this era and so when the blues was beginning to reach the peak of its popularity, the BBC began to give the genre more airtime. London music shops helped too

by stocking blues records in far higher quantities. However, an important factor that this documentary and many other histories of British blues music often overlook is the role of African-American GIs in introducing many Britons to the genre during and after the Second World War.

The history of blues music is defined by the histories of slavery and African-American oppression. [Work songs and religious spirituals sung by enslaved African-Americans were heavily influenced by traditional African harmonies and rhythms](#). They would use these songs not only to pass the time but also to communicate with one another, as typified by the call and response element of this music. Even after emancipation, many African-Americans in the South were forced to work for little or no pay, and [the blues music of this era came to symbolise the plight of those whose lives remained blighted by prejudice, hard labour and incarceration](#). The Delta blues, originating from the Mississippi Delta, were first recorded in the 1920s and told of [the ongoing poverty, discrimination and poor working conditions that continued to affect African Americans at the turn of the century](#). Although African-American GIs played a vital role in the Second World War, with around 100,000 stationed in the UK alone, institutional and societal racism remained highly prevalent.

Despite being stationed in the United Kingdom, the African-American GIs who served here remained subject to US law, meaning that they continued to experience segregation and racial oppression. African-American GIs were largely consigned to service and supply duties, including [having to endure poor living and working conditions while building airfields](#). When they attempted to raise issues regarding their ongoing racial segregation, they were met with brutality at the hands of their own military police, as was the case at [Bamber Bridge in Lancashire during June 1943](#) and [Park Street in Bristol on 15 July 1944\[NJE1\]](#). In both instances, one African-American soldier was killed and several more were injured. Legalised prejudice towards African-American GIs continued throughout their time in the United Kingdom and the British government [did little to remedy the situation despite being aware of their ongoing mistreatment](#). The GIs also experienced discrimination during their recreation time with many pubs, such as the Colston Arms in Bristol, [enforcing racial segregation between soldiers](#).

The reception of the wider British population towards African-American GIs was on the whole rather more welcoming and facilitated a number of important cultural exchanges. This included many Britons being introduced to blues music

for the first time during the 1940s and 1950s, a phenomenon that would help change the course of British music for the coming decades. As a means of endearing themselves to their hosts, the GIs [gave away large numbers of records to local children and would perform the blues](#) to British military personnel while stationed at their bases. Many Britons during the war could listen to [blues records and blues-themed programmes via the American Forces Network](#). This station proved to be an important forum for the genre even after the Second World War had ended, allowing many who were not situated in the vicinity of army bases to become familiarised with this style of music.

There were also several chance encounters between these GIs and the families of future British blues stars. A young [Mick Jagger was first introduced to the music of Muddy Waters after meeting an African-American cook](#) who worked at the same US airbase as his father, a PE teacher. Furthermore, merchant seamen stationed in port cities including Belfast and Newcastle exchanged records with their British colleagues, including the fathers of [Van Morrison](#) and the Animals' [Eric Burdon](#). In addition, many of the blues LPs that were sold in UK record shops in the decades after the end of the war [previously belonged to African-American GIs](#). Many other prominent blues musicians including Manfred Mann's [Paul Jones](#) would buy these albums and take inspiration from them while creating their own music in later years.

Although there is a rich scholarship concerning the impact of the blues on British rock and pop music, the influence of African Americans and in particular GIs is all too often missing from these narratives. The 1950s and 1960s would undoubtedly see Blues music become drastically more popular in Britain, but the earlier cultural exchanges that occurred in Britain during the Second World War sowed the seeds for this later musical trend. At a time when African Americans faced extreme discrimination both at home and abroad, African-American GIs based in Britain can be credited with performing and distributing the music describing their ongoing oppression, as well as influencing countless bands and musicians who remain household names to this very day.



Caption: Steel Guitar, courtesy of Steve Garry
at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JHS_Vintage%C2%AE_AMG1_Acoustic_Resonator_Guitar_-_f-holes.jpg

Mothers with lived experience of modern slavery

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When we consider life after modern slavery, we should not only consider survival, but also the prospect of survivors having opportunities to become [thriving members of society](#). My research focuses on women and young persons who have left situations of modern slavery in the UK, and I have recently commenced fieldwork, speaking to women as well as practitioners who support them. I am increasingly becoming aware of the large gap in the manner in which mothers with children are supported, which may severely impact their potential to thrive after exploitation. Many women enter exploitation as mothers, while others emerge out of exploitation pregnant, or with young children, some having their children as a [result of the exploitation](#).

Motherhood

Motherhood requires '[maternal work](#)', which comprises daily repetitive tasks towards the raising of children. This 'maternal work' is three-pronged in that it encompasses the physical care of children, the emotional and spiritual care of children, and the training of children to be social. This makes motherhood a multidimensional role, in addition to taking care of oneself as an individual. The '[cultural story](#)' of motherhood, however, makes mothers out to be strong, independent, and nonthreatening- thus expected to be able to bear almost anything.

Mothers with lived experience of modern slavery seem to be expected to conform to this 'cultural story' having to rely mostly on strength to survive. Strength is needed to perform their 'maternal work' – physically, spiritually, and emotionally taking care of their children, doing school runs – and during the COVID-19 lockdown, this included [home-schooling](#). This is done in conjunction with [moving forward](#); battling insecure immigration statuses; dealing with insecure, sometimes temporary accommodation; dealing with criminalisation; integrating; working (if allowed and able); dating, or sustaining a marriage; fostering friendships; and so forth.

A suspended future

Women generally consider their children to be their lives, and some mothers find solace in vicariously living through their children by throwing themselves into their upbringing. After all, a [mother's love](#) is 'supposed' to know no bounds, and part of her 'maternal work' is to protect her child. Because the support available for those who can access it is limited, mothers with lived experience of modern slavery may have to pause or suspend their own lives in favour of those of their children. Some would, for instance, [skip their therapy sessions](#) and other important appointments, but would ensure to take their children to the doctor when needed.

However, children grow up and move out. What happens then? A mother I recently interviewed could not answer me when I asked her about what she wanted the next few years of her life to look like. Her children are her life and soon they will grow up and leave the nest, after which she will be left to deal with her past trauma that was deferred to raise her children.

Work

The benefits of being able to work have been well documented. The inability to work, on the other hand, has been found to affect individuals negatively, as it can impede [social integration and increase destitution](#), [impair confidence](#), [cause loss of skills](#), [accentuate isolation and increase vulnerabilities](#). Working is important in restoring mental wellbeing and a sense of [dignity and self-worth](#) and the provision of a [meagre weekly allowance](#) does not address the mental health implications associated with living without work.

Mothers with lived experience of modern slavery express a strong desire to work, but there are various compelling challenges that prevent them from doing so. The issue of work affects mothers differently and it is not simply a matter of having the right to work or the capability. Usually, these mothers are [lone parents](#), and encounter problems surrounding childcare. Some women are British survivors for instance who are unable to work due to insecure childcare. Others may be international survivors with the right to work but face other layers of difficulty in addition to childcare – women may have language barrier problems or long gaps in their resumes that are hard to explain to potential employers because of time spent in exploitation.

In addition to childcare, some mothers are also faced with skills deficits. Some may have spent many years in terrible working conditions performing unfulfilling tasks that may have stunted their productive abilities. Others may have entered exploitation while they were still children and as such were deprived of the opportunity to gain certain skills. One of the women I interviewed relayed to me that in the quest to obtain skills and thus gainful employment, she would take her babies to class with her, sometimes having to breastfeed during lectures and subsequently having to repeat modules multiple times.

Effects on children

With [World Children's Day](#) commemorated on Saturday, 20 November 2021 (and on 20 November of every year since 1954) to 'promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare' it is apt to recognise the impact on the children discussed within this context. Children emerging out of exploitation with their mothers are being let [down by the system](#), even though the need to [extend particular](#) care to the child has been emphasised in various international and national human rights

instruments. Insufficient support for a mother invariably means insufficient support for the child.

Further, some children are affected by their mothers' experiences. Those with their mothers and are exposed to their mothers' hardships may face the possibility of stunted growth and development and/or [mental health problems](#). Children are at times [forced to grow up too quickly](#) – taking on responsibilities such as taking care of younger siblings and sometimes even suppressing their feelings to protect their mother's emotions.

Others are affected by being left behind – a significant number of migrant women have children and are usually unable to migrate with them, because of [a lack of safe and legal pathways to migrate](#) and other factors. Some then decide to leave their children behind, in the care of relatives, friends, or nannies, although most feel [guilt and remorse](#) for doing so.

While [existing studies](#) suggest that the circumstances surrounding each cohort of children left behind are highly variable, some children struggle without their mothers and some may become withdrawn or [perform poorly in school](#).

The way forward

Although I am in the early stages of my data collection, I have found that the journeys of these mothers and those of their children have barely been researched. Data needs to be collected to inform solutions. More needs to be done, to ensure that women and children in this category are given equitable treatment to not only survive but also thrive, given that their background conditions are complicated. As a mother myself, I know that thriving mothers have a better chance of raising thriving children.



Caption: Mother and child photo from Pexels, copyright free.

Publication: Decolonizing Colonial Heritage

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This month marks the publication of *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actions and Practices in and beyond Europe* (Routledge), a major output of the Horizon 2020 project ECHOES. Running from 2018–2021, this project – ‘European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities’ – was led by Professor John Oldfield of the Wilberforce Institute.

Decolonizing Colonial Heritage explores how different agents practice the decolonization of European heritage in a number of different urban settings. Including contributions from academics, artists and heritage practitioners, the volume explores decolonial heritage practices in politics, contemporary history, diplomacy, museum practice, the visual arts and self-generated memorial expressions in public spaces. The comparative focus of the chapters includes examples of internal colonization in Europe and extends to former European colonies, among them Shanghai, Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro. Examining

practices in a range of different contexts, the book pays particular attention to sub-national actors (curators, artists, citizens groups), whose work is opening up new futures through their engagement with decolonial heritage practices in the present.

Decolonizing Colonial Heritage is divided into three parts. Part I, 'Haunted Worlds: Ghosts of the Colonial Past', includes chapters on the multiple imperial entanglements of countries in Europe's North and East, as well as its West and South; Sam Mendes' highly-acclaimed film *1917* and the question of imperial nostalgia; an in-depth analysis of Cecil Rhodes' spectral presence across the landscape and built environment of the campus of the University of Cape Town; African- and Afro-descendent life stories in contemporary Lisbon; and an assessment of another spectral presence, that of the Nigerian-born jazz musician, August Agboola Browne, also known as 'Ali', who was apparently the only black participant in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising.

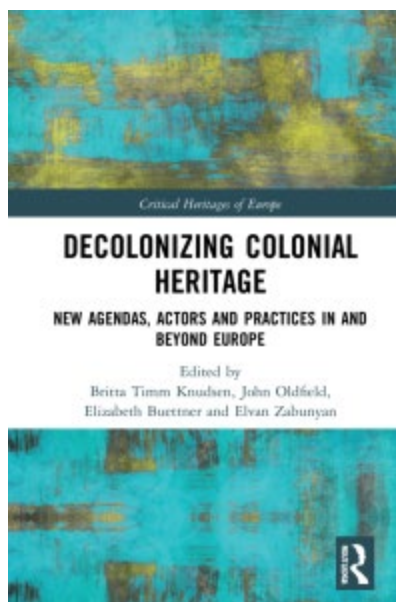
Part II, 'Contemporary Heritage Practices', hones in on museums and curatorship, both inside and outside Europe, with case studies from Amsterdam, Shanghai and Warsaw. It then moves on to consider colonial culture's echoes within visual culture and site-specific art, starting with the Valongo Wharf region of Rio de Janeiro, now a World Heritage Site. Other contributions deal with European settings and events, including the annual *Todos* festival in Lisbon and the life experiences and working practices of a number of artists currently working in Marseille. The section concludes with a meditation by Meghna Singh on her multimedia, virtual reality installation, *Container*, which links South Africa's history of slavery to forms of modern exploitation, prejudice and discrimination.

Part III, 'Imagining Decolonial Futures', investigates new decolonial ways of thinking about Europe today and its inseparability from historical entanglements with other countries. Britta Timm Knudsen's contribution, 'Decolonial Countervisuality', offers an experimental approach to decolonial methodology in which she invites heritage practitioners to reflect on the Belgian-Congolese documentary, *Faire-part* (2019). The second chapter turns to 'New Diplomacy and Decolonial Heritage Practices', offering a vision of what International Cultural Relations might look like in a decolonial world. The final chapter links Europe's historical record of dealing with 'others', including European Jews, to recent histories of excluding ethnic minorities located within and beyond the content, not least Muslims. Framed by the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the

ongoing fallout from the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, it also suggests new ways of imagining an intercultural, transnational and entangled Europe of the future.

Decolonizing Colonial Heritage is edited by Britta Timm Knudsen, John Oldfield, Elizabeth Buettner and Elvan Zabunyan, and includes contributions from Dr Cristina Clopot and Dr Meghna Singh, research fellows at the Wilberforce Institute. Generously supported by the European Commission, the book is available as a free resource online [here](#), as well as in hardback. For further details, see <https://www.routledge.com/Decolonizing-Colonial-Heritage-New-Agendas-Actors-and-Practices-in-Knudsen-Oldfield-Buettner-Zabunyan/p/book/9780367569600>

Decolonizing Colonial Heritage is one of two books produced by the ECHOES project, the other being *Practicing Decoloniality in Museums: A Guide with Global Examples*, edited by Csilla Ariese and Magdalena Wroblewska and published by the University of Amsterdam Press (November 2021) <https://www.aup.nl/en/book/9789463726962/practicing-decoloniality-in-museums>



Black History Month 2021: Our African door

Posted on November 4, 2021



As part of Black History Month 2021 we are appealing to you to help us understand an object given to us a number of years ago by a former Lord Mayor of the City of Kingston upon Hull, Honorary Alderman David Gemmell – a carved door. David's sister was an avid visitor to Africa during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. On one of her visits she acquired a door that he later presented to the Institute for us to look after.

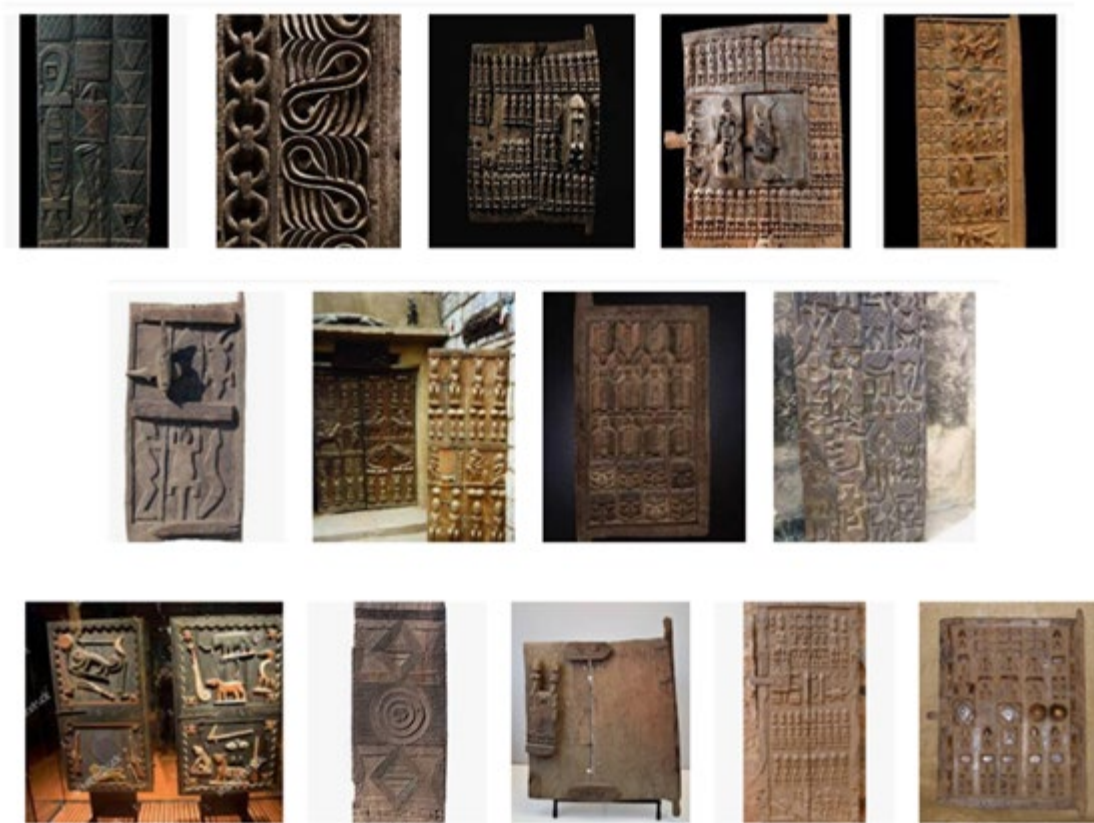
The 45 x 75cm door, pictured above, appears to be made out of planks of a hard wood, nailed together using handmade nails. It has some impressive carvings on the front with a clear handle near the centre. The reverse is plain. But what do the symbols represent? Where was the door originally used? And where in Africa does it originate? We would love to know more so that we can share the story with visitors to the Institute.

A quick search on Google images returns numerous types of African doors variously described as 'traditional' doors, 'Dogon granary' doors, 'palace' and 'shrine' doors, for example. The doors themselves come in various shapes and sizes, and the patterns appear to reflect the traditions of a range of wood carvers right across Africa.

Wooden doors with elaborately carved reliefs may at one time have been reserved for the wealthiest and most important of African chiefs and created by professional carvers. In any case it seems likely that the size of the doors and the quality of the carving would have reflected the status of those who commissioned them. The carvings themselves, symbolic representations of gods or celestial bodies, animals or plants, or scenes from everyday life, can sometimes give a clue to the purpose of the doors.

Where did our door originate, and who might have produced it? Could it perhaps be a Dogon door? It certainly has a number of similarities with Dogon doors for sale on the Internet. The Dogon, who live in present day Mali, produced carved wooden doors for their granaries, and the elaborate designs they used were intended to provide ritual forms of protection for their food supplies. These appear to be very popular with collectors and were sometimes sold in craft markets. Many are likely to be copies, produced expressly for the consumer market.

We have had our door for a number of years now, and would like to know more about it. So if you are able to add to our knowledge in any way, please get in touch with Nick Evans at N.J.Evans@hull.ac.uk or Judith Spicksley at Judith.Spicksley@hull.ac.uk



Images of African doors taken from Google Images

Public lecture: A British family's legacy of slave ownership, and its relevance today

Posted on October 28, 2021

Thursday 4 November 2021

4.00-5.30PM GMT

Wilberforce Institute, 27 High Street, Hull. HU1 1NE

Or join us by livestreaming on Microsoft Teams. Please click [here](#) to register and receive a link.

For other information contact R.Bloomfield@hull.ac.uk



Cecile Oxaal: Alex Renton: Karen Okra

This talk will be given by Alex Renton, author of *Blood Legacy: Reckoning With a Family's Story of Slavery*, and will include contributions from Cecile Oxaal and Karen Okra, who will both share details of their own family histories.

Alex's ancestors were prominent Scots who were also slave holders in Tobago and Jamaica. In the excerpt below, Alex reflects on what he decided to do when skeletons fell out of his family cupboard. As he notes, it's not easy to stuff them back in. When they're 150 years old, and more, you might think they represent

what police drama calls a cold case. But often the old crimes turn out to have much more relevance today than first appears.

Alex's family's cupboard was an archive store-room in the old house in Scotland where his grandparents lived. His grandfather was a historian, in charge of Scotland's national archive for twenty years. At home he carefully curated the family's own papers, which went back to the seventeenth century. Several of his books on Scottish history were based on them. But in the great mass of letters, diaries and accounts was a story that he never got around to telling, or that he decided was best left untold.

'Like many old families in Britain, we grew up with a legend of our ancestors' essential goodness. The men whose pictures hung on the walls of the old house had played their role in the management of the best empire the world had ever known, we learnt: a benevolent machine for civilising the greater part of the globe. But there was another, less pride-inducing side of the story. The first I knew of it was seeing, in my grandfather's catalogue of the papers, the words 'Tobago' and 'Jamaica', again and again. His own grandfather had been a third generation plantation-owner: he had received £1.5 million in government compensation money in 1833 at abolition for 'giving up' the 198 enslaved people in Jamaica.

My family has glossed over this history, as my education did, as Britain has. This denial – of the 3.25 million Africans who were enslaved and transported, of the generations that were exploited and abused afterwards, and of what the 12% of GDP slavery-related industries meant to Britain in the early 1800s – is a crime that still toxifies Britain today.

It also acts to deny that the racism and inequality that afflicts our 21st century country has its roots in the story of British slavery and colonialism. I believe it is right for people like me, with the privilege of access to this history, and as beneficiaries of the wealth of slavery, to acknowledge it today. We cannot change the history, but – as Sir Geoff Palmer, campaigner in Scotland for acknowledgement of the country's history in enslavement puts it – 'we can still change the consequences'.

Alex will be joined by Cecil Oxaal who will talk about her family history, one of mixed heritage from wealthy white slaveholders. Karen Okra will also be sharing

her family heritage. Together our speakers will offer three different but equally interesting perspectives on people in Britain with Caribbean histories.

For more information about Alex's book go to www.bloodlegacybook.com



Taking a Knee: a gesture redefined for protest

Posted on October 21, 2021



Chloe Baker, Research Intern

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Getting down on one knee has been anything but a threatening gesture. For some examples, it's used to pay one's respect, to devote oneself to the Lord in prayer, and to love another human being by asking for their hand in marriage. However, [Colin Kaepernick's and Eric Reid's decision to Take the Knee](#) on September 1st, 2016, during the American national anthem, was seen as an act of defiance and disrespect, at least that's how it looked to some of the white population of the United States. For Kaepernick and Reid, this was their way of demonstrating that enough was enough. Why should they stand and salute the flag when it represented a country that continually treated black communities

and other minorities as unequal? Since then, a growing variety of sports have become the stage for Black Lives Matter protests involving Taking a Knee, as both have a long history with the struggle for equality and the fight against oppression.

Is Taking a Knee a new way to protest?

The short answer to the above question is no. The Wilberforce Institute has been researching the idea behind Taking a Knee, and what it has uncovered is that while Taking a Knee has been firmly established by 2021 as a way to challenge racism and oppression through [George Floyd protests](#), black individuals have been making the gesture for centuries. Its earliest depiction was in 1787 on a [Wedgwood medallion](#) for the abolition cause with the famous words 'Am I Not A Man and A Brother'. However, this popular abolitionist image is controversial because it was created for a white audience. It shows a supplicant slave in chains with minimal clothing and sanitised of the brutality of slavery, asking white society for the right to be human (Marcus Wood, *The Horrible Gift of Freedom*, 2010). It was the civil rights era that saw a reclamation of the gesture by black communities as black men and women took a knee in [prayer protests](#) and [civil disobedience](#) for equality. In the twenty-first century, it is through sports that people of all backgrounds associate Taking a Knee with protesting racism.

Sport as a platform

Since 2016 the question 'why sports?' has made its appearance now and then regarding protests taking place in sports settings. The answer to that question can be broken down into several factors. The most obvious one is that sports games congregate the population of the surrounding areas into one spot which means the protest will be seen by a substantial amount of people. Bigger arenas such as the [2020 Olympics](#) are filmed too, and will therefore have the bonus of reaching an even greater audience over a larger radius. Secondly, like any other profession, playing sport is a job and its players are people who wish to create a better working environment with equal opportunities. Scholars Adam Love, Alexander Deeb, and Steven Waller use the National Basketball Association for an example, stating that within the [profession people of colour make up 80% of players, but only hold 30% of head coaching positions, 10% of general manager positions, and 6.9% of CEO/President roles.](#)

As outsiders, fans only see that high player percentage, and so they tend to think of sport as removed from [‘everyday concerns of inequality, power, and discrimination’](#), and the success of athletes of colour as proof that racism is not rampant in the sporting world. Taking a Knee disrupts that view. Thirdly, the reaction the protest receives reflects the attitudes of the area and can therefore prove its point. For example, [a football match between Millwall and Derby](#) saw fans boo football players who decided to Take a Knee to protest racism. Lastly, and most significantly, black athletes have been using sports to fight for change for the better part of a century.

[Jackie Robinson](#) joined the Montreal Royals, a baseball team, in 1946 and successfully broke the ‘colour line’ of Major League Baseball when appearing on the field for the National League Brooklyn Dodgers from 1947 until 1956. [Eroseanna Robinson](#) stayed seated for the American national anthem at the Pan American Games of 1959. [Tommie Smith and John Carlos](#) were kicked out of the Olympics in 1968 for their raised fist gesture at the podium, and [Wyomia Tyus](#) wore black shorts at the same event to subtly protest, all in the name of highlighting racial injustice. The list continues. Why sport? Because it’s where people give their undivided attention.

Taking a Knee in sport is the next step in a sequence that goes back to slavery. Black men and women Taking a Knee for a cause is not a twenty-first-century idea but has appeared in history at crucially important moments. The idea of the gesture within sports means that it is kept in the front of people’s minds via popular events, expressing that racism does not cease to exist because one cannot see it.



'Am I Not A Man And A Brother' Chair, Wilberforce Institute. Photo taken by Chloé Baker.

The Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture – a brief history (Part II)

Part II: the end of the first phase of the Annual Lecture and its later re-inauguration

[Jump to Part I](#)



Emeritus Professor Michael E. Turner,

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Tonight Professor Douglas Hamilton of Sheffield Hallam University will give our Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture. If you haven't yet signed up you can do so [here](#) where you will also find details of the lecture. Having given us the first part of his brief history of the lecture last week, Emeritus Professor Michael Turner concludes this week with a discussion of the end of its first phase, and its later re-inauguration.

Sydney Smith died in 1984 at the age of 99, but the annual lecture he founded in 1972 continued for another four years before coming at that point to an abrupt end. In October 1988 the Department of Economic and Social History was looking forward to welcoming Arthur Marwick, the flamboyant professor from the Open University, to deliver a talk, but he never came.

The 1980s saw quite considerable debate and sometimes unrest in the University sector. Many universities embarked on radical restructuring programmes in order to embrace some of the new technologies and subject areas that society would demand in the future. More traditional areas of learning came under attack as intellectual knowledge was no longer valued for its own sake. Universities embraced different ways to confront the more targeted funding provided by the conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher. More specialisation took place, for example, and the activities of so-called fringe subjects, especially languages, were discontinued. Members of staff moved to other universities where central funding for their activities was increased. The University of Hull lost Classics, Scandinavian Studies, Dutch Studies, and Russian, and in the sciences the Physics Department was lost. Some of these activities did return, but with much reduced activity. It was the attack on Philosophy which led to the redundancy of a specific lecturer, but it also served to ignite the fuse of revolt. Redundancy was not a word easily applied to the University sector and Hull became the first or at least the most prominent University to declare a redundancy. In consequence the AUT, the national Association of University Teachers, rallied to Hull's cause and a boycott of all activity at Hull was declared. The impact was considerable. The University found it very difficult to recruit external examiners not only for undergraduate degrees but also to examine research theses. Colleagues were no longer invited to speak at external events, and external speakers cancelled their visits to Hull. Most significantly for our story here, Arthur Marwick cancelled his invitation to give the Annual Sydney Smith Lecture.

For whatever reason, the lecture was not reinstated once order had been restored, though the income from its investments grew nicely during the years of double-digit interest rates. In 2001 the Department of Economic and Social History was amalgamated with History. From 2004, however, the Wilberforce Institute began to take shape, under the three 'WISE' men who founded it, David Richardson, Michael (Mike) Turner and Gary Craig; it opened its doors late in 2006. Mike and David had both worked in the old Department of Economic and Social History, and so in 2009 they negotiated with the University to release the

Alderman Sydney Smith endowment specifically to the Wilberforce Institute in order to re-inaugurate the lecture. It was a perfect match, a lecture in social and labour history but specifically devoted to slavery and all its exploitative labour connotations. To make this rebirth something to be remembered, the distinguished American historian, Professor Seymour Drescher, was invited from Pittsburgh in 2010. His credentials included books on slavery, antislavery, abolition and most controversially his *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (1977).

Later speakers included Professors Marcus Wood in 2011, Philip D. Morgan in 2012, Catherine Hall in 2013 and Verene A. Shepherd in 2014. In 2018, we welcomed Professor Jean Allain, a scholar of international law who helped draft the [Bellagio Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery](#). Two of our former Directors have also given lectures – Professors David Richardson in 2016, and John Oldfield in 2020.

Over the years, the lecture has moved between the University Campus and the Wilberforce Institute. Last year Covid-19 forced John Oldfield to deliver his lecture using a virtual format, but this year we are planning once again to hold the Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture in the Institute, with live-streaming of Professor Hamilton's talk for those who cannot make it. We would be delighted to welcome you in person or inline.



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<https://hullhistorycentre.org.uk/home.aspx>

A21: Walk for Freedom in Hull

Posted on October 11, 2021

Saturday 16 October 2021, 11am



Sarah Colley, PhD student

Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull.

S.E.Colley-2013@hull.ac.uk

Walk in single file! Quietly! Wear black!

Aren't these the kind of instructions often given in schools?

Perhaps on occasion, but on Saturday October 16th this is the guidance we will be adopting on the Walk for Freedom, which is taking place this year in Hull for the first time. [A21](#), the charity behind the walk, describe it as a silent protest against contemporary slavery. Its aim is to raise awareness that slavery still exists.

Those of us working or studying at the Wilberforce Institute strongly believe in social justice and the principle of freedom for all. Being next door to the birthplace of William Wilberforce, I have been constantly reminded that millions of people are still living in situations of contemporary slavery, such as forced labour, sexual exploitation, debt bondage and forced marriage. So, what can we as individuals do, when it feels that any action we take won't make much of a difference to the [40 million people estimated](#) to be in some form of slavery today?

Well, on one of A21's awareness cards, it says "when we show up for the freedom of others, we show up for the world we want to see. A world where justice, human dignity, and freedom prevails. Your steps matter. Your voice matters. For those enslaved in your city, and around the world." By walking here, or in a city close to us, or even by taking up A21's virtual challenge, we can all play a part in learning more about slavery. And by having more discussions on the topic, by more people learning what to look out for and how to report it, I would argue we can all play our part.

We'd love to have you join us on the Hull walk, and this is not just a local event – we will be joining with people in walks organised in over 50 countries, in hundreds of locations across the world, all on the same day. So, what do you need to know about the Hull walk? I will try and answer the most common questions below, but feel free to email me if you have any other queries: s.e.colley-2013@hull.ac.uk

Where is the walk taking place?

We will be following a historic route around Hull, starting from the Wilberforce Monument and walking down Humber Street, along the marina, across the new Murdoch connection bridge, and through the city centre. Our walk will end in Queens Gardens, where Wilberforce will be atop his 90-foot column, looking down on us as we finish.

What time are we walking?

We are starting the walk at 11am and as it is a 2-mile route, it will take us around an hour to walk it. We are suggesting that everyone registers online, via the [A21 website](#) before October 16th, but we will be able to register people on the day, if preferred. Registration will be open by 10am.

Who is supporting the walk?

Raising awareness is always a team effort and huge thanks need to go to the amazing support offered by my colleagues and friends at the Freedom Festival, the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership and of course, those at the Wilberforce Institute. We are all passionate about doing whatever we can to raise awareness of the topic.

More about A21

For more information on A21, please have a look at their website: <https://www.a21.org/> where you can read more about the charity and the work they do, and also find information on the walk and this year's virtual challenges.

If you are concerned that someone might be held in slavery, forced labour or being exploited in other ways, you can always call the Police (999 or 111, depending on whether it is an emergency or not) or the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 or you can report or contact them [online](#).

Hope to see you on October 16th!



The Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture – a brief history

Posted on October 7, 2021

Part I: Sydney Smith and the establishment of the Annual Lecture



Emeritus Professor Michael E. Turner,

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In advance of our Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture next week, Emeritus Professor Michael Turner provides a brief history of the lecture's creation and development. The first part is given below, and the second part will appear next Thursday on the day of the lecture. You can sign up to the lecture [here](#).

The history of the Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture goes back to the 1970s, and the Department of Economic and Social History, which was later

absorbed into the Department of History. To understand the lecture's creation, however, we have to begin with the man himself.

Sydney Smith came from a family of tailors who moved from Birmingham to Ipswich and then to London, where he was born in 1885. After spending his earliest years in the capital, Sydney moved to Goole at the age of nine when his father fell ill. His father's brother lived there and the family thought it would be wise to be nearer to him. Sydney's cousin was a Goole newsagent and Sydney became one of his newspaper sellers, later buying into the newsagent's business himself.

By the age of 18 Sydney had moved to Hull and was living on the Boulevard. Thereafter he never strayed far from the Hessle Road. Born into a Methodist family, Sydney became a lay preacher in adulthood, but there were also early family connections with politics – his maternal grandfather, Charles Hedges, had been political agent to conservative politician and Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Sydney took a different political direction, became a socialist and joined the ILP (Independent Labour Party). He eventually attended Ruskin College in Oxford, a popular college for bright young socialists before attending St Catherine's College, also Oxford, where he read modern history. He expanded his newsagent business into books, especially those of the Fabian Society, and active politics beckoned. He was first elected to Hull City Council in 1923. Sydney remained almost continually on the Council until 1942, and served as Lord Mayor in 1940. Being unmarried, he took as his lady mayoress his niece, Miss Daisy Sunderland, who was only 23 at the time.

In the 1945 General Election Sydney was elected to Westminster as part of the Labour landslide. Representing the South-West Hull seat, he deposed the sitting MP Richard Law, who later became Lord Coleraine. His maiden speech was on the subject of the National Insurance Bill, where he spoke against a proposal to introduce a means test for unemployment benefits – it was contrary to the Beveridge line that paying into a fund conferred rights of entitlement if hard times and unemployment followed later. Sydney's other main interventions at Westminster were on local issues, specifically the urban reconstruction of Hull which had been the most 'densely' bombed city during the Second World War. He also spoke on Hull's fishing industry. However, Sydney stood down from Parliament after only 5 years in 1950 at the age of 65 and returned to municipal politics. Twenty years later, when he retired from the Council, he was made an Honorary Alderman for life. External honours followed in the final years of his

life: a school was named after him in Hull; he became an Honorary Freeman of the City; and the University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Law and conferred on him membership of the University Court for life.

The Alderman Sydney Smith Lecture was created when the new Department of Economic and Social History was formed in 1970-71. Following negotiations conducted by two of the Department staff, John Saville and Mike Brown, Sydney made a financial bequest to inaugurate a four-year lecture series in labour and social history. Saville was the first Professor of Economic and Social History at Hull, and Mike Brown was an historian of the labour movement and very much a friend of Sydney. Reputedly Mike's family dog Syd, was named after him. The endowment became perpetual through a trust fund.

The very first lecture was given by Professor Asa Briggs on 15 May 1972, then Vice-Chancellor at Sussex and himself a noted historian of the Labour Movement. Brigg's lecture was on *Social History and Human Experience*. Sydney was therefore in his mid-80s when the lecture series began. He attended the first lecture and wrote Briggs a warm letter of appreciation, although he disclosed that he 'scarcely heard a word of what was said. I knew he was carrying the audience with him by the ripples of laughter which shook those sitting about me'. Sydney was already blind and nearly deaf by this point, and so in subsequent years details of the lecture were narrated to him by Mike Brown (and tape recordings of the lectures were made).

Following Briggs appearance, the annual lecture became a who's who of the intellectual left with such noted and often controversial figures as Edward Thompson in 1974. Three more heavyweight intellectual Marxists followed in the period 1978-80 in the shape of Rodney Hilton, Eric Hobsbawm, and Christopher Hill. The lecture also attracted the Welsh fireball Gwyn Williams in 1983, not to mention a relatively young new member of the intellectual left, Gareth Steadman Jones, in 1986. In those early years there was only one female lecturer, Charlotte Erickson, who spoke on *Women Emigrants from Britain to the USA* in the early nineteenth century. However, the lecture was proving to be a great success, attracting academics of reputation and distinction to Hull, and confirming the Department of Economic and Social History as an important centre for the study of Labour History. As Part II will show, it is somewhat ironic then that it was labour relations that would bring the first phase of the Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture to an end.



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Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture: Enslaved revolt and the Royal Navy in the Caribbean, c. 1790-1832

Posted on September 27, 2021

Thursday 14 October 2021, 5.30PM – 7.30PM BST

Wilberforce Institute, 27, High Street, Hull. HU1 1NE Or join us by
livestreaming on Microsoft Teams



Professor Douglas Hamilton

Sheffield Hallam University

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This year our Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture will be given by Douglas Hamilton, Professor of History at Sheffield Hallam University. He is an historian of the eighteenth-century British Atlantic empire, with a particular interest in

the Caribbean and slavery. He is currently working on two projects. The first is 'An empire of islands' funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council which explores how islands contributed to the establishment, extension, and maintenance of the British Empire in the Age of Sail. The second project assesses the role of the Royal Navy in eighteenth-century Caribbean society.

For this lecture, Professor Hamilton will focus on this second project, and he offers an abstract below of what he intends to cover.

While the actions of foreign navies and enemy privateers occupied the minds of naval officers, one of the gravest threats to the security of the British colonies in the Caribbean came from within. For a generation or more scholars have placed considerable emphasis on what Hilary Beckles has called 'the 200-years war' against enslavement, highlighting the role of the enslaved in their struggle for self-liberation. The actions of the Royal Navy as an instrument of the state to be used in suppressing revolt have received much less attention. Yet in virtually every major rising across the British Caribbean from the mid-18th century, the Royal Navy was instrumental in securing victory for the colonial elite. The existing scholarship currently highlights the ways in which the navy blurred the lines between enslavement and emancipation and provided routes into freedom; this lecture makes plain the extent to which it helped Britain and the Caribbean planter class face down challenges to the system of enslavement.

For details of how to get to the Institute, or to livestream this event contact R.Bloomfield@hull.ac.uk



Adolphe Duperly (1833): Destruction of the Roehampton Estate in 1832.

Posted on [September 30, 2021](#)

Conference: Modern Slavery and Climate Change

Monday 11 October 2021

Climate change and modern slavery are elements of a vicious circle. Natural disasters and slow degradation of the environment destroy traditional livelihoods and push people towards hazardous and exploitative work. Meanwhile, these exploitative and unregulated industries are often extremely polluting and high emitters of CO₂.

This free online event, hosted by the Wilberforce Institute in partnership with Anti-Slavery International, brings together researchers and practitioners from around the globe to share their experiences and solutions to this vicious circle.

Join us online on 11 October 2021 by registering for your free ticket at: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/158716331821

Those taking part include speakers from Rainforest Alliance, Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery International, Rights Lab, Fundación Libera, International Institute for Environment and Development, and Confederación Nacional de Mujeres indígenas de Bolivia, among others.



Wilberforce Institute Debate: The Impact of Brexit – has this increased or decreased the risk of labour exploitation and modern slavery in the UK?

Posted on September 16, 2021

Tuesday 21 September 2021, 4PM – 6PM BST

As issues about the supply of goods and pharmaceuticals begin to bite in the wake of Brexit, Cristina Talens, Head of Business Risk Assessment Services in the Wilberforce Institute, will lead a major discussion about the impact of Brexit on labour exploitation and modern slavery. This webinar introduces a panel of experts, listed below, who are working at the forefront of identifying and tackling exploitative practices on the ground today.

Dame Sara Thornton – UK’s Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and chair of the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit Leadership Advisory Board. Dame Sara was Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police from 2007-2015 and the first Chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council from 2015-2019

Melville Miles – Head of Human Rights (Greencore) and Board Member of the Food Network for Ethical Trade

Darryl Dixon – Head of Gangmasters Licensing Authority single enforcement body

Shayne Tyler – Group Compliance Director at Fresca Group and Anti-Slavery Network Director

David Camp – Chief Executive of allianceHR Ltd and the Association of Labour Providers Ltd

This is not a discussion between academics. Cristina has assembled a stellar panel of experts from a diverse range of backgrounds from the Anti-Slavery Commissioner to police enforcement and experts in the areas of ethical trade and supply chains. Our speakers will be talking about the impact of Brexit on labour in the UK and the new risks companies need to be aware of with the sourcing of labour.

To sign up for this event please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7287658042180033552>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



Uncovering and Celebrating Black Canadian History: The BlacktoCanada podcast

Posted on August 5, 2021



Channon Oyeniran

Former postgraduate student

University of Hull

channonc425@gmail.com

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots”

Marcus Garvey

In 2018, after some thought and discussion with my husband, I decided that I wanted to document the stories of Black Canadians and the over 400 years of history that we as Black people have in Canada. I concluded that a written blog or a video blog would be ideal! I liked the idea of a video blog because I could visit different historical sites across my home province of Ontario, and then eventually venture to the other provinces and territories in Canada, to show everyone the importance of that site to Black Canadians. However, after some more thought about the logistics of this and how it would work, especially with a then two-year old, maybe a video blog wouldn't be the best way for now to share

these stories. I did need a name for this project, even though I didn't know what the project would look like and with help from family, friends and members of my community, the name "BlacktoCanada" was chosen as one of four options for my new project!

Though I had a name intact and a logo ready to go, other projects, having my second son and the busyness of life took over, and it wasn't until three years later that I finally launched the idea I had envisioned in 2018: to document and showcase the rich and amazing stories of Black Canadians. However, despite originally wanting to write a blog and more specifically create a video blog, I decided on a podcast – a growing and popular trend and a way for people to listen while on the go!

Being a historian of Caribbean History, Black History in Canada and the history of Black enslavement (thanks to the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull!), it has always been important to me to share all the amazing stories I learned about with others, specifically the next generation. Growing up in the Canadian school system, I didn't always learn about the rich history of Black people in Canada. I want this podcast to be a resource and a tool that students, teachers and anyone can use to learn about the history, communities and the individuals who helped build Canada into what it is today. Particularly, after all that occurred in 2020 concerning the #BlackLivesMatter movement and the murders of countless Black people, it is evident that now more than ever, the attention is on Black people, their history and how that history connects to anti-Black ideas, and the injustices Black people face across the world. We are in an era of racial and social awakening globally, and I believe we must act and not be stagnant. This is another reason why I started and launched BlacktoCanada. I want to be able to contribute what I know about Black History in Canada and share it with as many people who will listen!

Also, what I really appreciate about my podcast is that it is not specifically a tool to be used or listened to only during a specific time, such as Black History Month. Often during Black History Month, the focus is on the achievements, accomplishments and the legacy that people of African descent have left behind and continue to make. Black History Month is of course a time of memorialization with a goal to educate, recall and celebrate the Black experience, achievements and endurance of people of African descent, from their forceful journey from the shores of Africa to their lives in the Americas and Europe. Sadly, when the month is over, many people put the activities, memories

and knowledge of Black History Month “away” until the following year. However, the beauty of a podcast like BlacktoCanada, means that the accomplishments, achievements, legacies and stories of Black people in Canada remains relevant and real in the memory of those who choose to listen to the podcast.

On January 11th, 2021, the first episode, “Africville”, of the BlacktoCanada podcast was launched and the last episode, “Black History in Canada: 1960 to Present”, of season one wrapped up on April 19th, 2021. I’m so happy and proud of how far the podcast has come in a few short months!! It has been humbling and inspiring to talk with different guests about their connections to Black history in Canada. Season Two of the podcast will launch in September and there will be more awesome guests who will share their knowledge and stories concerning Black Canadian History. As mentioned, the BlacktoCanada podcast provides listeners with the rich, interesting and often untold 400-year history and stories of Black Canadians. Listeners can learn about the challenges, barriers, hardships, joys and resilience of Black Canadians and how they helped to build Canada. The BlacktoCanada podcast also has a mandate to celebrate the achievements of Canada’s Black communities!

BlacktoCanada is available on a number of podcast platforms including:

Anchor: <https://anchor.fm/channonoyeniran>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/4dAXZH6dp3h8xLD6LURcRh>



‘Anywhere Kids’ – a film for young people by young people

Posted on July 29, 2021



Andrew Smith

Coordinator, Humber Modern Slavery Partnership

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The Humber Modern Slavery Partnership, based at the Wilberforce Institute, has teamed up with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Humberside and local award-winning production company [My Pockets](#) to produce an innovative animation and resource pack for parents, teachers and carers to educate 10–12 year-olds on the dangers of child criminal and sexual exploitation.

The OPCC fund and oversee a local campaign called [Not In Our Community](#) that aims to raise awareness of child exploitation, both criminal and sexual. In addition to successful social media campaigns, they also produce resources and stories based on real life events that are used throughout educational and professional settings to raise awareness that helps protect young people.

My Pockets has vast experience in making innovative and heartfelt films, music, digital campaigns, and social art projects. In 2008 the company was invited to

Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister in recognition of their work inspiring young people.

‘Anywhere Kids’ uses aspects of real stories from real victims in our area to reveal how young people are groomed, coerced, and trapped into exploitation such as drug dealing, forced criminality and sexual exploitation. The film seeks to open a dialogue with younger children about some of the dangers they may face online or in person and how they might protect themselves from being targeted by exploiters and organised criminal gangs.

The film is narrated by the female character called Aiesha, a young person who lives in our area, and her story is very real. Aiesha wanted to tell her story in a way that would help other children stay safe from sexual exploitation and abuse. From beginning to end this brave and inspirational young lady has been a constant motivation for all who have worked on the film. We are absolutely sure that when other young people hear her story, they will not only be able to relate to Aiesha but they will feel more confident and empowered to stay safe or ask for help.

The resource pack will help children explore elements of the film by using specially designed question and activity cards that promote critical thinking, group discussions, debate, and even creative activities such as drawing and painting. The resource pack also contains useful information for teachers, parents, and carers such as the definitions of child criminal and sexual exploitation, signs to spot, support available and specific advice on how to work with children who make disclosures or have concerns. The hope is that this resource will empower teachers to be confident in facilitating conversations with their pupils, give children the confidence to speak up, and help parents to understand the risks of this destructive crime.

As coordinator of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership I recognise that ‘finding new ways of reaching young people in Humberside is a top priority for us and our partners. Seeing first-hand the devastating effects this despicable type of crime has on young people and their families we are determined to bring partners together to take the fight straight to the criminals and organised criminal gangs who are relentless in finding new ways to exploit and harm our young people for their own gain.

‘These criminals destroy our children’s lives for profit, they tear families apart and show little regard for the lasting damage they often do. As this issue becomes increasingly complex, we must work hard to find more suitable and lasting solutions by which to safeguard our young people. This must always begin with education and empowerment. By giving young people the knowledge and confidence to push back against those who would take advantage of them we are building the foundations of more resilient communities that drive out CCE [Child Criminal Exploitation] and say no to all forms of slavery.’

With input from colleagues at the Wilberforce Institute the resource pack will act as a template for discussing other difficult subjects with young adults and children in the future.

1. You can view the ‘Anywhere Kids’ animation [here](#)
2. Click [here](#) to visit the Fearless.org website
3. The full range of Not In Our Community resources can be accessed at www.notinourcommunity.org along with information on the help and support available in Humberside



Wilberforce Institute Debate: Slavery in Massachusetts

Posted on July 19, 2021

Thursday 22 July 2021, 4PM – 6PM BST

Slavery was important everywhere in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world, including in places like Massachusetts where the numbers of enslaved people were relatively small and the colonial economy was not directly based on enslavement. Slavery had been legally sanctioned in 1641, but just over a century later, according to the [Massachusetts government's own website](#), the population of the enslaved may have constituted little more than 2 percent of the total population.

What has drawn the recent attention of scholars however is not the number of the enslaved or their economic roles. The topic of Native American and African American slavery in Massachusetts has flourished following a series of important articles and books on a range of issues, from the rise and fall of slavery in Boston, to the life and works of Phillis Wheatley, the African American poet, to the question of why emancipation occurred, when it took place and how it happened during the American Revolution. This webinar introduces some of the major scholars who are contributing to this dynamic field – Jared Hardesty, Gloria McCahon Whiting and Margaret Newell – along with commentary from two very distinguished historians of New England and Canada – Mark Peterson and Charmaine Nelson. The speakers will reveal how important the question of slavery was in Massachusetts, despite the small number of the enslaved, and outline a range of historical opinion on slavery and emancipation in this fascinating British colony and American state.



Jared Hardesty



Gloria McCahon Whiting



Margaret Newell



Charmaine Nelson



Mark Peterson

To sign up for the webinar please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1007670936280116239>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



First slaves arrive in Massachusetts. Image at <https://www.massmoments.org/moment-details/first-slaves-arrive-in-massachusetts.html>

Tropical Hospitality, British Masculinity, and Drink in Late Eighteenth-Century Jamaica

Posted on June 24, 2021



Professor Trevor Burnard
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In our last regular blog before the autumn, Professor Trevor Burnard provides a summary of his recent article in the *Historical Journal*.

Jamaica was the wealthiest and most unequal colony in the eighteenth-century British Empire. It established a distinct culture among its white inhabitants – what we might call the lifestyle of the ‘British male abroad’. That culture was characterized by various forms of libidinous excess, as seen in sexual behaviour that was depraved, deviant and debauched by the standards of the time, and by our standards today, involving as it did the sexual exploitation of enslaved women and free women of colour. It involved, moreover, reprehensible and exploitative attitudes to non-white people both directly and also indirectly – the gluttony and drunkenness of white Jamaicans contrasted glaringly with enslaved people on the verge of starvation. Commentators such as the historian Edward Long praised the white inhabitants for their commitment to an ethos of hospitality and generosity but the reality of white Jamaican ‘hospitality’ was

much more sordid. A better guide than Long to the realities of white culture in eighteenth-century Jamaica, even though Long is by far the more important writer, is J.B. Moreton, who wrote a racy guide for the benefit of ‘cowskin heroes’ or young male immigrants seeking wealth and fortune in managerial positions as overseers of enslaved people on plantations.

[Tropical Hospitality, British Masculinity, and Drink in Late Eighteenth-Century Jamaica](#) uses Moreton’s guide as a means to investigate Jamaica’s debauched drinking culture. It shows that drink, dancing, and illicit sex combined to create a milieu in which activities frowned upon in Britain, or which were confined to specific and highly regulated homosocial encounters, defined white male cultural practices in the island. They drank to excess, adopted libertinism as a mode of behaviour, and saw hospitality less as a virtue than as a way of obtaining pleasure, often at the expense of enslaved women. In short, white Jamaicans were hospitable but they were not polite. If anything, they grew less polite over time, as their positions as privileged parts of the plantation system made them feel especially entitled. Ideas about the tropics formed in the Caribbean quickly migrated to other regions, notably to India. This revealed that British rule was not inevitably linked with ‘moral progress’. The tropical male abroad was devoted to very hard drinking, a vice which harmed their health, turning their well-formed British bodies into diseased Creole ones. This transformation showed in the malign effects of the tropics on character and physiognomy. The white tropical male abroad was thus not generous and hospitable, as patriotic Jamaican writers tried to insist was an intrinsic part of Jamaican culture. Instead, the tropical male abroad, at least those that took enthusiastically to island life, was typically a drunkard and a sexual predator. Their drinking culture provides a window into how white men devoted to satisfying their urges and seeking pleasure as a major goal adapted themselves to the peculiar social conditions, including slavery, of eighteenth-century Jamaica.



Harbour Street, Kingston, Jamaica, between 1820 and 1824, James Hakewill (1778-1843).
Source: <https://archive.org/details/picturesquetouro00hake/page/12/mode/2up>

Wilberforce Institute Summer Webinar: Windrush Day 2021

Posted on June 22, 2021

Tuesday 22 June 2021, 4pm – 5:30pm BST

On Windrush Day 2021 the Wilberforce Institute welcomes you, on behalf of partners across the City of Hull, to highlight Hull's important migrant ties with the Caribbean at a free online event.

Chaired by Karen Okra, the panellists include Gifty Burrows (Founder of the Africans in Hull and East Yorkshire Project), Dr Nicholas Evans (Senior Lecturer in Diaspora at the University of Hull), and Catherine Ross and Lynda-Louise Burrell (Founders of Museumand, The National Caribbean Heritage Museum). Closing remarks will be provided by Councillor Aneesa Akbar, Portfolio Holder for Communities at Hull City Council.

This region's links to the Caribbean are very strong. Planters from Hull and the surrounding region were among the earliest colonists settling Barbados in the first half of the seventeenth century; an early Governor of the Island emanated from Ryedale; Lincolnshire planter, Thomas Thistlewood, had a friend on Jamaica who came from Hull; and trade from the British West Indies arrived at the port of Hull from numerous islands including modern day Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Haiti and St Kitts. More recently, during the Second World War thousands of RAF personnel from the Caribbean were based at nearby RAF Hunmanby.

It is therefore unsurprising that personal connections established over centuries encouraged people from the Caribbean to come and live, study, or work in our region after the Second World War to bolster Britain's post-war labour shortages. It was a period often described as the Windrush Generation after the HMT *Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex, on 22 June 1948, carrying passengers from the West Indies. Those coming to this region in the following decades included lawyer Sir Roy Marshall, who became the fourth Vice Chancellor of the University of Hull and the first black leader of any UK university; historian Sir Hilary Beckles, a triple graduate of the University of Hull

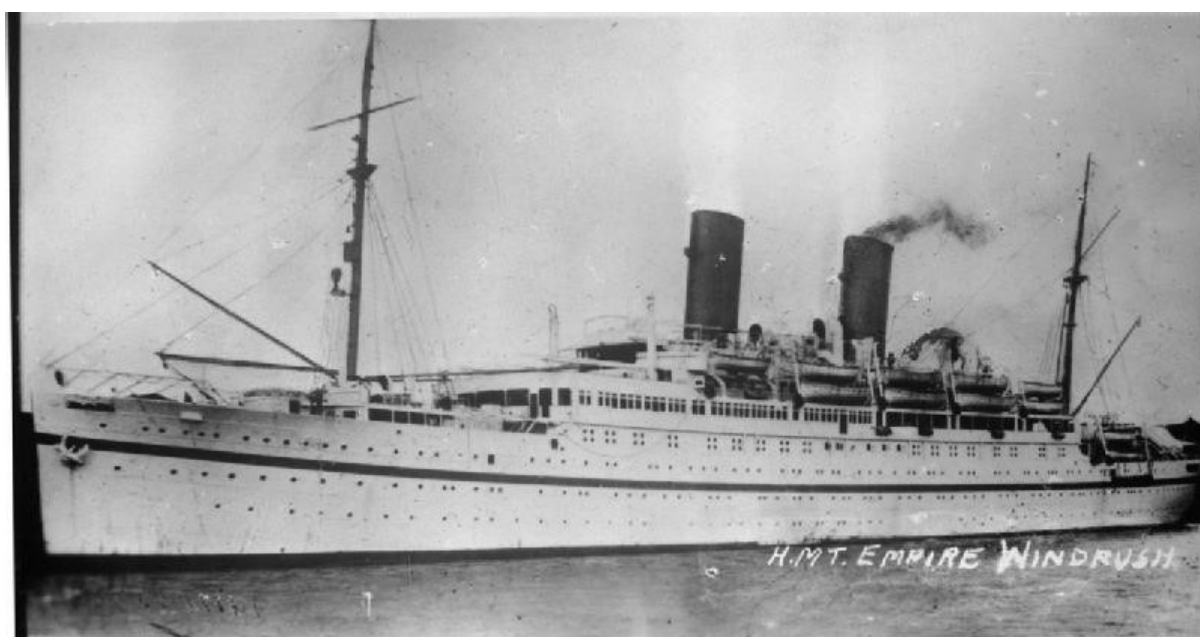
and present Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies; and rugby captain Clive Sullivan, whose family originated in Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda.

The personal bond between both regions is the focus of a new £16,000 project funded by the UK Government's Windrush Grant. Led by Hull City Council the partnership includes the University of Hull, Wilberforce House Museum, Hull Libraries, Hull Culture and Leisure Limited, Hull City Council, Museumand, The National Caribbean Heritage Museum and the Hull Afro Caribbean Association. It will draw upon the expertise of historians Professor Trevor Burnard and Dr Nicholas Evans from the University of Hull's Wilberforce Institute.

To learn more about the ties the project seeks to highlight then please click on the link below to register for the webinar:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6896312166844011789>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



HMT Empire Windrush, source: <http://media.iwm.org.uk/iwm/mediaLib//19/media-19146/large.jpg>

Human Trafficking Experience: The Lost Victim Voice

Posted on June 17, 2021



Dr Chloe Wilson

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Dr Chloe Wilson, recently awarded her doctorate for her investigation of the specific experiences of victims of human trafficking in England, shares some of her key findings.

Considering the treatment of victims by organisations in the United Kingdom [UK], particularly in the immediate aftermath of their initial identification, is key to restoring the victim voice. The very nature of the trafficking experience means that victims 'lose their voice', from the moment they are trafficked, to their eventual release (if applicable). Broadly, a lost victim voice relates to the individual inability to express the harm caused by a crime, or a criminal. This may occur due to trauma, which can greatly impact victim confidence. A further consideration (alongside the victim voice) is the disposable nature of individual victims. This is a term coined by [Kevin Bales](#): a disposable person is a new type of victim, targeted as a cheap, replaceable commodity. Both of these concepts are particularly interesting when looking at the ways in which victims interact with organisations in the UK when they have been identified. The whole process

relies on a level of cooperation from a victim, without which they cannot progress through the system. A disposable victim with a lost voice may be hard to support as they are often hurt, confused and afraid. These considerations emerge from a fundamental issue: the way victims of human trafficking are treated by organisations in the UK.

Victims have varied experiences, which can be split into two categories:

1. Physical experiences, such as sexual or physical abuse, pregnancy, abortion, or illness.
2. Psychological experiences, which affect the victim's mental state and wellbeing, such as stress, psychological torture, emotional abuse and manipulation.

These two areas are not independent of one another – research shows that there is a significant crossover from one to the other for many victims.

The victim journey itself includes a number of substantial milestones, such as initial contact with a trafficker, arrival in the UK or destination city and exploitation. In the latter stages of their journey, as victims come into contact with the UK authorities or charity services, it is the variability of their experience that is notable.

- How are they treated?
- As a victim or as an offender?
- Do they receive help initially?
- Is there immediate support available to them?

These considerations are directly linked to government frameworks, which are in place to offer support to victims and to aid practitioners. This should provide an indication of the victim's on-going treatment and the way the authorities may be able to improve the victim experience, in turn helping their recovery and rehabilitation.

Many external factors contribute to the lost victim voice. Many victims who have been trafficked into the UK are transported from foreign countries, meaning they have been separated from their home, family and culture. Not only have they been exploited and abused in some way, they are also very alone in a foreign place. This is a traumatic experience for the trafficked victim – the loneliness and fear of being so far away from their home and their family. This

isolation can often manifest as guilt, with the victims blaming themselves for what has happened. Many feel they could have avoided the situation or that they were wrong to have initially trusted their traffickers. These feelings can be exaggerated by the captors who are likely to reinforce this message, telling the victims that they are to blame and that their families are suffering because of them.

Moving away from the trauma victims experience whilst they are being trafficked, focusing on the initial contact between victim and first-responder, is key to improving the victim experience and empowering them to regain their lost voice. Working with organisations to improve their services and ensure victim treatment is at the forefront of their agenda is a critical first step. Reaching across the globe to consider alternative approaches to victim treatment can also provide insight into best practice. [In 2012, Unicef conducted a study of Nordic responses to child trafficking](#), with particular focus on assisting victims within the destination country. The paper considered the practical issues faced by child victims travelling thousands of miles to a new country and a new culture. Unicef suggests ways in which the experience might be improved for young victims, such as providing budgets, setting up institutions and creating action plans. It acknowledged that the progress made across the United Nations, in aiding victims and ensuring they are not left unprotected, has been slow. In short, this can be attributed to a lack of cooperative working between the organisations that are involved.

My research identifies substantive links between the lost victim voice and a lack of cooperation between organisations, highlighting the need for a more joined-up approach to provide the best possible support for victims of human trafficking. Drawing links with care for children in the UK and the notorious [Victoria Climbié Case](#) allowed me to develop an ‘Every Victim Matters’ approach. This idea focuses on multi-agency cooperation through the use of a Modern Slavery Key Worker. It is suggested that increased communication and accountability from organisations, alongside a consistent point of contact for the victim, would substantially improve the victim experience. ‘Every Victim Matters’ would improve the treatment of victims, enhance the victim experience and empower the victim voice.



Workshop: Sugar and Slaves on its 50th Anniversary

Posted on June 10, 2021

Monday and Tuesday 28-29 June 2021

Co-sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania and the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

THE McNEIL CENTER FOR
EARLY AMERICAN
S T U D I E S



UNIVERSITY OF HULL | WILBERFORCE INSTITUTE

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION OF RICHARD S. DUNN'S *SUGAR AND SLAVES: THE RISE OF THE PLANTER CLASS IN THE ENGLISH WEST INDIES, 1624-1713*

The Wilberforce Institute is delighted to be co-hosting this major two-day workshop on Richard S. Dunn's *Sugar and Slaves* with the McNeil Center for Early American Studies. Established as the Philadelphia Center for Early American Studies in 1978, and renamed in honour of its benefactor Robert L. McNeil, Jr., in 1998, the McNeil Center facilitates scholarly inquiry into the histories and cultures of North America in the Atlantic world before 1850, with a particular but by no means exclusive emphasis on the mid-Atlantic region.

2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Dunn's *Sugar and Slaves*, which has become one of the foundational books in the writing of Caribbean and Atlantic history. His highly evocative work opened up an entire field of study. Since its publication, historians have both deepened our understanding of subjects first developed in Dunn's work and, inspired by his scholarship, have turned to new topics entirely.

The workshop will be based around pre-circulated papers, which will be forwarded to you soon after 7 June if you have registered. For the provisional programme see below.

For more information and to register for the workshop, please visit:

<http://mceas.org/dunn.shtml>

Monday 28 June 2021

Please note that all times are Eastern Standard Time (UTC-5; BST-5)

10:00-10:15 AM

Introduction and Welcome

Emma Hart and Daniel K. Richter, McNeil Center and University of Pennsylvania

10:15-10:30 AM

Reflections on Sugar and Slaves, I:

Hilary Beckles, University of the West Indies

10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Session One The Environment:

Chair: Trevor Burnard, Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

Mary S. Draper, Midwestern State University

“Winds, Lived Geographies, and Empire Building in the Seventeenth-Century British Caribbean”

Justin Roberts, Dalhousie University

“Corruption of the Air’: Disease and Climate Change in the Rise of English Caribbean Slavery”

Jordan Smith, Widener University

“The Native Produce of this Island’: Processes of Invention in Early Barbados”

12:00-1:00 PM

Lunch Break

1:00-2:00 PM

Session Two Other Contexts:

Chair: Daniel K. Richter, McNeil Center and University of Pennsylvania

Peter C. Mancall, University of Southern California

“The First Age of Revolution”

Michiel van Groesen, Leiden University

“The Anglo-Dutch Lake? Johannes de Laet and the Ideological Origins of the Dutch and English West Indies”

Tuesday 29 June 2021

10:15-10:30 AM

Reflections on Sugar and Slaves, III:

Nicholas Canny, National University of Ireland, Galway

10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Session Four Economies:

Chair: Emma Hart, McNeil Center and University of Pennsylvania

Paul Musselwhite, Dartmouth College

“‘Plantation’ and the Rise of Capitalist Agriculture in the Early Seventeenth-Century Caribbean”

Teanu Reid, Yale University

“Financial Life in the Tropics”

Nuala Zahedieh, Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

“The progress of ‘King Sugar’ in early English Jamaica”

12:00-1:00 PM

Lunch Break

1:00-2:00 PM

Session 5 Slavery panel I: Origins

Chair: Alison Games, Georgetown University

Casey Schmitt, Cornell University

“‘They brought them from the Palenque’: Captivity and Smuggling in Jamaica, ca. 1660”

Holly Brewer, University of Maryland

“Not ‘Beyond the line’: Reconsidering Law, Power and Empire in the origins of slavery in the Early English Empire”

2:00-2:30

Break

2:30-4:00 PM

Session 6 Slavery panel II: Runaways, Marronage

Chair: Sheryllyne Haggerty, Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

Clifton Sorrell, University of Texas

“‘Ne Plus Ultra’: The Maroons and the Contested Conquest and Geography of Early Jamaica-- 1655-1690”

Simon P. Newman, University of Wisconsin

“The Barbados Planter Class and the Normalization of Slavery and Resistance in Restoration London”

Linda Rupert, UNC Greensboro

“Intertwined Geographies of Marronage and Empire in the Seventeenth-Century Circum-Caribbean”

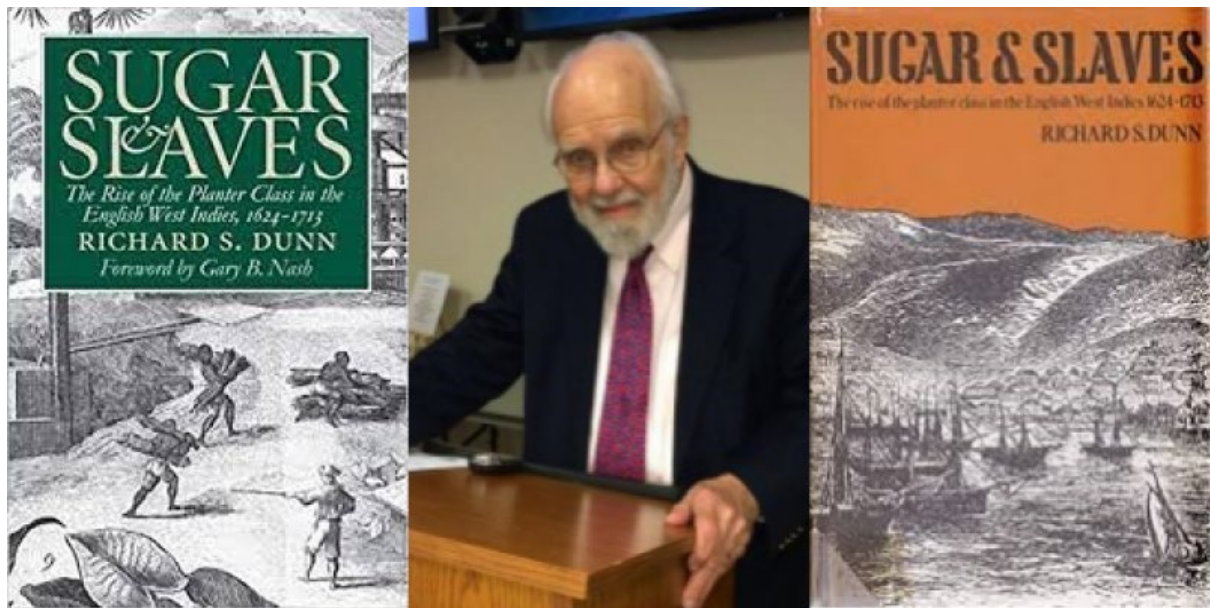
4:00-4:15 PM

Reflections on Sugar and Slaves, IV:

Roderick McDonald, Rider University

4:15-4:45 PM

Wrap up, with remarks from Richard Dunn, University of Pennsylvania



Richard S. Dunn, Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania, with two of his editions of *Sugar & Slaves*

Covid-19 in Camps – How the pandemic is impacting young refugees

Posted on June 3, 2021



Charlotte Russell

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From the early stages of the pandemic, we have seen the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on minority and marginalised groups. This disparity continues to disadvantage those living in refugee camps across the world. While Covid-19 mortality rates in refugee camps have not been as devastating as was initially predicted, the impacts of the pandemic for displaced people are both broad ranging and ongoing. In the case of young refugees, we are seeing a particular set of adverse consequences which extend beyond physical health.

In my research I'm speaking with NGOs working within refugee camps on the Greek islands, and with people living in the camps who are seeking asylum. Time and time again, when I asked about the safety issues which young people in these camps are facing, Covid-19 came up. Interviewees spoke about the increased, unmonitored abuse and exploitation of young people as a result of Covid-19. One young man referred to this as the 'hidden pandemic' in refugee camps. A little more exploration revealed that this is unfortunately very much a

trend across camps globally. While every camp presents distinct problems, trends such as this are appearing across the world.

Lockdowns, income loss, restriction of services and confinement to insecure environments are increasing the existing threats to the safety and well-being of young refugees. They are facing higher levels of mistreatment, gender-based violence, exploitation, abusive smuggling, social exclusion and separation from caregivers. In a refugee camp setting, where the stresses of daily life are already severe and child protection services are limited or non-existent, these increased safety risks are felt all the more intensely. While interconnected, these issues can be grouped into three dimensions: provision of services, poverty and xenophobia.

Services which young people in camps relied upon to alleviate the associated problems of encampment are slowed, or unable to function. One example of this is the closure of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing education services. Schools in refugee camps provide an informal safeguarding role – one which is rarely filled in any formal capacity. NGO representatives have described to me how getting to know young people and seeing them on a regular basis allowed their teachers to spot indicators that a young person may be experiencing some form of abuse, and to act accordingly. Remote learning is simply not accessible financially to the majority of these young people. It requires a mobile device, mobile data, and very often a long journey on foot to purchase the mobile data, not to mention the risk of exploitation or abuse faced while making this journey to the nearest town. In any case, it is the in-person contact which most effectively alerts teachers or support staff to a safeguarding issue.

Many other support structures are now closed too, including ‘safe spaces’ in camps. In Vial refugee camp on the island of Chios, the ‘safe space’ for women and young people has now been closed for ten months, making it harder for children to report child protection issues and receive the necessary support and care. Closures of support structures such as these are linked by NGOs and refugees themselves to the increasing rates of neglect, abuse, gender-based violence and child marriages occurring in camps.

Shifts in the services processing asylum claims are also having a tangible impact on the overcrowding and poor monitoring of camp residents. United Nations agencies suspended resettlement procedures at the beginning of the pandemic.

In many countries, border closures have left displaced people stranded, placing children and their families at risk of further harm and potentially separating families for longer stretches. In the United States, people seeking asylum, including children, have been turned away or deported to their countries of origin at the United States–Mexico border as part of the response to Covid-19. This indefinite prolongation of encampment also further increases the poverty of those living in camps worldwide.

While the pandemic has not only increased the impacts of poverty on displaced people in camps, it has also altered and reduced the means available to refugees to combat these poverty increases. Children and young people are no exception to this change. Families and caregivers of refugee children are inherently more vulnerable to job loss or economic downturns. With loss of access to support services (which have been forced to withdraw or reduce their support due to social distancing measures or lack of funding), comes a greater intensity of need. This increased need for food, clothing, shelter, and income must be accommodated somehow. And with the closure of ‘safer’ channels to do so, there is an increased likelihood of children accessing what they or their family need through means which exploit them. More children are now working to provide income for their families, engaging in coercive or emotional relationships, exploitative or abusive smuggling, or sexual exploitation.

Very much interwoven with these issues is the circulation of misinformation on the spread of Covid-19. Stigma, xenophobia and discrimination towards displaced children and their families are being exacerbated worldwide. In Lebanon, multiple municipalities have introduced restrictions on Syrian refugees to stem the spread of the virus. However these do not apply to Lebanese nationals. Similarly, displaced people on the Greek islands are facing curfews, and even lockdowns that do not apply to Greek residents. In Italy, there have been incidents of police brutality towards young refugees simply for leaving their camp. With these trends a differentiation is made between the rights of nationals compared to those of refugees. They also underscore the overlap between health inequality or the commodification of health, and the enjoyment of basic human rights to safety and protection, a relationship which Covid-19 has highlighted all too clearly.

While it is important not to homogenise the experiences of minority groups, or to associate the personal identities of these people with only the labels of ‘refugee’ or ‘child’, it remains important to demonstrate that they are facing

distinct challenges. These challenges need to be tackled with their particular circumstances in mind. The health implications of displacement, particularly in a pandemic, are of course vital to appreciate. However the ‘hidden pandemic’ of unmonitored and unprevented abuse presents an equally vital child health crisis which continues to be overlooked.



Moria Corona Awareness Team (MCAT), a refugee-led initiative working to provide protection from Covid-19 in camps on Lesbos island. Image at <https://www.facebook.com/MoriaCoronaAwarenessTeam/>

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Times: Living the British Empire in Jamaica 1756

Posted on May 27, 2021



Sheryllyne Haggerty

Honorary Research Fellow

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The *Europa* left Jamaica for London in November 1756. It was the start of the Seven Years' War, and the vessel was taken by a French privateer on the 21st December, and then retaken by the British two days later. When the British retook the *Europa*, they found its letter bag from Jamaica hidden under a gun in the Captain's cabin. The bag of letters – written by planters, merchants, ships' captains, attorneys, artisans, ordinary sailors, and even some women, and sent to people in London, Bristol, Dublin and Liverpool – was taken as evidence for the Prize Courts in the High Court of Admiralty, as was usual, along with the vessel and its cargo. Those letters were never delivered. The cache of c.350 letters, covering September to November 1756, is preserved at The National Archives (HCA/32/189/22 and HCA 30/259). This is unique, because none of the original post bags of letters of the thirteen other vessels which were retaken as prizes returning from the British Caribbean during this conflict have been found.

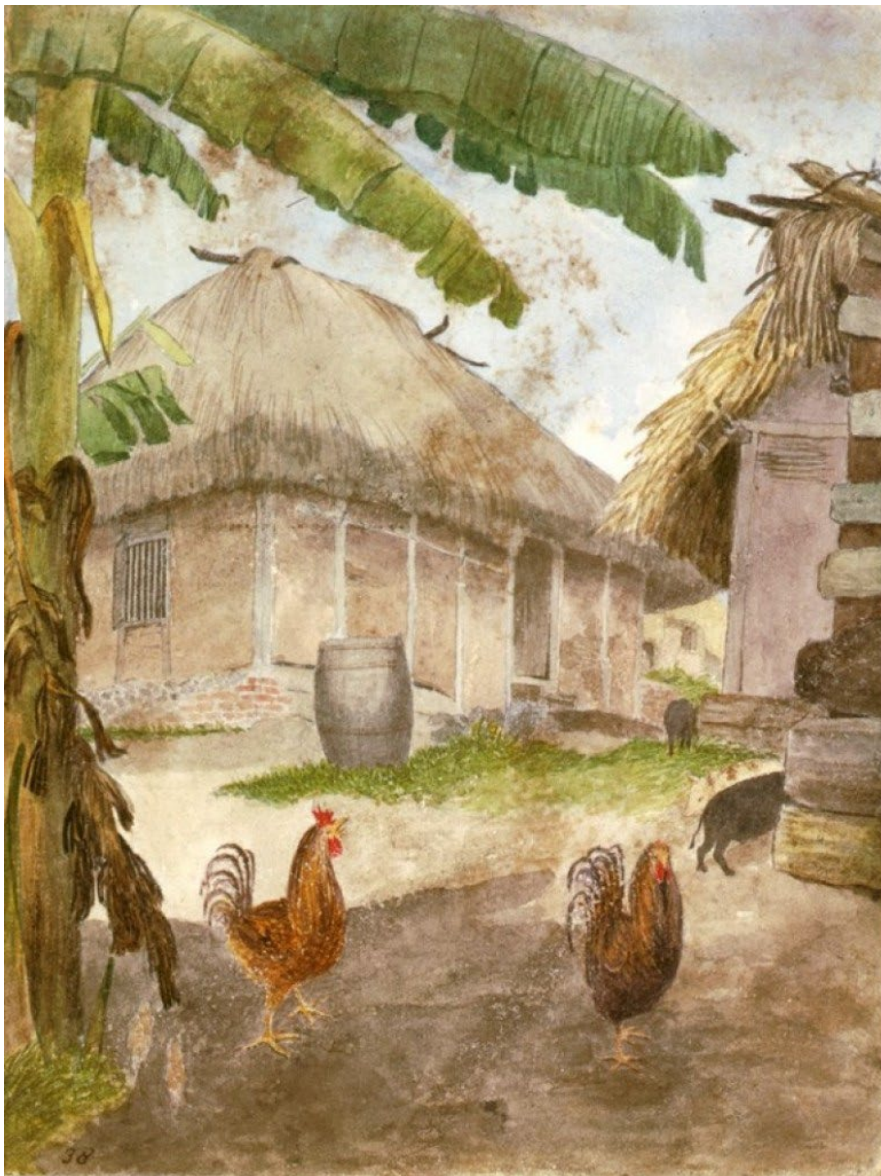
I first discovered these letters in 2016 by accident, when I was looking for additional material for an article on privateering. I knew they were exciting, but had no idea what for, so I just photographed them all, including all the bills of lading, bills of exchange, ephemera and envelopes. It was about a year later that I realised that whilst others had used these documents for specific purposes such as prices of enslaved people and the processes of the prize courts, no one had used the letters as a discreet data set. Yet here were letters from people from a wide range of social backgrounds, writing on a vast array of topics. They provided a prism of Jamaican history – even of British imperial history – at a moment in time. Moreover, given that the Seven Years' War would end with British hegemony in the Atlantic, and that Jamaican attitudes towards the enslaved would harden considerably after Tacky's Revolt in 1756, they spoke to how life was experienced by ordinary people, white, black and of colour, men and women, free and enslaved, at this important moment in Jamaican history.

I decided to let the letters speak for themselves. Not knowing where to start I transcribed all the letters, associated documents, envelopes, ephemera – everything. This started possibly my largest academic journey. By following the letters I followed the themes they spoke to: trade and finance (okay I was fine with that) but the remaining themes pushed me into areas of history with which I was unfamiliar: war and politics; love, family and friendship; death and disease; consumerism. One area, if not missing entirely – but certainly unrepresented in the letters – were the enslaved. How was I to deal with this glaring omission of ninety percent of the population? In fact I dealt with this issue in the same way I had in fleshing out the lives of the white letter writers. I adopted an iterative methodology in which I used every source I could find for 1756 in conjunction with the letters. This has included: accounts of produce (statements of crops produced on estates of absentee planters); manumission records; court records; mercantile papers; wills; probate documents; and state and government records in Jamaica, Dublin, London, and many regional British archives. I also looked for further information beyond 1756 to tell me more about some of the people who either wrote the letters, were written to, or written about. I used the letters of the elite, but only for what they told me about others, rather than themselves. This methodology has enabled me to furnish far more information on the lives of the enslaved and ordinary whites than would otherwise have been possible.

I enjoyed the challenge of learning about all these areas of history that were new to me immensely. The only thing I have enjoyed more has been getting to know the characters that appeared to me from the pages of these letters: Captain

William Clutsam, aptly named given the various travails he encountered; Edward Magnar who deserted a slave ship to go privateering; Sarah Folkes who could not bear to think that her child in England was dead; carpenter Ewbank Ogle, grateful that his brother had survived a fever; Rachel and Manoel Mendes ordering kosher beef brisket for a taste of home; and Amelia, who had to wait fourteen years for her promised manumission to be realised. I like to think that in some small way, not only have I told their stories, but that their letters have finally been delivered.

My book on this project, *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Times: Living the British Empire in Jamaica 1756* is under contract with McGill-Queen's University Press and will hopefully be published in 2022.



“Untitled Image (Thatched Houses)”, *Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave*

Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, accessed March 1, 2021, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2402>

Racial Capitalism and the End of Empire Files

Posted on May 20, 2021



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My research on child migration from Britain, and Indigenous child removal within Canada during the twentieth century, is particularly concerned with race. From a theoretical point of view, I am interested in what these schemes might demonstrate in terms of understanding ‘racial capitalism’. Connections between historic child welfare, and what academics term the ‘colonial global economy’ might not seem obvious, but both fuse questions of morality with relationships defined by imbalances of power, and an intent to gauge whose interests are being protected.

‘Racial capitalism’ is a concept attributed to [the late Cedric Robinson](#), alongside other key figures associated with the Black Radical Tradition, recently receiving renewed interest from [scholars and activists](#). In its most basic sense, it proposes an inextricable relationship between racism and capitalism.

Robinson argued that racialised exploitation was foundational to the development of capitalism within Europe, before the introduction of

transatlantic slavery, in processes he considered colonial. He demonstrated that historically Europe's working-classes contained racialised subjects, including Irish, Roma, Slav and Jewish people, whose exploitation was broadly accepted on account of their apparent cultural or ethnic inferiority.

[Contemporary sociologists](#) suggest that the capitalist tendency to differentiate workers along racial lines is frequently underestimated in accounts of how the modern world developed. We have to ask what is the work that racism does – over time and across place, for whose benefit and why – and set this alongside postcolonial theorists, who address the colonial [processes fundamental](#) to the reproduction of plural racisms.

In my research, racialisation, essentially the identification of particular people as 'races' has clear significance. When Christopher Columbus 'discovered' North America in the fifteenth century, he apparently labelled its people '[Indian](#)' because he mistakenly believed he had reached Asia. Five hundred years later, children from ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds were forced to attend 'Indian Residential Schools', in an attempt to erase their 'Indian' heritage and assimilate them into Western-European culture, a legacy of this crude '[pan-Indian](#)' construction and the colonial systems that manufactured and defined its terms.

How racial codes are constructed and transformed was something I considered when looking at the [British Documents on the End of Empire](#) series, an annotated collection of government records chronicling Britain's withdrawal from its colonial territories. The following quotes are all taken from these files, with the headings indicating which volume. I would urge anyone interested in Britain's recent colonial history to have a look at them.

The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951: Part IV, pp. 144-155.

After the Second World War, the disintegration of Britain's old imperial identity is reflected in discussions over Canada's rejection of the 'phrase if not the content of Dominion status', now considered to imply domination. The model was India, 'which only twenty years ago clamoured for Dominion status, now demands independence'. In a letter to India's first Prime Minister Pandit Nehru in 1949, one year after gaining independence, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee emphasised the 'power of words' and the changing dynamics of Britain's former empire, remarking how Canada first 'called itself a Dominion having

taken the term from some phrase in the Bible'. He lamented the fact that 'we in this country are rather insensitive to the content of names'.

Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice 1925-1945: Part II, pp. 291-306.

Racial sensitivities, or lack thereof, are detailed in one compelling memo written in 1940 by B.E. Carman, Director of Education in British Honduras (now Belize), regarding 'offensive passages in school textbooks'. Reflecting upon British racism, colonial policy, and the influence of the former on the colonies, Carman urged the Colonial Office to review the distribution of books authored by British academics, as their contents, 'though not necessarily actually offensive, are yet irritating to local people'.

Carman cites the following extract to highlight what he terms the hypocrisy of 'Western standards' that claim cultural differences as 'an accident of geography' rather than racial inheritance, while still viewing non-white people 'as some strange inferior species'.

The original people were negroes of a backward type [...] But they have mixed to some extent with the better tribes farther north and so have been improved. (Laborde, *The Southern Lands*, 1931).

Carman also suggests that racial hierarchies between colonised populations be considered: 'books written for West Africa cannot be used in the West Indies since the people here rightly regard themselves as being more advanced than their African relatives, particularly if they happen to be comparatively fair-skinned.'

Carman's proposed solution, with hindsight, appears extraordinarily naïve. He suggested that if British scholars were only more 'careful of what they write', they could spare not only the feelings of Britain's colonial subjects, but potentially reverse racial prejudices 'developing in England [which] would be checked and probably even killed'.

This understanding of British racism as 'purely a social problem' recurs, demonstrating an important contention of postcolonial theory, and what is considered a false distinction between economic/political systems and social relations. The racism integrated in the former is denied by emphasising the latter. In the minutes of Colonial Office

meetings in the early 1940s, the problem of domestic racial prejudice, characterised as ‘a disinclination on the part of white people to be brought into close association, socially, with coloured people’, is contrasted favourably with the seemingly intractable colonial ‘colour bar’, and explicitly racist legislation favouring their white European minorities. Despite these cases being, ‘very difficult to answer by a government which attempts to take its stand against colour prejudice’, in Africa especially, such discrimination was still considered ‘to be, and is, in the interests of the natives themselves.’

The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1951–1957, Part III, pp. 393–395.

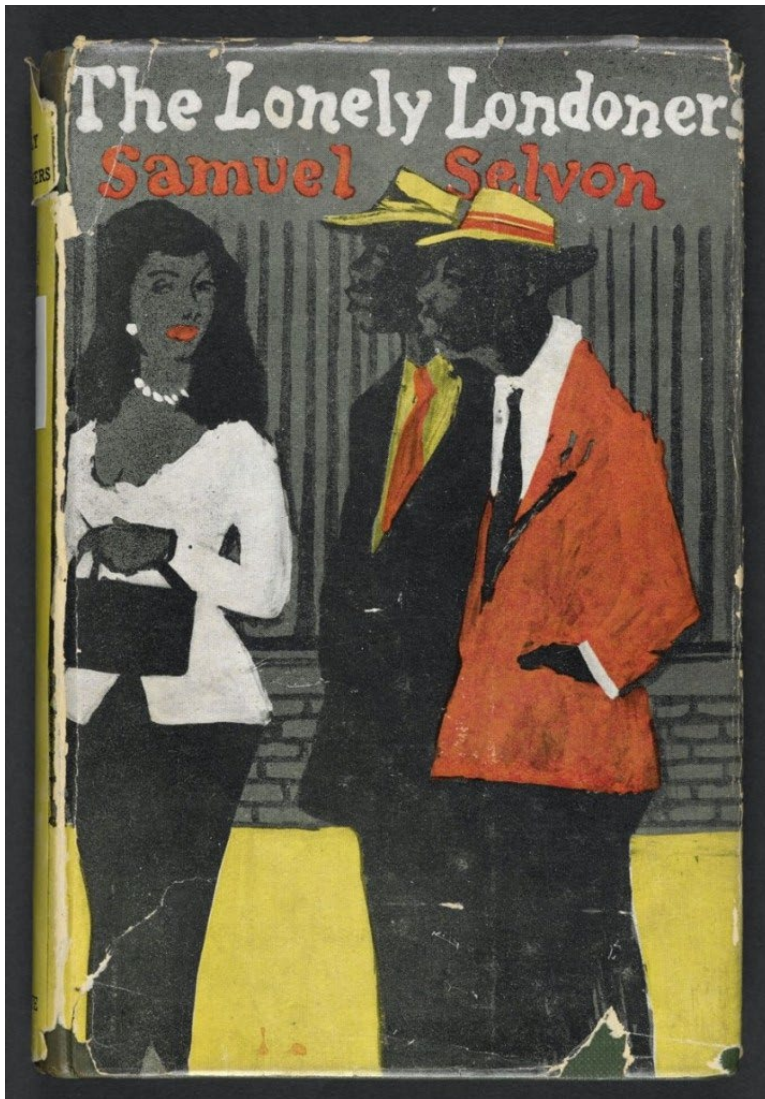
Hope that Britain’s racist inclinations could, in Carman’s words, simply be ‘brought up to date’ had been firmly dispelled by the 1950s, although the hypocrisy of publicly portraying anti-racist sentiments while tacitly condoning colonial racism, and here implementing racist policies, remained consistent. In the words of Lord Salisbury in a 1954 letter to Lord Swinton, ‘if we legislate on immigration, though we can draft it in non-discriminatory terms, we cannot conceal the obvious fact that the object is to keep out coloured people’.

This was in relation to the increasing migration of British subjects from the West Indies, foreshadowing the recent [Windrush scandals](#). Salisbury remarked: ‘It is for me not merely a question of whether criminal negroes should be allowed in or not; it is a question whether great quantities of negroes, criminal or not, should be allowed to come...’

He was suggesting, derisively, that ‘this sudden increase of the inflow of Blacks is of course the welfare state’. Arguably this is true, since these were people actively recruited in their thousands to help [rebuild](#) Britain’s economy after the war, including to its new National Health Service.

Because of its usage in contexts similar to the above, ‘negro’ is a term now considered deeply offensive. In the 1920s however, W.E.B. Du Bois, forefather of the sociology of race, [advocated its use](#) by *black people* over ‘coloured’ for political reasons. Thinking about the currency of race – the work racialised constructions do, who uses them, how they change and why – is significant in

research that hopes to understand racial capitalism and, ultimately, how the exploitation of particular people is often justified.



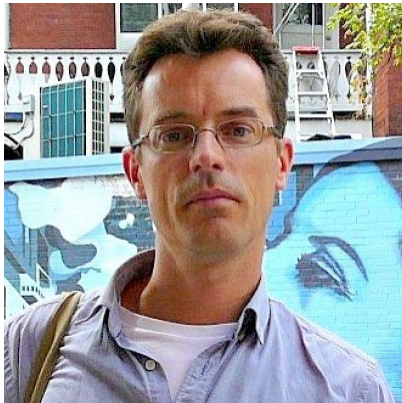
Samuel Selvon © 1956. Published under a [Creative Commons License](#).

“The *Lonely Londoners* is regarded as the first – and definitive – novel to represent the Black migrant experience in England.” British Library.

Unfree labour in the Angolan coffee economy, 1830-1960

Posted on May 6, 2021

Wilberforce Institute Webinar, Thursday 20 May 2021, 4PM – 6PM BST



Dr Jelmer Vos

Lecturer in Global History

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We hope you will join us for the last of our Wilberforce Institute Webinars for this academic year. On Thursday 20 May, at 4pm (BST), Dr Jelmer Vos of the University of Glasgow will share with us some of his latest research on the history of forced labour in Angola.

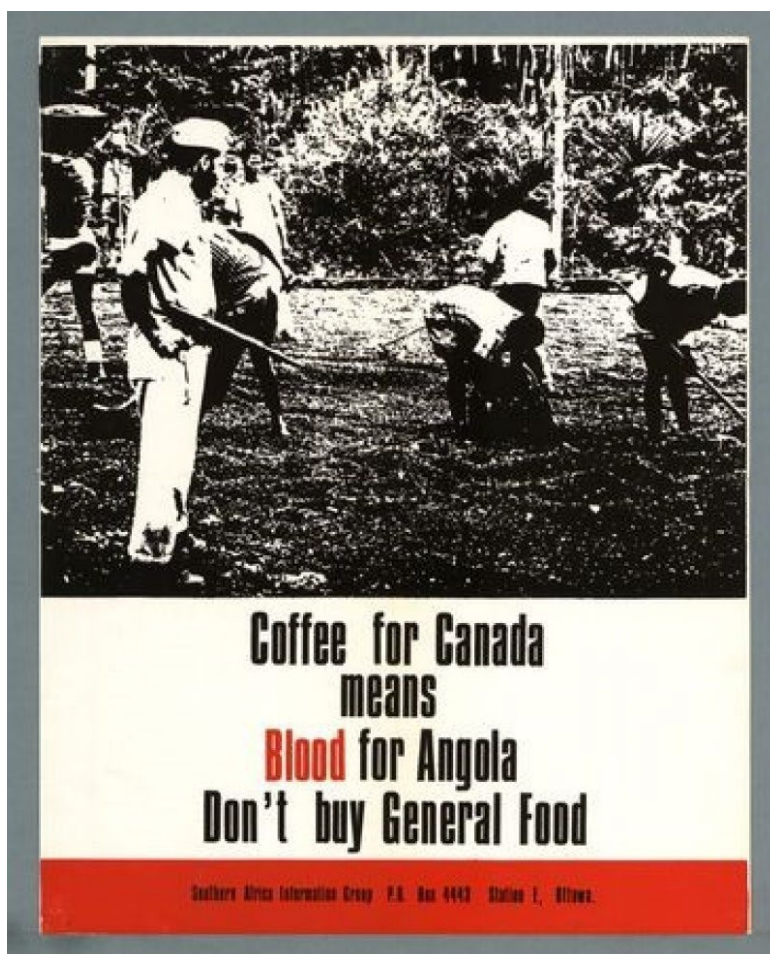
The first coffee estates in Angola using enslaved workers emerged in the 1830s. African smallholders long remained the dominant producers of coffee in this Portuguese colony, but in the 1930s and especially after World War Two settler production based on a system of forced wage labour expanded dramatically, making Angola one of the largest producers of [robusta](#) coffee in the world. Forced labour became a prominent feature of colonial life in Angola, and eyewitnesses and historians have long debated the continuities between this form of labour coercion and proto-colonial slavery.

This paper intervenes in this literature with three propositions. First, Angola differed from other colonial coffee economies where foreign planters played a dominant role (Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Kenya) as the Portuguese government, despite fierce international pressures, was unwilling to withdraw their support from the settler economy. Second, forced labour resembled 'modern slavery' as described by Kevin Bales, in the sense that the system treated African farm labour as 'disposable'. Third, despite this, its roots lay not so much in proto-colonial slavery, but rather in the equally old system of compulsory portage.

To sign up for this event please click on the link below:

<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/6900012022283361804>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



Southern Africa Information Group (Ottawa), and Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika (Amsterdam). *Coffee for Canada Means Blood for Angola. Don't Buy General Food*. 1972.

Posted on [May 13, 2021](#)

Modern Slavery and Conflict: The Drivers and the Deterrents



Dr Alicia Kidd

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Dr Alicia Kidd, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Wilberforce Institute, talks about her forthcoming research monograph, *Modern Slavery and Conflict: The Drivers and the Deterrents*, after securing a contract with Oxford University Press. Her book will run in the Clarendon Studies in Criminology series.

This book developed out of my PhD thesis on the relationship between conflict and modern slavery, which I completed at the Wilberforce Institute in 2019. I had come to the subject in response to my experience as a practitioner in the field where I identified a real gap in research and knowledge regarding the root causes of modern slavery. In bringing an academic focus to practitioner experience, my book injects new material into the field of modern slavery, which is an area in which interest continues to grow amongst academics, practitioners and members of the public alike. This growing interest in modern slavery has also led to large public debates about immigration and asylum which are topics that my book engages with, particularly in relation to the discrepancies between the UK government's declared intention to lead the way in defeating modern slavery whilst simultaneously imposing a restrictive and hostile environment on

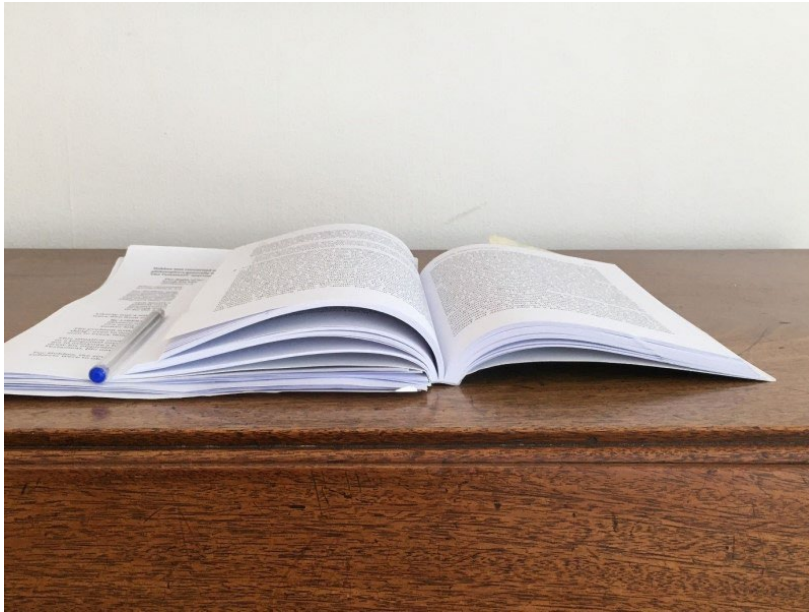
those seeking asylum.

By looking beyond just the individuals involved in cases of modern slavery – the victims and the perpetrators – my book will consider the ways in which states facilitate, and sometimes even actively encourage, situations of modern slavery to occur. While there is growing visibility of modern slavery, the portrayal of modern slavery cases inevitably focuses on an unwilling victim, tricked or deceived into exploitation by a criminal perpetrator looking to benefit from the victim's misfortune. My book will challenge this conception of modern slavery by questioning the common assumptions that a) victims of modern slavery are all entirely distanced from the fate that awaits them and b) that modern slavery is a relationship simply between a victim and a perpetrator.

With a broad definition of conflict as an organising concept, I consider the ways in which conflict can facilitate modern slavery by generating unsafe conditions, disrupting support networks and encouraging displacement. Using first-hand accounts, comparisons are made between those who fled conflict to the UK in relative safety, and those who fled but then experienced modern slavery. My book contextualises these stories in order to understand why some people appear to be more at risk than others when escaping a conflict situation. The book also considers the lives of people after they have fled conflict and arrived in the UK. With the belief that they have left danger behind, arriving in the UK brings hopes of safety. However, by drawing insights from interviews with those who have experienced the UK immigration system, I am able to make observations about how the UK government and its restrictive and hostile immigration policies actually put people at increased risk of modern slavery once they are in the UK.

The strength of my book lies in its unique empirical focus on a comparison between first-hand accounts of people fleeing conflict to safety, and those fleeing conflict and experiencing modern slavery. It offers rare personal insights into the experiences of asylum seekers, refugees and victims of modern slavery and the specific aspects of their journeys that made them vulnerable to exploitation. I hope to have the first edition available in print in 2022.

In this blog, Professor Oldfield talks about the collaboration he was involved with between the Wilberforce Institute and the British Library.



The Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery in Britain

Posted on April 29, 2021



Professor John Oldfield

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In this blog, Professor Oldfield talks about the collaboration he was involved with between the Wilberforce Institute and the British Library.

In August 2020, I was approached by Katie Adams at the British Library [BL] to write an essay for the BL website. I would be lying if I said I did not hesitate for a moment. The brief was ambitious: a short 2000-word piece, tentatively entitled ‘The Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery in Britain, c. 1787–1838’, that would provide readers fourteen years of age and above with an accessible, up-to-date and academically rigorous introduction to the BL’s anti-slavery collections.

Having accepted the commission, I began to sketch out a plan. In conversations with Katie, we agreed that what was needed was an ‘integrated’ history of British anti-slavery, one that not only highlighted the achievements of William Wilberforce and his supporters but also took account of black resistance, whether in the Caribbean or here in the United Kingdom [UK], as well as the involvement of women in the abolitionist campaigns of the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. Furthermore, we wanted to make space for international perspectives and – if the word limit permitted – to say something about the legacies of emancipation (1833/1838) and the UK’s reckoning with slavery.

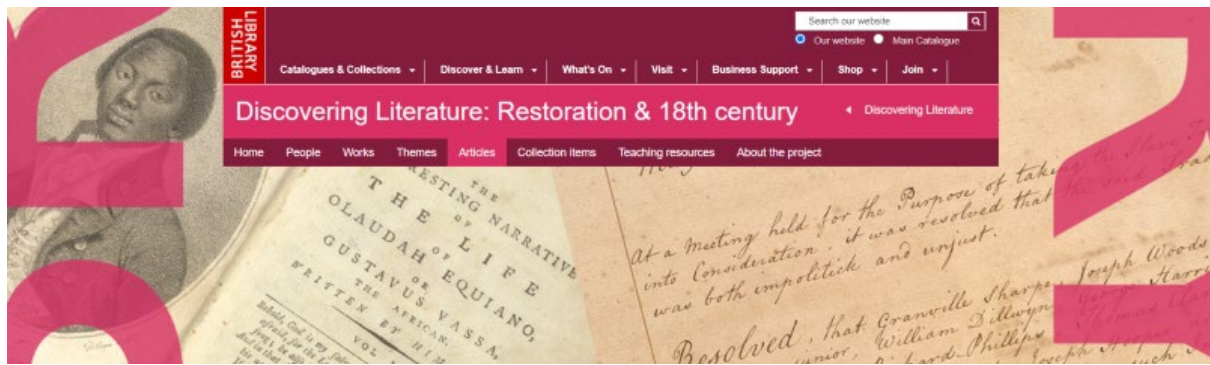
In early November, I submitted a first draft, which remarkably came in at just over 2,000 words. It soon became apparent, however, that we needed more space, not just to plug some of the obvious gaps but to tweak the argument and – in places – to make it more accessible. This was not all. The essay also had to fit within a suite of BL web pages, which inevitably meant that some degree of cross-referencing was necessary. As a result, the original draft began to expand, so much so that we set ourselves a new target of 3,000 words, including further reading and footnotes.

Late in December, I submitted a final draft, which Katie then built into web pages, complete with the relevant links. If you are interested in seeing the results, you can access the pages here:

[Abolition of the slave trade and slavery in Britain – The British Library \(bl.uk\)](#)

Commissions of this kind are never easy or straightforward. They inevitably involve making decisions about what to include (and what to leave out), about tone and about register. They also involve understanding your client’s needs, which is why dialogue is so important. To a large extent, the whole process is about testing ideas, while at the same time being aware of the obvious constraints. None of us likes word limits but they can also be a way of focusing the mind, demanding a different kind of discipline that can be strangely liberating.

While my name appears as the author of ‘Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery in Britain’, the article should properly be regarded as the result of a collaboration between the Wilberforce Institute and the BL, and one that, for me, proved immensely rewarding. I am very grateful to Katie Adams for her expertise, support and encouragement, as I am to her colleagues at the BL. The essay is all the better for their input.



St Vincent's volcanic crisis – failing to learn from Montserrat

Posted on April 22, 2021



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The eruption on 9 April of La Soufrière volcano on the Caribbean island of St Vincent followed months of smoke plumes and other warning signs. At the time of writing, some 20,000 people have been evacuated from their homes, about one fifth of the island's population. Some are temporarily housed in shelters, others on cruise ships or neighbouring islands. On 14 April, [the United Nations launched an emergency appeal](#) after shelter capacity was breached and supplies of drinking water and other essentials ran low. Overcrowding also threatens to spread Covid-19 among the displaced.

To anyone with a long interest in the region or of volcanology, this may all sound familiar. In 1995, La Soufrière's namesake – the Soufrière Hills volcano – erupted on the island of Montserrat, another former British colony in the same island chain. The southern half of the island, including Montserrat's capital, were evacuated several times before temporary resettlement eventually became permanent. Around two-thirds of Montserrat's original population of 10,600 inhabitants eventually relocated overseas, most in the United Kingdom [UK].

The volcanoes themselves also seem to be following similar patterns: eruptions of ash, debris and gases following a period of seismic activity and heavy ash falls that blight everyday life and pose a risk to health. Montserrat's Soufrière Hills lava domes continue to rumble to this day, although the last major eruptions occurred between 1995 and 2010. Likewise, La Soufrière seems set to pose a threat to Vincentians for some time to come. Yet in my own research into the disaster on Montserrat, I found that neither the UK Government (Montserrat is a British Overseas Territory) nor the Government of Montserrat had been prepared to respond to an eruption, despite warnings from scientists, eruptions on neighbouring volcanic islands, and increased seismicity. Considering that St Vincent suffered three major eruptions in the twentieth Century, and like Montserrat is subject to other natural disasters such as hurricanes, the lack of preparedness and international support appears inexcusable.

To minimise disruption from displacement, and prevent more serious harms such as trauma, exploitation and poverty among displaced people, temporary accommodation must provide for an adequate standard of living. Despite St Vincent's history of volcanic activity and months of warning signs, it appears that the government did not have enough shelters, hygiene kits or beds, and no adequate contingency for providing clean water and sanitation. The Montserratian government made similar oversights 30 years ago; as a result, 19 people who had returned to the relative comfort of their homes in the exclusion zone [were killed by a pyroclastic flow on 25 June 1997](#).

The inadequate response of the UK Government to an unfolding catastrophe in its overseas territory caused further hardships on Montserrat. My analysis of Hansard records shows little interest in the situation among UK parliamentarians and government until the tragedy of June 1997 forced the issue into the spotlight. By this time, islanders had struggled on in cramped and insanitary conditions with limited access to food, education and health care, for almost two years. Eventually, the British government opened an assisted passage scheme to help Montserratians leave the island, with several thousand ultimately relocating to the UK. Yet the privations and indignities continued when many of the evacuees, who were supposed to be treated as British citizens, were denied National Insurance numbers and other basic support in the UK. Meanwhile the impacts of the late-1990s eruptions continue to be felt on the island to this day, with many Montserratians still lacking adequate housing and employment opportunities.

As the UN launches its emergency funding appeal, Britain, the former colonial ruler of St Vincent, [has pledged just £200,000](#) of support. It is inevitable that the crisis on St Vincent, like La Soufrière itself, will rumble on for some time to come. To prevent a severely reduced quality of life for the relocatees, and potential tragedy if people opt to return home rather than suffering the misery of inadequate shelters, the British government must do more. The international community too should consider routes for safe and legal passage off the island for those who choose to leave, either temporarily or permanently, to reduce pressure on the limited available services. Such relocations should be carried out with dignity and with respect for the wishes of the evacuees.

Montserrat and St Vincent and the Grenadines sit in an increasingly vulnerable position as climate change warms the neighbouring seas and air. More forceful hurricanes and rising sea levels put the islanders at greater risk from future natural disasters. Heavy storms triggered by climate change can also increase the risk of, and dangers from, volcanic eruptions in the region. The sad inevitability that natural catastrophes will become more severe and frequent should prompt policymakers in the Caribbean nations and their former colonial rulers to step up their disaster preparedness and response. Sadly, for the currently displaced population of St Vincent, the window of opportunity may already have been missed.



The volcanic eruption plume of La Soufrière on St Vincent, during explosive eruptions on 9 April 2021. ©ItsMeOni (from @_ItsMeOni on Twitter)

Insurance Covered! A look at the Zong Massacre

Posted on April 15, 2021



Professor Trevor Burnard

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[Insurance Covered!](#) offers a series of podcasts on all matters relating to insurance, created and compered by Peter Mansfield, a partner with the law firm [RPC](#) (Reynolds Porter Chamberlain). As part of this series Professor Trevor Burnard was invited to discuss the most notorious insurance case in history, *Gregson v Gilbert* (1783), commonly known as the Zong Massacre. In the podcast Professor Burnard places this case in its Jamaican historical context, explains why the case came about and notes its importance in the burgeoning British abolitionist movement. A summary of the podcast is provided below.

The Zong massacre, long recognised as a notorious event in insurance history, involved the despicable murder of enslaved people in an attempt to claim back losses in insurance. During November and December 1781, the crew of the ship named the Zong threw more than 120 enslaved captives overboard in order to claim insurance on these 'losses'. This took place only a month after Britain had lost the American Revolution with the Battle of Yorktown. French ships were at that stage just moving in towards the Caribbean, and it looked like Jamaica would be conquered by the French fleet. At that point, Jamaica, which was Britain's most valuable and important colony, was in a terrible state. The great

majority of Britons were invested in the slave trade and Britain was the greatest slave trading nation in the world.

The Zong was a ship captured in Ghana by the Gregson family, Liverpool slave traders, who used this captured ship to transport a very large number of captives to the West Indies, ideally to Kingston, but with only a very small crew. The ship encountered trouble en route, found itself off course and running low on supplies. With not enough water to go round the crew had three choices. The first and the most obvious was to wait for water to arrive, in other words, rain, or another ship, and to sail for Montego Bay as quickly as possible. The second was to batten down the hatches so the slaves could not escape, accept that some would die from dehydration and disease and then to try and sell as many as they could for whatever price they could get when they got to Montego Bay; that's what normally happened on slave ships in this sort of situation. The third, and the one they chose to take, was to throw 54 women and children overboard in order, they claimed later on, to stop an insurrection; this took place on 29th November 1781. A further 42 individuals, all men, were thrown over on 1st December and sometime after 6th December the crew threw over another 26; 10 Africans threw themselves overboard. This equates to the abhorrent murder of 122 captives and a total of 132 deaths.

The Gregsons then put in an insurance claim, citing the action taken to be lawful to prevent insurrection and rebellion, which at the time was a common claim to make. The underwriter however refused to pay out on the claim. This is thought to have been because the actions of the crew made him doubt that this was a legitimate claim – it looked more like a scheme to maximise profits and make up for the poor return on the voyage. The decision was then left to the courts to decide. Initially the decision went in favour of the slave traders, but on appeal, Lord Mansfield reversed the decision. There were two key reasons for this: the manner in which a number of captives had thrown themselves off the ship; and the claim that a lack of water had been the reason for insurrection, when in fact there had been heavy rain before, during and after the massacre. Despite Mansfield's ruling the story has an unsavoury ending: the Gregsons may not have won their claim but they ultimately got away with 122 murders. The case of the Zong was nevertheless of key importance in helping to kickstart the abolitionist movement.

You can view the podcast via the following links:

- [Acast](#)
- [iTunes](#)
- [Spotify](#)



'The Slave Ship' by J. M. W. Turner (1840). In the background, the sun shines through a storm while large waves hit the sides of a sailing ship. In the foreground, enslaved people are drowning in the water, while others are being eaten by large fish.

Source: [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston](#)

‘Casually Lost’ and Commonly Stolen: Slave Stealing in American History

Posted on April 8, 2021

Wilberforce Institute Webinar, Thursday 22 April 2021, 4PM – 6PM BST



Dr Laura Sandy

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We hope you will join us for our next webinar on Thursday April 22 at our usual time of 4pm (BST). The speaker will be Dr Laura Sandy, Senior Lecturer in the History of Slavery and Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of International Slavery at the University of Liverpool. Dr Sandy studies the history of North America, the Atlantic World and slavery, and has undertaken archival research in every former slave state in the southern United States. She has looked at plantation management, resistance, free people of colour, voluntary enslavement, the theft of enslaved people and the laws of slavery. Her most recent work investigates the illegal trafficking of the enslaved in North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this will be the subject of her talk.

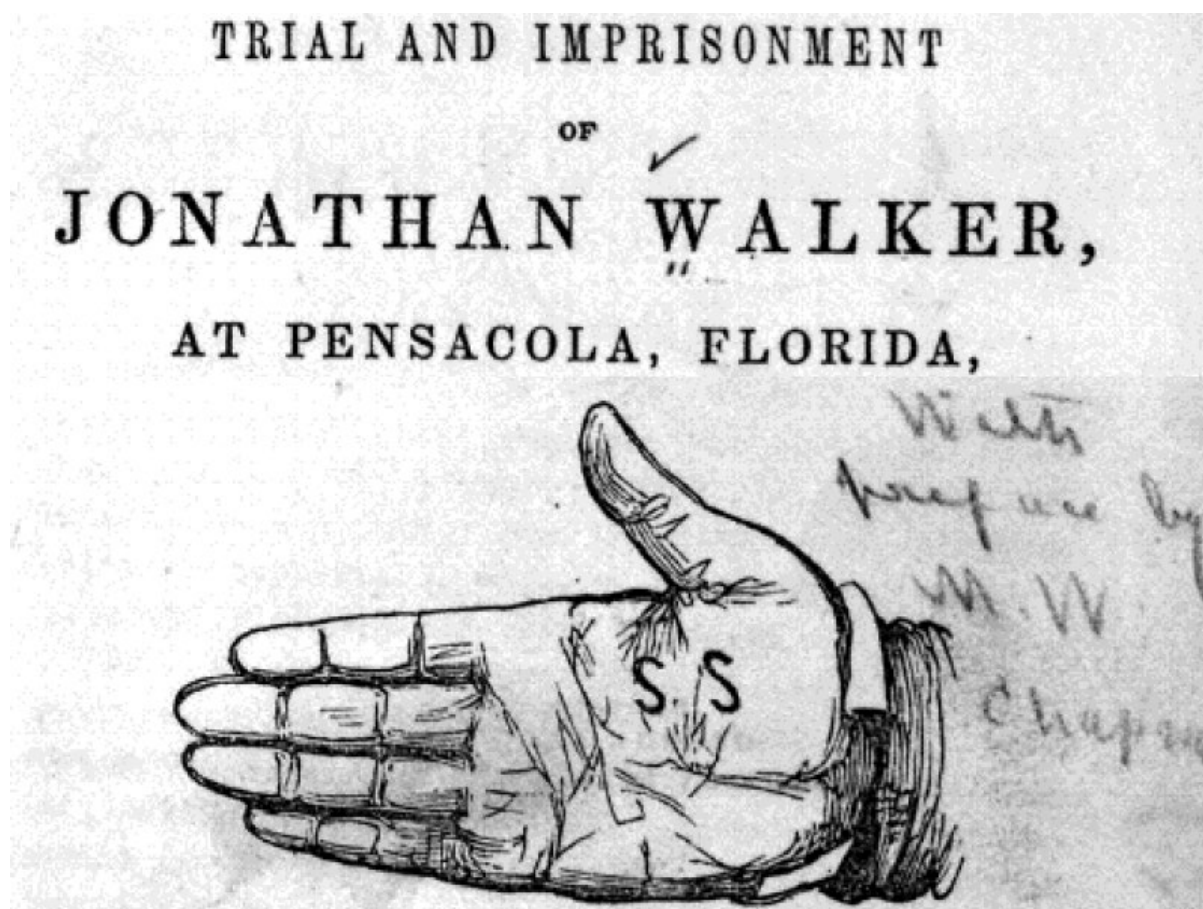
The practice of slave stealing spans the history of American slavery. The theft of human property was clearly a complicated crime and those involved in this

'underground slave trade' came from a variety of backgrounds and had an array of motives. By uncovering these histories and integrating them into the broader narrative of slavery, Dr Sandy will provide fascinating new insights into the 'peculiar institution' and its evolution over time and space. More broadly, this research enhances our understanding of the multifaceted, internal and external challenges to slavery in the nineteenth century and leading up to the Civil War. Indeed, it argues that slave stealers shaped antebellum southern political thought and made a significant contribution to the rising sense of insecurity over the future of the institution, which led to the growth of sectionalism and the outbreak of war.

To sign up for this free event please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3037076929184758029>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



Notice concerning a white man being put on trial, imprisoned, and branded on the hand with 'SS' for slave stealing

An Holistic Approach to Contemporary Slavery and Climate Change

Posted on April 1, 2021



Saphia Fleury,

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**CALL FOR PAPERS: Wilberforce Institute Workshop,
October 11, 2021.**

Slavery is often considered to be a problem of the past, while climate change is seen as a threat to our future. Yet the two issues present a real threat in the here and now, and often interact with exploitative and dangerous consequences.

Climate change poses an immediate and existential threat to many of the most marginalised communities on the planet. All over the world, the impacts of this global emergency are being felt right now in the form of both sudden-onset disasters and slow-onset events. When combined with ongoing deforestation, pollution and resource scarcity, the impacts of these occurrences, which are making livelihoods ever more precarious for millions of people in the poorest countries, lead to increased levels of migration and displacement.

This situation has clear implications for development and human rights. In the words of former UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, Philip Alston, climate change is 'likely to challenge or undermine the enjoyment of almost every human right in the international bill of rights'. Among the human rights issues that emerge most strongly are those linked to exploitation such as forced and unfree labour, human trafficking and slavery.

Meanwhile, research demonstrates that slavery in industries such as mining, fishing, brick-making and timber production can raise greenhouse gas emissions and drive other forms of environmental degradation. It has even been suggested that the climate crisis could be averted completely by putting an end to contemporary slavery.

Yet to date, the relationship between climate change and contemporary slavery has received relatively little attention in the policy, advocacy and academic fields. Furthermore, mainstream approaches to both issues have traditionally favoured technocratic or legalistic approaches that place these issues within 'siloes', disconnected from their political, social and economic contexts.

On Monday 11 October 2021, the Wilberforce Institute with support from Anti-Slavery International will host a one-day inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral workshop to break down these siloes and explore the relationship between these twin ills. Submissions are welcome from all sectors, including academics, activists, NGO practitioners, policy makers, journalists, PhD students, and others.

We welcome proposals relating to all aspects of these complex and wide-ranging issues, including intersecting or intervening themes such as: migration and displacement; conflict and insecurity; land, livelihoods and natural resources; ethnicity, gender and race; colonial and neo-colonial legacies.

We are interested in submissions that contribute to breaking new conceptual, methodological, and empirical ground in this topic area, and in particular those that advance novel recommendations for tackling these issues at the levels of policy and practice.

Abstracts for proposed papers or presentations (200-300 words) should be sent with a short bio to Dr Chris O'Connell, Dublin City University

at christopher.oconnell@dcu.ie and Saphia Fleury, Wilberforce Institute at s.fleury-2019@hull.ac.uk

The deadline for submission is 30 June 2021. We aim to inform successful candidates by late August. There is no fee for attendance or participation in this event.

For any enquiries, please contact Chris O'Connell or Saphia Fleury.



Mural depicting the era of the rubber boom from an Indigenous perspective in the town of Nauta, Loreto Province, Peru (Photo: Chris O'Connell).

Living with the consequences of slavery

Posted on March 25, 2021



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Mavuto K. Banda

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Five months in, our three newest PhD students, Isabel Arce Zelada, Jen Nghishitende and Mavuto Banda, reflect on their collective agenda and their individual research projects so far.

We started our PhDs in the midst of a pandemic and as a cluster we have had little opportunity to work together and understand how our projects interlink. However, through various zoom calls and physically distant interactions we are beginning to understand where we belong in this cluster as a team as well as individually. As a cohesive unit we found that we each speak about the way various institutions constantly ask groups of people with different experiences of exploitation to present themselves as victims. This establishes a uniform 'humanitarian' response to problems that involve a multiplicity of experiences, and in the process creates and recreates the model of what a victim is and what they need. At the core of all our projects are individuals who constantly have to prove themselves to be victims in order to get some level of assistance. As such, we are, as a collective, critically investigating what we mean when we say 'victim' and what solutions we need to achieve to assist this group of individuals.

Isabel

In asylum processes the idea that the nation-state is providing safety to a person seeking persecution has a long and complicated history. As an institution asylum has always led to wide networks of power in which many other institutions are involved. In the UK, the rise of nationalistic sentiments, detention centres and hostile environments have led to an awkward paradox in which the UK *saves* the asylum seeker, yet also *condemns* them for a role in the demise of the British nation. At the same time, the asylum system keeps its humanitarian role by supposedly *saving* the true refugee. I am therefore researching the many violent tactics of distrust and retraumatization that are present in the UK asylum process.

Jen

My research deals with women and children who have survived modern slavery in the UK and as such, I will be focusing on those people who have already either been accepted or rejected as 'victims' by the UK Home Office. In recent years, the spotlight has been placed on survivors' accounts, their tales of slavery and their eventual escape or rescue; scant attention has been placed on what happens to survivors after slavery, especially in the long term. My research will

therefore examine the long term trajectories of survivors in the UK, all the while looking at the laws, policies, and processes that are in place to assist them with rehabilitation and reintegration into society in order to regain their rights and dignity.

Mavuto

My research looks from a different perspective at the children that have become the victims of modern slavery. In adhering to Fairtrade standards and safeguarding their corporate image, Malawi's commercial agriculture has banned the employment of under-18 year olds in its plantations, as it seeks to *prevent* and *rescue* children from the evils of 'child labour'. Once the work of under-18 year olds in commercial tea and tobacco plantations had been defined as 'child labour' this ban became necessary. My study therefore aims at exploring the impact of 'child labour' bans in commercial tea and tobacco estates with respect to youth employment and livelihoods in rural communities of Malawi. It will try to understand the socio-cultural dynamics of life in Malawi, and how communities view children's participation in the labour market.

Henry Ford once said, 'Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.' Our continual working relationship will therefore lead to the collective success of our cluster as well as our individual successes in our research projects. We also look forward to hopefully meeting and working with everyone soon in person at the Wilberforce Institute. Our shared hope for the future is that *victimhood*, with the pressures of presenting oneself as the perfect victim, is scrutinized, and the assistance that is needed is given without requesting trauma as payment for it.

Debt and labour coercion in historical perspective

Posted on March 18, 2021



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As an academic, it's always good to be invited to give a talk. Thanks to Shebanee Devadasan, President of [Durham Justice Society](#), I was asked to join the Modern Slavery panel as part of their annual Human Rights Conference for this year. I was in excellent company as my fellow panellists were [Gary Craig](#), [Parosha Chandran](#) and [Meena Varma](#). My contribution was to provide some historical perspective on the role of debt as a method of labour coercion, as this is often a key mechanism through which modern forms of slavery operate.

Over the last decade I have been thinking hard about the relationship between debt and slavery in historical and contemporary societies. Exploring the transatlantic slave trade, I found that in the colonial records of the Portuguese government in Angola, discussions about debt slavery were an important part of the [contested framework of enslavement](#) between those areas under Portuguese law and those under African rule. As I discussed in my talk, [European societies by the early modern period did not generally allow citizens to recover their outstanding debts through the enslavement of](#)

[debtors](#). This had been a common route to enslavement in antiquity, and documentary evidence of such activity survives in the ancient Near East, Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean from the end of the third millennium to the middle of the first millennium BCE. Under the influence of Roman and biblical law, medieval societies in western Christendom increasingly rejected such practices. By the sixteenth century, debts were recovered on goods, livestock or lands, or through imprisonment until the debt had been repaid. The practice of debt bondage, in which the debtor agreed to work for the creditor until the debt had been repaid (also of ancient origin), was retained, however, and was used by early modern migrants from western Europe to the Americas who signed up to an agreed term of labour as a way to repay the cost of their passage. A very similar system remains in operation today. Siddharth Kara's work on [contemporary migrants](#) shows how a formal debt agreement, which covers costs associated with travel and arranging work, has to be paid off on arrival through labour. But what Kara's work also shows is that additional debts are imposed on migrants after travel and costs manipulated to keep them in debt and under control.

Debt slavery has been prohibited by [international convention](#) since 1926, and in 1956 a [supplementary convention](#) added debt bondage to the list as an institution or practice similar to slavery. Debt bondage as defined in this latter treaty refers to agreements in which the value of the labour that is performed is either not applied towards reducing the debt or has no defined time limit. A classic example is hereditary collateral debt bondage in South Asia, in which the debt rolls over to the next generation. Yet examples of debt bondage, also referred to as bonded labour and debt servitude, continue to exist around the world. There are good reasons for this, and working off your debt is not in itself against the law. The idea of being able to repay a loan through your labour offers those in need of resources, who have no other way of repaying their debt, a valuable as well as pragmatic solution. However, because this is often the only way funds can be raised it can encourage creditors to exploit their debtors and extend the labour-debt relationship indefinitely.

In my studies of the connection between debt and slavery I argue that the idea of debt is one of the most powerful sources of social coercion we know, and one of the earliest. There is a longstanding myth, [as Graeber's book articulated](#), that all debts have to be repaid, even though we recognise that this is not always the case. The idea of debt provides the glue that creates the social relationships that allow us as individuals to work with others for the benefit of us all. This

cooperative strategy is not fool-proof, however, because not everyone obeys the rules. Debt as a social construct can also be weaponised as a way to force some to accede to the demands of others, and when debt can be recovered by using the human body, the impact can be devastating. During the [transatlantic slave trade](#) debt was used as a pretext for ensnaring its victims: if you could create a debt, no matter how small, you could call it in and claim a slave.

Today it is through the binding of labour rather than sale into slavery that debtors become trapped. Kevin Bales' work on [brick kiln workers in Pakistan](#) revealed how dishonest managers could exploit the illiteracy of their labourers to ensure that the number of bricks they made did not cover the debts they had accrued. As a result the family had to return to work in the kilns the following year. The idea of debt may have most traction where labourers are involved in illegitimate activities. The extortionate interest rates that workers are charged in [illegal gold mines in southern Ghana](#) means they are quickly trapped into long hours of work as they try to repay their debt. They work because they are desperate and because they believe they must honour their borrowing agreements – their debts have to be repaid.



Brick kiln labourer. This file is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#) license.

ACTion to end modern slavery

Posted on March 15, 2021

The Wilberforce Institute is taking to crowdfunding in support of an exciting new initiative – ACTion to End Modern Slavery. This project aims to fund a Justice Hub at the Institute through which we can inform and educate professionals about how to use the Modern Slavery Act (2015) in criminal prosecutions.

While the Act has impact, modern slavery and people trafficking is big business in the UK and is growing fast. People can be trafficked and exploited in many ways, including being forced into work, begging, crime or sexual exploitation.

Getting to grips with this complex legislation is challenging and needs access to additional expertise within the justice system, as well as offering insight and support for those working to de-criminalise victims.

[According to the UN](#), while European countries record higher conviction rates than in other parts of the world, this number has been stagnating or decreasing over the last few years.

Our goal is to share our expertise with those who apply and work with the law, so that they can use it to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of modern slavery and protect those who are vulnerable to it.

We need £45,000 to create a website and run the project for a full year. Nearly £14, 000 has been pledged so far but we need a little more to get this Justice Hub into action.

If you would like to know more or make a donation please visit:

<https://hull.hubbub.net/p/ACTion-to-end-modern-slavery/>



Remembering the Australian Freedom Ride

Posted on March 11, 2021

Historic and present-day campaigns for Indigenous Civil Rights



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In December 2020, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced [that the country's national anthem will be amended in order to better represent the nation's aboriginal past](#). The anthem will no longer refer to Australia as being 'young and free', a change that was well-received in the country's parliament. It came as part of a broader campaign to better recognise indigenous Australians, including [the induction of Johnny Mullagh to the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, the first aboriginal player to receive this accolade](#). When exploring the role of indigenous Australians in the country's past, a defining event that is often overlooked is the Freedom Ride of 1965. This was inspired partly by the American Civil Rights movement and particularly the Freedom Rides that took place earlier in the decade. While many Australians continued to support the movement in the US, [these events also encouraged people to address domestic civil rights abuses](#).

This is not to say that Australians at the time had previously been oblivious to indigenous issues. Just one month prior to the Freedom Ride, an article in the Canberra Times explored a recent survey conducted by the Sydney Morning Herald that found that [tens of thousands of indigenous Australians were](#)

[suffering from poverty, wage discrimination and limited access to education.](#)

Racism, both institutional and societal, was stated to be the cause, with the article citing substandard legislation as well as social indifference towards these problems. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not yet recognised as Australian citizens and they had therefore been consistently ignored by governments at all levels.

Equally, aboriginal groups had been active in Australia for many decades prior to the Freedom Ride and had taken inspiration from campaigns in other parts of the world. For example, aboriginal dockworkers in Sydney campaigned throughout the early-twentieth century against racial discrimination, low wages and dangerous working conditions. Their occupation required them to travel across the Pacific Ocean which meant that many workers also witnessed first-hand several African anti-imperialist and social justice campaigns. As Alyssa L. Trometter has explained, [indigenous labourers understood their struggle to be global and ideas pertaining to the attainment of racial equality were frequently exchanged between both continents.](#) The Australian Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s built upon these earlier exchanges while utilising many of the same methods used in American campaigns for racial equality, including the Freedom Rides.

The Australian Freedom Ride commenced in 1965 in New South Wales. The student-led campaign was largely organised by Charles Perkins [who would later become the first indigenous graduate of an Australian university.](#) The event sought to highlight ongoing economic and social prejudices against indigenous Australians in addition to explaining how provincial governments continued to exclude aboriginal people from public facilities. The public baths at Moree became a symbol of the region's ongoing racial segregation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had long been banned from these and other such venues, and [white opponents of the Freedom Ride subjected the participants to racism and violence during attempts to desegregate the pool.](#) Moreover, after their demonstration in Walgett, a driver of a large vehicle attempted to collide with the bus carrying the Freedom Riders, forcing the bus off the road and placing the lives of the demonstrators in danger. Despite this, [local newspapers rarely reported the incident and the culprit was not brought to justice.](#) The Freedom Ride continued undeterred. As the year progressed, the campaign gained increasing indigenous and non-indigenous support with pressure on the federal government to introduce civil rights for First Nation Australians intensifying.

The Freedom Ride succeeded in bringing about many positive changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Locally, the Freedom Ride led to [the desegregation of Moree Baths as well as cinemas, hair salons and other amenities across New South Wales](#). As for Charles Perkins, after becoming the first indigenous graduate of tertiary education, [he would later become the first indigenous Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs](#) and would have a substantial influence on Australian politics throughout this career. This event is also widely credited with helping to bring about the 1967 Australian Referendum, [the result of which meant that indigenous people were given citizenship and stronger civil protections](#). The attainment of legal recognition for aboriginal Australians demonstrates that the Freedom Ride was not simply a local movement, but instead influenced public opinion and highlighted injustices nationwide.

Sadly, this did not lead to the outright cessation of discrimination against indigenous Australians. [Aboriginal Australians are still disproportionately affected by unemployment, economic hardship and reduced access to state education](#). Furthermore, in 2008 the Australian Federal Government apologised to indigenous children who had been forcibly removed from their families to be raised in governmental and religious institutions. [Official estimates suggest that as many as one in three indigenous children were separated from their families between 1910 and 1970](#). In some states including Victoria, [this practice continued until 1976](#), over a decade after the Freedom Ride took place. Moreover, societal prejudice still persists. [A 2020 study at Australia National University found that 3 in 4 people held a negative view of indigenous Australians](#) and recent Black Lives Matter protests highlighted the ongoing issue of aboriginal deaths in police custody, [with over 400 having occurred in the last thirty years alone](#).

It is however important to remember that First Nation Australians have played an active role in advocating for civil rights and legal equality. The Freedom Ride began as a local movement but gained national support and succeeded in creating meaningful legal change for the country's minority groups. It must be remembered not only as a pivotal moment for the country's treatment of its indigenous peoples but also for the global campaign for human rights. The influence of this event can still be felt today and underlines the significant contribution that indigenous Australians have made to the country's history, a contribution that for far too long has been all but disregarded.



The Student Action for Aborigines bus outside the Hotel Bogabilla, February 1965 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryofnsw/20135180866/>

Reflections on a decade of anti-slavery efforts in the UK

Posted on March 4, 2021

Wilberforce Institute Webinar, Thursday 18 March 2021, 4pm GMT



Klara Skrivankova

Grants Manager for Trust for London.

We hope you will join us for our next webinar on Thursday March 18 at our usual time of 4pm (GMT). The speaker will be Klara Skrivankova, now working as Grants Manager for Trust for London. Before joining the Trust, Klara worked for Anti-Slavery International and acted as an expert advisor to the Ethical Trading Initiative and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. She has also served on the boards of two United Nations Trust Funds and advised international bodies, including the Council of Europe. She currently serves on the boards of PIN UK, Hibiscus Initiatives and the Association of Charitable Foundations, and is involved with initiatives around international anti-trafficking and business and human rights. Recognised as an expert on human trafficking and forced labour in the UK and internationally, Klara has been working in the field since 2000.

Klara had planned to come up to the Wilberforce Institute last year, but her talk had to be put on hold because of the Covid-19 epidemic. We are delighted she has been able to reschedule.

Klara's talk, entitled, 'On the road to eradication: Reflections on a decade of anti-slavery efforts in the UK', will consider how the UK's response to modern

slavery has changed over the past ten years, both from a broader international perspective and from the perspective of people's everyday lives in communities around the country. She will discuss the impact of UK specific issues such as Brexit, changes in immigration regulations and the economic impact of Covid-19, and place them alongside international developments in law and policy and the broader global problems of Covid-19 and climate change.

To sign up for this free event please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1710408397181010960>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



A Renewed Impetus for Reflection on our Colonial Legacies in 2020

Posted on February 25, 2021



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Since 2018, members of the Wilberforce Institute have been leading the work on a Horizon 2020 research project named ECHOES: [European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities](#). The consortium is made up of a number of European institutions (Aarhus University, University of Amsterdam, University of Warsaw, University of Coimbra, University of Rennes 2), partners from outside

Europe (UNIRIO (Brasil), University of Cape Town (South Africa), Department of Cultural Heritage and Museology, Fudan University (China)), as well as a set of non-academic partners. By embracing a decolonial approach, the researchers on the ECHOES project hope to address the lacunae in the interpretation and representation of our colonial heritage, both inside and outside Europe.

As part of the ECHOES project, researchers at the Wilberforce Institute have produced a series of deliverables, including materials for non-academic audiences. The last of these outputs is a policy brief for European policy makers interested in heritage diplomacy and international cultural relations. The point of departure for the brief was the realisation that 2020, with its intense challenges provided by the experience of living through a pandemic and the tragic death of African American George Floyd in May 2020, has exposed pervasive racist patterns and helped communities across the world problematise colonial legacies in a new way.

We were also mindful, when writing this brief, of how the social and economic inequalities that were amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as unequal access to healthcare, for instance ([discussed here also](#)), have exposed old colonial (Eurocentric) approaches to international relations that continue to disempower the Global South.

Moreover, the tragic and important moment of George Floyd's death has brought a renewed urgency to the Black Lives Matter debate and provided the impetus for countries across Europe to reconsider the representation of colonial memory in public spaces. A wave of protests and debates focused on monuments, especially those of historic figures connected to slavery and colonialism (such as the much-discussed case of Bristol's Edward Colston), have subsequently enveloped Europe, creating in their wake contentious culture wars.

These major events we have related to one of our long-standing concern within ECHOES, namely the production, representation and circulation of knowledge. The policy brief thus argues for a wider recognition of different types of knowledges in international projects, including what we define as 'community knowledge'; the type of knowledge that cannot be classified based on a neat westernised scientific approach, e.g. folklore, storytelling, myths and narratives – some of them traumatic – transmitted orally across generations.

We are mindful that across Europe there is a severe deficit in engaging with colonialism that is not present in the case of other major historic events, such as the Holocaust or the memories of the two world wars. At this time of reflection, it is important to continue the work to identify power imbalances in institutions of different types and reconsider the ways in which we interact with marginalised groups.

Although models for international cultural relations or heritage diplomacy are commonly represented by interactions between states (and state agents), we argue that there is a need for a more complex approach that includes a wider range of actors, including non-state ones. As research in ECHOES has shown, actors working on the ground (e.g. museum curators, artists and citizen groups) often create projects and develop activities that involve a deeper engagement with colonial legacies in their communities. There is a great opportunity to further this agenda, we believe, by supporting and encouraging the work of such grassroots actors.

We also highlight in this document the importance of meaningful inter-cultural dialogue unhindered by unequal power relations in such activities. Accordingly, we argue for the importance of adequate training of EU officials and other actors involved in international projects to ensure they approach cultural differences with sensitivity. We believe that such intercultural encounters are key to continuing to generate new interpretations of shared experiences of colonialism across Europe and address the deficit mentioned at the beginning of this blog.

Our key recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- There is an urgent need for EU policymakers at all levels to confront the legacies of colonialism.
- While there are significant barriers to the creation of a shared European narrative on our colonial past, some of them political or related to different interpretations of the colonial past across member states, we need to arrive at a more equitable representation of colonial legacies in different narratives of shared heritages across Europe.
- While top-down approaches have their merits, grassroots movements and independent cultural actors (including museum curators and artists) are vitally important in advancing our understanding of colonial legacies and in addressing these legacies sensitively.
- Such independent cultural actors bring with them a wealth of local knowledge, sometimes indigenous knowledge, that needs to be incorporated

into heritage diplomacy efforts on equal grounds with other forms of knowledge (e.g. scientific knowledge).

- Active listening and the ability to foster genuine intercultural dialogue are skills that policymakers and EU professionals at all levels need to exercise routinely. This includes an openness towards integrating a wider range of actors in diplomatic activities and involving them in policy development processes.
- European institutions, representatives and policymakers should go further in advocating the acceptance of a multicultural Europe as a precondition for thinking in terms of intercultural relations. This includes addressing inconsistencies in the treatment of heritage across different areas of policy interventions (e.g. integration, development, etc).
- Whether labelled as heritage diplomacy or ICR, international collaboration projects and initiatives that address the colonial past need to be based on a foundation of trust and mitigate against unequal power relations between partners. This should include actions or any reparations needed to account for the past.
- Rather than being ignored, or addressed solely by grassroots efforts, colonial heritage needs to be mainstreamed at European level and should be included as a fundamental topic in existing heritage and arts and cultures initiatives.

Read the full policy brief here: http://projectechoes.eu/wp-content/uploads/ECHOES_heritage-diplomacy-policy-brief_3_final.pdf



The ECHOES Project logo

Criminology, climate change and the ‘useable past’

Posted on February 18, 2021



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What are the harms inherent in human migration? Who are the victims and who is responsible? Does it make a difference whether somebody is fleeing environmental catastrophe rather than persecution or conflict? These are some of the questions I am grappling with in my PhD research, which seeks to understand the difficulties faced by migrants, particularly children, in the context of climate change.

My approach is somewhat unorthodox. I am trying to answer these questions by looking to the past, using case studies that are not directly connected to changes in the Earth’s climate. The first case study concerns the ‘boat people’ migration from post-war Vietnam (c.1975-1992), which is generally ascribed to political causes but also had environmental roots. The second is that of Montserrat, specifically the evacuation of more than half the island’s population following a series of catastrophic volcanic eruptions between 1995 and 1998. In what sense can these histories be considered ‘useable’, and provide an insight into future climate migration? For me, the answer lies in a perspective called eco-global criminology (EGC).

Like all branches of criminology, EGC is concerned with harms, victims and perpetrators. It seeks to predict future risks (to the environment, humans and

animals) and develop solutions to prevent the worst environmental crimes occurring. Unlike many other branches of criminology, however, it is not limited to harms which are illegal. It also scans the global horizon for acts which are 'lawful but awful', which hurt the environment and by extension humanity, but are not strictly criminal. An important aspect of EGC is the transnational nature of these harms, and climate change is a truly transnational problem.

The two case studies, Vietnam and Montserrat, represent geographical regions with a history of major human migration and environmental degradation. In both cases, the people who fled their homes in the twentieth century, including large numbers of children, experienced human rights violations at the hands of the state and other actors.

Many of the children who fled volcanic eruptions in Montserrat came to the UK. Their arrival here often occurred after multiple relocations on their home island and in the Caribbean region. On arrival in the UK, some spent months, even years, in insecure and poor quality accommodation. The policies designed to prevent them leaving Montserrat in the first place, and later to protect them on their migratory journey, often failed to uphold their human rights. As a result, many of the children faced issues including poverty, insecurity, racism, trauma, family separation and a lack of educational attainment.

For all its failures, the evacuation of people from Montserrat was, to some extent, an example of planned and assisted relocation. For the boat people on the other hand, grave uncertainties, including a high chance of death, attended their irregular departure from Vietnam. Thousands were turned away by neighbouring states, resulting in many migrants perishing at sea. Others faced serious human rights abuses in camps and holding centres as they awaited resettlement.

By understanding the patterns of risk and harm that affected these migrants, EGC can help us to predict the risks that displaced persons may face in the future. Importantly, it also gives us the opportunity to prevent harm, by putting in place policies and programmes today that allow people to adapt to their changing environment, and/or protect them if they are forced to move. Vietnam and Montserrat are already experiencing climate change-related degradation and are forecast to experience worsening impacts in the coming decades. It is therefore possible that both countries will see a significant uprooting of their populations in the near future.

Today, Montserrat faces an increasing risk of strong hurricanes and, thanks to the destabilising effects of heavy rainfall, further volcanic activity. EGC can use the lessons of the past to plan for the future; to propose better policies to help Montserrat's current generation of children remain in their homes, or in the worst case, to migrate safely and with dignity. Similar comparisons and lessons can be drawn from the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, where wartime environmental destruction led to massive food insecurity and was one push-factor in the boat people migration. Today, as flooding, drought and salinisation sweep through the Delta, similar issues threaten to uproot and scatter the rural poor. These examples of the 'useable past' provide the benefit of hindsight, and EGC compels us to anticipate and mitigate future harms to prevent another human tragedy.

In 1959, the environmentalist Peter Farb suggested that 'life is like a delicate fabric', presenting a romanticised vision of the interdependencies of the human and natural worlds. But his ultimate conclusion had a more ominous overtone:

The wonder is not that so many threads are necessary in the fabric, but rather than the fabric manages to exist at all. (P. Farb, Living Earth, 1960: 164)

When environmental harms pull at these threads, there is a grave risk that the structure will ultimately disintegrate. Both Vietnam and Montserrat have faced historical periods when the fabric of life certainly appeared to be falling apart, with both the natural world and human society hurtling towards a dangerous threshold. Climate change represents a similar existential threat today. Using an EGC approach may help prevent repetition of some of humanity's past mistakes, as a small contribution to our collective battle against the gravest risk we face.



15 May 1984 – Vietnamese refugees wait to be rescued by the USS Blue Ridge from a 35-foot fishing boat 350 miles northeast of Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, after spending eight days at sea

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:35_Vietnamese_boat_people_2.JPG

Venture Smith's American Dream: A Parable for Today?

Posted on February 11, 2021



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Africans have been part of US history since they first landed in the colony of Virginia twelve years after Jamestown was founded in 1607. Their numbers grew, first by import and then by natural reproduction, to around 4 million (or one in nine) of the US population by 1865, the vast majority enslaved, enriching with little or no personal gain their masters and the communities for which they were

forced to toil. Simultaneously, the new nation that emerged in 1776-1783 emphasized its attachment to personal freedom, encouraging white migration by those facing persecution and poverty in Europe in search of an American dream of self-realization and prosperity linked to natural ability and to bountiful natural resources. Some arrived in forms of time-limited bondage, but no Europeans experienced life-long or heritable slavery. If Africans preceded the arrival of Dutch, Irish, German, and other settlers in the Americas, racial slavery denied them access to the American dream that the others were offered. Despite emancipation in 1863, the legacies of such slavery continue to blight the lives of most African Americans today. It does not need to be so. Indeed, by recognizing Africans' long history in America and their historic contribution to its fortunes, social justice demands it should not be so. Realizing the American dream demands freedom for all, not just some.

The Narrative by Venture Smith (aka Broteer Furor), published in 1798, opens a window on how, even while debate over the future of slavery in the new nation was alive, Africans as free people would contribute to the national wellbeing. Several editions of Smith's Narrative have appeared, the one that this blog highlights being the first to be published in Fante, the last language that Smith probably heard as he was forced to leave the land of his birth for America in 1739 (Facsimile editions of the narrative, produced by the Documenting Venture Smith Project, and including an introduction and a timeline, are available from Chandler Saint, at cost and with postage in the UK, at £5.50).

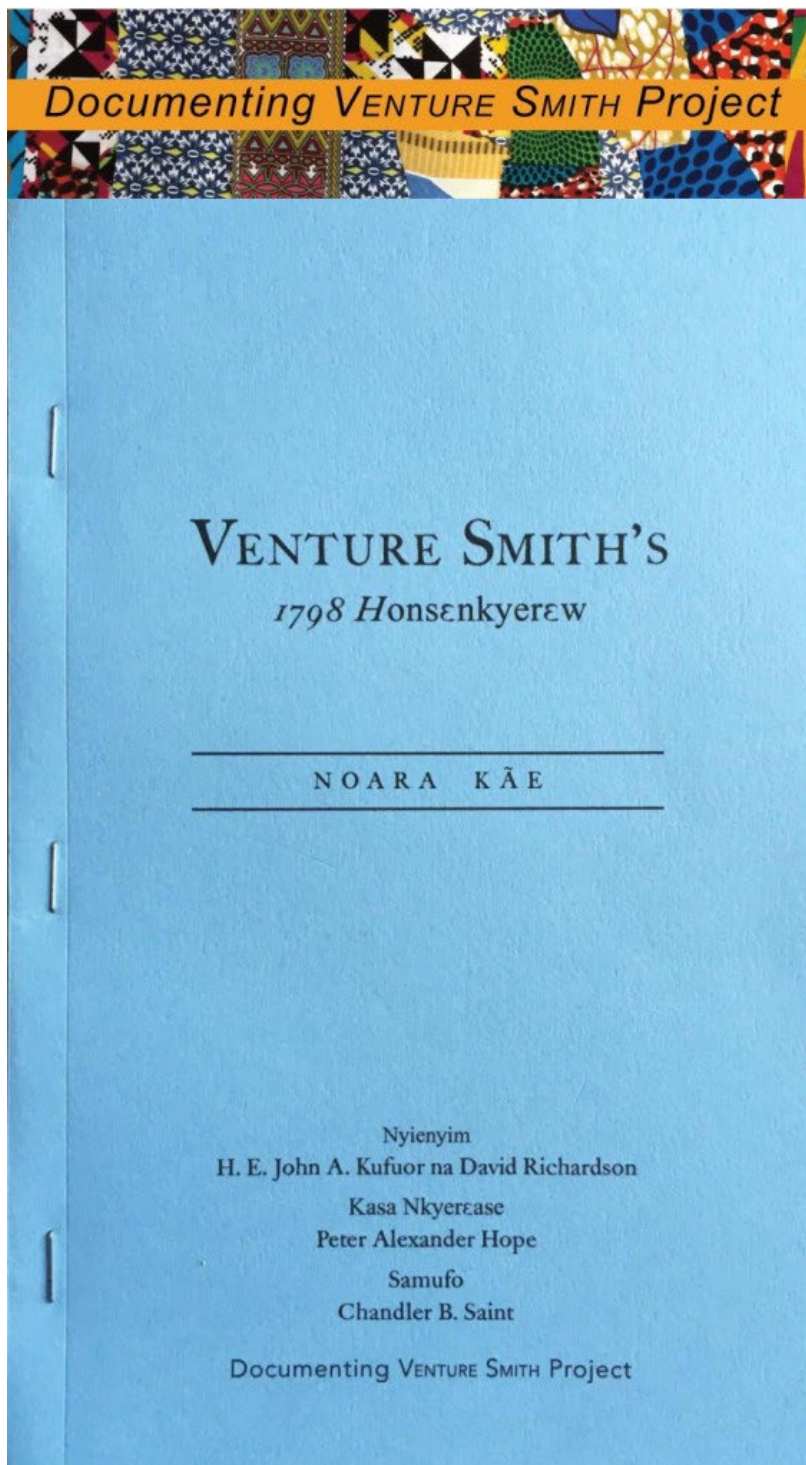
Enslaved in his youth, Smith prized the very freedoms upon which the idea of the American dream was based. He worked tirelessly over twenty-six years to liberate himself from slavery, achieving his goal in 1765. Freedom was not something he learned about in his acquired New England home; he brought the concept with him from Africa. It was part of his African heritage. Once free again, he established himself as a family farmer and built a successful business, in part by supporting the cause of those who fought to free the thirteen colonies from the alleged tyranny of George III's government. He established a family dynasty and a reputation for integrity and honesty in his dealings with others. He helped others to acquire freedom from slavery. And, unlike so many enslaved Africans, whose final resting places are unknown, Venture Smith was buried in 1805 in a marked grave in the Congregational churchyard of East Haddam, Connecticut. Smith's life and his gravestone revealed a belief in the American dream that few other of his contemporaries were allowed to demonstrate. They showed what was possible if only the American claim of the right to life, liberty

and the pursuit of happiness applied to all Americans regardless of race or other forms of social difference.

The tragedy for Venture Smith and for the millions of those who came to or were born in America as slaves is that notwithstanding gaining personal freedom in law, race would disqualify them from fully realizing the American dream. To be African was a barrier to becoming an American. Venture Smith knew it. Despite 60 years residence in his adopted homeland, despite his economic success, despite his reputation for truth and integrity, despite even his reconciliation with his former owner Oliver Smith from whom he took his surname, Venture Smith's last years were blighted by what he saw as racial prejudice. He fought it, as many others subsequently would, through the courts. He doubtless saw it too in the gradualism of slave emancipation that Connecticut enshrined in law in 1784. It was written large in the constitutional settlement of the new nation in 1789. And he almost certainly knew on his deathbed in 1805 that it would blight the lives of those of African descent who followed him.

The Narrative published by Venture Smith in 1798 is an inspirational story. It deserves to be better known, not only by those living in the continent where he was born (hence its translation into native African languages) but also by all Americans who are descended from those who, because of persecution, poverty, or enslavement, left the Old World for the so-called New. It reminds us in sober but uplifting ways how ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things even in the most unpromising circumstances. It speaks directly to its readers in uncomplicated language. It narrates a story of hope and, in the context of US history, one that imagines Africans as well as those of European descent sharing in the new nation's dreams. But it was a story, too, tinged with profound sadness, even bitterness; one that foretold how racial prejudice identified with slavery would prevent so many of African descent from realizing their ambitions. Such prejudice would, Venture Smith knew, deny the nation he helped to found in his lifetime the full fruits of Africans' inherent talents and values. The flame of hope that Smith identified in 1798 still remains alight today among at least some of his descendants, but two hundred years on continuing racial prejudice and social injustice prevent it from burning as brightly as it should for so many Americans of African descent. The human and social costs of such discrimination remain profound for the *whole* nation not just those directly subject to it. It is surely time to recognize that truth for the benefit of all who

look, as Venture Smith did in 1798, to the United States as their place of residence or their home.



The cover of the Fante edition of Venture Smith's narrative

What's going on at the Wilberforce Institute?

Posted on February 4, 2021

Wilberforce Institute Webinar, Thursday 11 February 2021, 4pm GMT



On February 11 at 4pm GMT we hold our regular 'What's going on at the Wilberforce Institute?' slot, this year by webinar, when we showcase the work of our PhD students. This year we welcome back Craig Barlow, now with his doctorate completed: he successfully defended his thesis in April last year. Craig will talk on 'Criminal Exploitation and the Statutory Defence: Putting Theory into Practice'. Since he completed his thesis, entitled 'Child Criminal Exploitation: A New Systemic Model to Improve Professional Assessment, Investigation and Intervention', the model he devised has been applied to case analysis and the development of expert evidence in both the criminal and family justice systems, in relation to modern slavery, and in the wider context of the general safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. His presentation will describe and explain this approach in the context of trafficking for criminal exploitation and the statutory defence for victims of criminal exploitation under Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Our three newest PhD students, Isabel Arce Zelada, Mavuto K. Banda and Jen Nghishitende, who make up the 'Living with Modern Slavery' cluster, will follow, giving us insights into their research so far. All three joined us in Autumn last year, despite experiencing a number of problems as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 epidemic. They have done incredibly well in difficult circumstances and have now begun to put their own stamp on their projects.

Isabel will talk first about ‘Asylum as Violence in UK Courts’.

Her project looks at the process of asylum within the liminal state of being outside of the nation–state as a person seeking asylum. By acknowledging that we live under a grand narrative of human rights that are tied to nations the liminal space of leaving a nation–state to seek refuge somewhere else exposes a state of being in which no nation–state is kept responsible for the enforcement of an individual’s human rights. How does this affect subjectification?

The asylum process is heavily reliant on the narrative of the person seeking asylum, however, it also scrutinises the narrative from the initial interview and throughout the court hearing. Whether the person is accepted as a refugee by the end of the process or not they will have experienced:

1. being extracted from their previous nation to refer to them as an individual in the eyes of the court;
2. being subjectified into categories already existing in the asylum narrative; and
3. having their identity questioned by national or personal notions of what that identity should be.

Isabel is interested in the reality of going through a process of subjectification in which identities are disputed and asked to be proven throughout that process. And what are the experiences of those going through a process in which the subjectification into an *asylum seeker* and a *refugee* supersedes the personal subjectification of the person seeking asylum?

Jen will talk next about her project, which investigates a related issue: ‘The Dignity and Rights of Women and Children Subjected to Modern Slavery in the United Kingdom’.

In recent years, the spotlight has been placed on the accounts of survivors of modern slavery – their tales of slavery and their eventual escape or rescue. As such, scant attention has been placed on what happens after slavery: how survivors go on with their lives and how they reintegrate into society with their rights and dignity intact. Jen’s research will investigate life after modern slavery in the United Kingdom, specifically focusing on women and children and how they attempt to move on with their lives after experiencing the ordeal of modern slavery, including the support available to them to achieve ‘normal’ lives.

Finally, Mavuto's project comes at modern slavery from the opposite perspective, investigating how restrictions on modern slavery can work to make children more vulnerable to exploitation. His project is entitled 'Evaluating child labour bans in Malawi's agriculture'.

The United Nations and International Labour Organisation are promoting children's rights and fighting against all forms of child labour around the globe through legal frameworks. Being one of the signatories to these agreements, the Malawi Government has put in place policies and legal instruments to operationalise their international obligations on children's rights and committed itself to combat child labour. This study aims at exploring the impact of banning under-18 year olds from working in the commercial tea and tobacco estates in Malawi on youth and their families' livelihoods.

To attend this free event, please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2567521691498653456>

The Anti-Slavery Knowledge Network – building resilience in sub- Saharan Africa

Posted on January 28, 2021



Professor John Oldfield

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The Wilberforce Institute is involved in a number of collaborative research projects, among them ‘The Anti-Slavery Knowledge Network’ (AKN), led by the universities of Hull, Liverpool and Nottingham. As its name implies, AKN is about knowledge and knowledge sharing, in this case in sub-Saharan Africa. The aim of the project, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, is to show how the arts and humanities can help to build resilience in communities vulnerable to human trafficking, forced labour and child exploitation through strategic, heritage-led interventions: such things as community radio, music, storytelling, performance and film.

In the initial phases of AKN, we set up a number of pilot projects, including a series of projects in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where researchers at the Wilberforce Institute already had close contacts, among them Lansana Mansaray (‘Barmmy Boy’), a talented young filmographer who runs a cooperative called

'We Own TV'. Eager to get these projects started, in February 2018 I visited Freetown, taking this opportunity to introduce our work to the British Council, DfID and government ministers. I also made contact with local NGOs, community groups, heritage clubs and members of the Sierra Leone Historic Monuments Commission, some of these groups later becoming our partners.

One of the people that Barmmy introduced me to while I was in Freetown was Brima Sheriff, a filmmaker, activist and former Human Rights Commissioner. Brilliantly talented, Brima Sheriff began his career with Amnesty International, eventually becoming Director of the Sierra Leone Section. It was this work that drew him to the attention of the Sierra Leone government, which in 2012 made him one of its Human Rights Commissioners. An outspoken critic of human rights abuses in Sierra Leone, Brima subsequently fell foul of the ruling party, which in 2017 rather unceremoniously removed him from office. When I interviewed him in 2018, all of this was still very much on his mind and provided the backdrop to a conversation that ranged widely over local politics, human rights and the future prospects of Sierra Leone.

By the end of our interview, we had over an hour's worth of material. Barmmy later edited this down into a series of shorter films, two of which can be accessed via the links below. In the first of these, Brima speaks eloquently about the relationship between the arts and humanities and what we might call social development, drawing on his extensive experience as a filmmaker. The second video deals with the subject of contemporary slavery in Sierra Leone, a problem that Brima sees as being rooted in his country's social structure (especially family life and the role of women) and its peculiar demography. Shot in his own home and against the noise of the busy street outside, these are intimate films in which Brima speaks frankly about some of the challenges facing Sierra Leone in the twenty-first century.

This work was undertaken with the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Further information about 'The Anti-Slavery Knowledge Network' and the projects we are supporting in Africa can be found at: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk//poliitcs/research/research-projects/akn/>

I would also like to thank 'Barmmy Boy' for all his hard work on this project, not only in setting up my interview with Brima Sheriff but also in editing the material and producing these short videos. As it turned out, this was the first interview that Brima had given since stepping down as Human Rights Commissioner, and

for that I am immensely grateful. Brima Sheriff is a compelling figure: impassioned, eloquent and forthright. We hope that these videos will bring his unique voice to wider audiences and help to raise awareness about slavery and human trafficking, modern-day scourges that continue to have a devastating impact on communities across Africa and beyond.

The two films made during the project can be viewed here:

[Fighting Injustice: The Role of the Arts and Humanities in Sierra Leone](#)

[Slavery and Human Rights in Sierra Leone](#)



Brima Sheriff talking to John Oldfield in Sierra Leone in 2018

Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on January 21, 2021



Professor Trevor Burnard

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In today's blog Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute, provides a summary of the last of his publications in 2020.

The Atlantic in World History (London: Bloomsbury, 2020)

Atlantic history as a way of envisioning the making of the early modern world is a historiography that arose in the 1970s, became more fully developed in the 1990s and 2000s, and has by 2020 become an established field of historical inquiry. My synthesis of Atlantic history, based on being a practitioner of such history for nearly thirty years, provides a quick introduction for students and the general reader to this interesting field. It is a field that at bottom is an exploration of movement across the ocean and between the four continents of Africa, the Americas, and Europe – that movement being the movement of people, things and ideas. It starts with European involvement in Africa in the mid-fifteenth century and Columbus' epoch-making voyages to the Caribbean from 1492. It ends in the mid-nineteenth century, with the abolition of slavery in most New World societies. The book explores how the peoples and the environments of Atlantic places were linked together, in ways that were both

good and bad, but always historically interesting. I show how the Atlantic has been more than just an ocean – it has been an important site of circulation and transmission, allowing exchanges and interchanges between various peoples in ways that have profoundly shaped the development of the world beyond, as well as within, the Atlantic.

As the Atlantic world was about more than slavery, so slavery forms only part of a book in which gender, religion and trades are extensively discussed. Nevertheless, slavery is a vital part of the Atlantic world and indispensable to its workings. I explore its Iberian origins, its African dimensions and its apogee in the eighteenth-century Caribbean and North America before examining how the institution most central to Atlantic history, outside empire and the monarchy, was abolished in a very quick time. From the late eighteenth century abolition was built on two foundations: the establishment of an abolition movement by a determined and small number of evangelical Britons led by William Wilberforce, and the resistance of the enslaved in the Americas. The most important slave resistance to planter power was in Haiti between 1791 and 1804, an event that has a prominent role in my chapter on the age of revolutions.

I end my account by recalling the quintessential American song ‘Oh! Susanna’ written by Stephen Foster in 1847. It is a very African and Atlantic song as well as an American song – a ‘negro melody,’ as Foster called it. It is a comic, indeed tragicomic, retelling of the story of an enslaved person left behind in the many breakups that characterized African American slavery in the nineteenth century. It is a song written by a person of European heritage using the voice of a descendant of Africans wanting to leave a place which had once been Native American land. Thus, it unites through culture the ways in which peoples of the Atlantic were brought, often unwillingly, together. These many connections point to the continuing relevance of Atlantic history today.

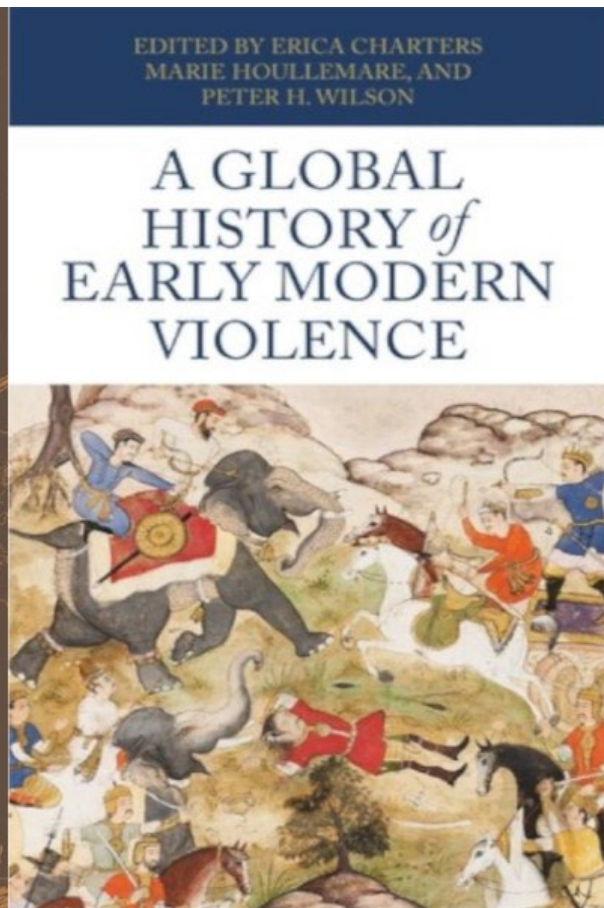
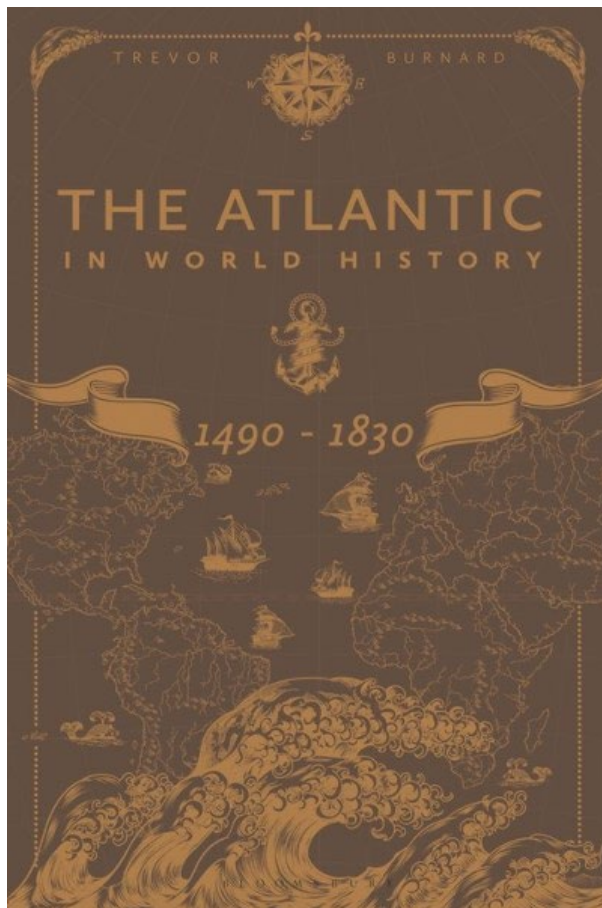
‘Atlantic Slave-Systems and Violence,’ in Erica Charters, Marie Houlemare and Peter H. Wilson, eds, *Violence in the Early Modern Period* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020)

In this chapter on violence in the Atlantic slave trade, I start by noting how we have to be careful when talking about violence and slavery. There are good reasons not to luxuriate in the details of violence and thus re-inscribe the problems of violence as experienced by enslaved people. Brutal language hardens rather than softens the reader to the violence of slavery, especially

when acts of brutality are catalogued at repeated length, making it hard to engage fully with a more important subject – what did violence mean and how did violence operate to strengthen or weaken the institution of enslavement. I argue here that brutality, violence and death were not mere by-products of the extremely lucrative early modern plantation system but were the *sine qua non* of the plantation world.

In this article, I ask the following questions. First, was violence central or incidental to the ideology of enslavement and to the workings of the Atlantic slave trade, in particular? I argue it was central. I also ask about the effectiveness of violence in maintaining planter power. I argue again that violence produced generally efficacious results for slave owners in keeping control over enslaved people. It was less effective in convincing rulers in Europe that planters' authority over their slaves was legitimate.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that acts of violent resistance by enslaved people were ineffective and pointless, even though such acts seldom met with any success. When enslaved people were violent, it demonstrated three things. First, it showed fellow enslaved people that some of their compatriots were prepared to reject their place in the system. Second, it showed to opponents of slavery that slave masters' propaganda about slaves being happy with their place in society was just that – slavery was not a benevolent institution but one upheld by coercion and through punishment. Finally, violence by slaves was often interpreted by abolitionists through a Christian lens, in which the iconography of Christ's martyrdom was equated with suffering slaves.



Wilberforce Institute Webinars, Spring 2021

Posted on January 14, 2021

Covid-19 may continue to restrict our opportunities to meet in person, but we hope you will join us in the coming weeks as we bring you a range of expert speakers with a wide variety of interests in our Spring season of webinar talks. Further details and confirmed titles will be available in due course, but for now we aim to introduce you to our experts and their interests. The talks will run from January until May.

Thursday January 28 2021, 4pm GMT

We begin on Thursday January 28 with Professor Sophie White, of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, who will talk about her latest book *Voices of the Enslaved: Love, Labor, and Longing in French Louisiana* (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture/University of North Carolina Press, 2019) <https://uncpress.org/book/9781469654041/voices-of-the-enslaved/>

Voices of the Enslaved draws on an exceptional set of source material about slavery in French America: court cases in which the enslaved themselves testified. It has won no fewer than seven awards to date, including the prestigious Frederick Douglass Award 2020 for the best book published in English on slavery, resistance or abolition.



Professor White is a historian of early America with an interdisciplinary focus on cultural encounters between Europeans, Africans and Native Americans, and a commitment to Atlantic and global research perspectives. She is also the author of *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Penn Press/McNeil Center for Early American Studies, 2012), of over 10 articles and essays on slavery and race, is co-editor with Trevor Burnard of *Hearing Enslaved Voices: African and Indian Slave*

Testimony in British and French America, 1700–1848 (Routledge, 2020), and is completing

a digital humanities project on slave testimony as autobiography in collaboration with the Omohundro Institute.

To sign up for this free event please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3585260440312170766>

Thursday February 11 2021, 4pm GMT

February sees our regular 'What's going on at the Wilberforce Institute?' slot, when we showcase the work of some of our PhD students. This year we welcome back Craig Barlow, who successfully defended his thesis in April last year on the subject of 'Child Criminal Exploitation: A new systematic model to improve professional assessment, investigation and intervention'. He will present a summary of his findings. Our three newest PhD students, Isabel Arce Zelada, Mavuto K. Banda and Jen Nghishitende, who make up the 'Living with the consequences of slavery' cluster, will draw the evening to a close with a brief discussion of their projects so far.



To sign up for this free event please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2567521691498653456>

Thursday March 18 2021, 4pm GMT

In March we welcome Klara Skrivankova, formerly of Anti-Slavery International, who is now working as Grants Manager for Trust for London.



Recognised as an expert on human trafficking and forced labour in the UK and internationally, she has been working in the field since 2000. Klara will share her reflections on the UK's response to modern slavery over the past ten years and consider how close we are to eradicating it.

To sign up for this free event please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1710408397181010960>

Thursday April 22 2021, 4pm BST

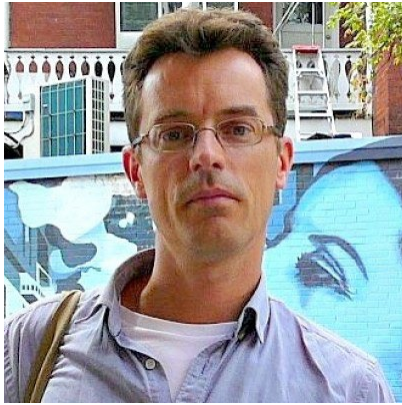
For our April session we welcome Dr Laura Sandy, Senior Lecturer in the History of Slavery and Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of International Slavery at the University of Liverpool.



Dr Sandy's work has involved archival research in every former slave state in the southern United States looking at slavery, plantation management, resistance, free people of colour, voluntary enslavement, the theft of enslaved people and the laws of slavery. Her most recent work investigates the illegal trafficking of the enslaved in North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Thursday May 20 2021, 4pm BST

In our final webinar of the Spring in May we welcome Dr Jelmer Vos, Lecturer in Global History at the University of Glasgow. His research interests focus on Angola, *the Atlantic slave trade*, and commodity history in Africa.



Dr Vos was part of the team that developed the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, and he acted as consultant on the project to establish historical connections between ABN AMRO, a Dutch bank, and slavery in the Atlantic world. His current book looks at the role of Angola in the global coffee economy, examining how Angolan robusta coffee became a global commodity, and how western demand for this product affected the lives of the Africans who produced it.

Examining the place of transatlantic slavery in Britain's public memory

Posted on January 7, 2021



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The tumultuous nature of 2020 has impacted many fields of scholarship and research, not least slavery studies. This year has witnessed a re-evaluation of the place of transatlantic slavery in Britain's history and public memory. For centuries, Britain benefitted enormously from the highly lucrative network of global commerce that existed between the United Kingdom [UK], West Africa, slave-holding British colonies in North America, and British territories in the Caribbean. At its heart was the exploitation of enslaved people of African descent. While much work has been done to examine the uncomfortable truths of Britain's involvement in transatlantic slavery, this difficult part of our history is often omitted or forgotten in public discussions of the nation's past.

Recent events associated with the Black Lives Matter movement, and the intense media spotlight subsequently focused on who should and should not be celebrated in Britain's public history, has led to calls for national institutions to review and reinterpret statues, heritage collections and paintings in the public realm. The Mayor of London announced a [commission](#) to review diversity in London's public landmarks and a recent [audit](#) commissioned by the First Minister of Wales identified over 200 public memorials in Wales associated with transatlantic slavery. Wealth associated with colonialism and the business of slavery subsequently invested in some of Britain's grand houses is investigated in a [report](#) by the National Trust, and an [audit](#) commissioned by Historic England reviews the research undertaken in this field in relation to the built environment. There are renewed calls for more representative accounts of Black history – and particularly Black British history – in the [national curriculum](#).

This level of scrutiny into the representation of this contested aspect of British history is not unprecedented. If 2020 represents a pivotal moment in Britain's engagement with its slaving past, our [new article](#) examines the impact of a similarly decisive moment: 2007, the year of much commemorative activity and public discussion marking the bicentenary of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

With governmental backing and the availability of finance through the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funding bodies, a huge number of institutions, heritage organisations, schools, theatres, youth and community groups mounted projects and exhibitions in 2007 that explored local and national connections to the history of transatlantic slavery and its abolition. Nearly 350 of these commemorative projects have been archived in the [Remembering 1807](#) digital archive produced by researchers at the Wilberforce Institute, part of the

Antislavery Usable Past, a collaborative Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project. *Remembering 1807* gives access to hundreds of resources emerging from the excellent research carried out in that year. In part, this archive is itself a work of preservation and commemoration. More to the point, however, it also provides us with a ready-made opportunity to evaluate what really happened in 2007, particularly at the local level, and to correct some lingering misconceptions about the nature of the bicentenary.


As we reveal in our article, while much of what occurred in 2007 in relation to the bicentenary was legitimately criticised as a ‘Wilberfest’ (with an over-concentration on William Wilberforce and other abolitionists), the array and scope of projects that took place around the country also revealed how far representations of the nation’s contribution to the business of transatlantic slavery were revised and contested in 2007, part of a movement to acknowledge and interpret this history for a wider public audience. New permanent spaces, such as the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool and the ‘London, Sugar and Slavery’ gallery at the Museum of London Docklands, reflected on all aspects of British involvement, and the many forms of African resistance to slavery. Detailed associations with transatlantic slavery were also made in locales beyond the ports of London, Liverpool and Bristol, as local archives and collections were investigated for links to abolitionists but also to slave traders and plantation owners, to local trade and industry, to country houses, and to stories of Black British history. In large part, community activism lay at the heart of 2007’s bicentenary commemorations, as many projects sought to examine the contemporary relevance of 1807 and the transatlantic slave trade to the UK’s diverse communities.

Why is examining commemorative activity that took place more than a decade ago important? 2020 has shown that discussion and debate about how as a nation the UK remembers and memorialises its slaving past is more pertinent than ever. It also reminds us how much of this history and its legacies remains uncovered. Learning lessons from what was absent during the bicentenary can help to (re)orientate future memory work around Britain’s role in transatlantic slavery. Understanding what has been done (or not done) in the past provides signposts for fruitful new avenues of examination and analysis.

New scholarship and research projects since 2007 relating to the historical archive of Britain’s investments in slavery provide much stimulus for examining this history. For example, [Slave Voyages](#) facilitates searches on thousands of

slave voyages between 1514 and 1866, including those sailing from British ports. The [Legacies of British Slave-ownership](#) provides data about the individuals and businesses who claimed compensation for loss of their enslaved workers when slavery was abolished in the British Caribbean in 1834, and who invested the profits from the business of slavery in a variety of different ways.

Looking forward, there are other anniversaries relating to transatlantic slavery to come, including the bicentenary in 2033 of the Emancipation Act of 1833 and in 2038, the bicentenary of the 1838 Act to abolish the apprenticeship clause (considered by many to represent the true 'end' of slavery in the Caribbean). Past commemorative efforts can inform future ones, providing tools and knowledge to affect public discussions about slavery, not least through engagement with local communities and new audiences. It is key, therefore, for historians, heritage bodies, and local and community specialists to keep identifying, recontextualising and diversifying the narrative around the history of Britain's slavery past.



ABOLITION 07

An exhibition to mark the bicentenary of Britain's abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

Including new work by artist Godfried Donkor

at **HACKNEY MUSEUM**
13th MARCH 2007
14th JULY 2007

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am - 5.30pm
Thursday 9.30am - 3pm
Saturday 10am - 5pm
Sunday, Monday, Bank Holiday closed

FREE ENTRY
HACKNEY MUSEUM
TECHNOLOGY & LEARNING CENTRE
1 READING LANE, HACKNEY
LONDON E8 1GG
Tel: 020 8356 3500
www.hackney.gov.uk

The National Lottery © 2007 **Hackney**

Courtesy of Hackney Museum. Abolition 07 emphasised the involvement of Hackney's residents in the abolition movement.

Modern Slavery Update

Posted on December 17, 2020



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In this final blog of 2020, Trevor Burnard and Andrew Smith provide updates on recent initiatives to tackle modern slavery. First, Andrew provides an overview of practical developments in our region that aim to combat modern slavery, taken from his November newsletter.

Tackling Modern Slavery

Seven-strong purge on Modern Slavery

A unique and trail blazing approach to tackling modern day slavery is set to crank up the heat on those who exploit people through business activities and supply chains. Seven Police and Crime Commissioners and their respective Chief Constables including Humberside have worked together to develop a Modern Slavery Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) Statement. In Humberside, the commitment by Police and Crime Commissioner Keith Hunter to fund the partnership coordinator role and support the creation of our dedicated Operation Wilberforce police team means that our Anti-Slavery efforts are now firmly part of daily business. While there is still much work to do to embed a sustainable and meaningful response in all sectors, stakeholders, partners and those who have a statutory duty to respond to modern slavery in our area have more support than ever before to meet their obligations.

Force wide strategy to tackle modern slavery – Humberside Modern Slavery Partnership Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023

To coincide with Anti-Slavery Day 2020, the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership released the first modern slavery strategy for the Humber region. This progressive move sets the tone for partnership action over the next three years in combatting this despicable crime. Spanning all four local authority areas in our region, this new, overarching strategy brings together statutory and non-statutory partners including law enforcement, academics and health and third sector professionals to give a focused and targeted approach to modern slavery and human trafficking. For more details see Andrew's earlier blog at: <https://wilberforceinstitute.uk/2020/10/26/combating-modern-slavery-in-the-humber/>

Innovative new workshops will help frontline workers respond to cases of modern slavery

The University of Hull's Wilberforce Institute has helped launch a new series of innovative resources, designed to help frontline workers respond to individual cases of modern slavery. Launched to mark Anti-Slavery day this year, the Institute, in partnership with The Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre, has announced new resources and workshops. These have been led by a team at the Institute, in collaboration with the [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority \(GLAA\)](#), the [Rights Lab](#) at the University of Nottingham, the [Humber Modern Slavery Partnership](#) and [Fresca Group](#). The workshops provided to partnership coordinators across the country will help

support the training needs among partners working in our communities. For more details see the earlier blog by Alicia Kidd, who led the project, at: <https://wilberforceinstitute.uk/2020/08/13/modern-slavery-partnership-workshops/>

In the second part of this blog, Trevor Burnard introduces the launch of a major new appeal for tackling modern slavery.

ACTION to End Modern Slavery

At the University of Hull we are proud of the work carried out at the Wilberforce Institute in understanding and tackling modern day slavery. However, success has been hard won, and the uphill battle continues in the face of increased incidences of modern slavery in the UK.

The Wilberforce Institute is therefore delighted to launch a funding drive for a major new initiative increasing knowledge about the Modern Slavery Act and its operations here in the UK. Action is needed now. Modern slavery and human trafficking are among the UK's biggest criminal industries and we can only defeat them together. That's why we're asking for your support. This week we are launching our fundraising campaign to help the Wilberforce Institute become a hub in the fight against this evil crime. The UK government passed the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, but without additional expertise within the justice system, as well as insight and support for those working to de-criminalise victims, this legislation is too complex to be effective.

The Wilberforce Institute has the ability to play a unique role in building a collaborative network within the legal profession and beyond. With our networks, research and expertise, we can develop strategic and coordinated approaches in protecting, investigating and prosecuting, turning dry legislation into an effective tool for emancipating victims.

More information about the campaign can be found [here](#).

Ethical considerations in child migration and exploitation research

Posted on December 10, 2020



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James Baker

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As we begin our second year, and prepare to dive into the primary sources for our research, we take a step back together to consider the ethical issues raised by our research on child migration and exploitation.

Saphia

My research involves interviewing adults who were evacuated to England following volcanic eruptions on Montserrat in the 1990s. These former child evacuees may have faced deeply traumatic experiences, including the destruction of their homes and communities and the deaths of people close to them. Moreover, relocation itself can be a traumatic process, so the semi-structured interviews that I plan to undertake may raise very sensitive issues, which can lead to re-traumatisation.

With this in mind, I wanted to equip myself with the tools to support my participants in case the interview process raised difficult memories. I did this in two ways.

Firstly, I undertook training from ECPAT UK on interviewing child migrants. Although my participants are no longer children, the training focused on conducting interviews with refugees and asylum-seekers and covering traumatic subject-matter, so contained useful pointers on how to prepare the interview space, address power imbalances between the interviewer and participant, and generally make the interviewee feel at ease. It introduced the Cognitive Interview Method, which allows the interviewee to hold images in their mind for

long enough to recount a full and accurate history to the interviewer, while avoiding re-traumatisation. The training is available for free [online](#).

My second strategy for supporting my participants was to produce a list of mental health support services, most of which are free to access. The NHS [website](#) contains a list of all the helplines and support services available. I chose the ones likely to be of most relevance to my participants and attached it to my Informed Consent Form.

Of course, interviewees have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and their experiences will be pseudonymised to avoid them being identified from my research. While I cannot exclude all possibility that my participants may find the interview process difficult, these methods should lessen that risk to an acceptable level.

Jasmine

My research involves accessing archive materials relating to the welfare of children sent from Britain to live in Canada on Vancouver Island, and Indigenous children forced to attend residential schools on the same island between 1920 and 1960.

Using child welfare records as 'historical' sources, particularly when they relate to living persons, raises significant data protection concerns. As a result there are legal restrictions under which such records are held, and, access granted. In addition, the use of pseudonyms and removal of all identifying details will ensure that these individuals remain anonymous and their formative experiences confidential.

Historically, research concerning Indigenous peoples has often hurt more than it has helped Indigenous communities. Consequently, it is important to reflect upon the positioning of the research and the researcher. As a non-Indigenous person, who did not grow up in Canada, it is crucial that I consider this 'outsider' perspective. The Canadian Tri-Council Policy on '[Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples](#)' is an important guide. In addition, there are numerous useful resources created by [Indigenous groups](#), [scholars](#) and activists that can help inform more ethically sound practices. This '[Indigenous Perspectives Guide](#)', produced for educational purposes is a good starting point for those unfamiliar with Indigenous history.

Western academics, and perhaps anthropologists in particular, continue to reckon with the racist, colonial elements of their heritage: the violence committed in the name of research; the enduring relevance of racism; and the 'scientific racism' that was extremely prominent in the context of this study. Records of one of Vancouver Island's residential schools suggest that children were underfed, given illegal and untested food supplements and denied dental treatment as the subjects of government [malnutrition experiments](#). It is critical then, that this research engages with the origins and legacies of these practices and the philosophies that informed them, research that was not just unethical but inhumane.

James

My research topic concerns the forced emigration of British children to Australia during the mid-twentieth century. I am currently investigating how the education, heritage and museum sectors have preserved the memory of the child migrant experience, while focusing on how child migrants themselves have defined this narrative and the extent to which these migrations are viewed as being a part of British history.

Many British children who were raised on farm schools were subject to [abuse and exploitation throughout their childhoods](#). They grew up in unfamiliar surroundings thousands of miles from home, and it wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that the British public became aware of the suffering that was inflicted upon [former child migrants](#). While it is my duty as a researcher to offer these former child migrants a voice and to galvanise the reconciliation process, any research must be undertaken with caution.

During my research, I intend to offer former child migrants and those who have championed the child migrant cause the chance to be interviewed about their experiences. It is not my intention to rigorously investigate the experience of growing up in Australian farm schools, but instead to look at whether the voices of former child migrants have been fully listened to in the years that have followed and the challenges that lie ahead in [ongoing justice campaigns](#). While I do not seek to create emotional discomfort, this subject matter can prove traumatic for interviewees.

Research protocols for interviews must be strictly adhered to. Interviewees must be provided with consent documentation which includes the right to

withdraw participation, to have interviews paused or terminated altogether, and to understand how any data will be used. As the principal investigator, I need to complete a full risk assessment and obtain ethical approval before conducting interviews, as well as to carefully consider the questions I intend to ask. This will not necessarily guarantee the emotional wellbeing of research participants, but it will ensure that the emotional wellbeing of my participants is the top priority of my primary research.

As we move into the next stages of our research, we must continually reflect on the practical application of our ethical values, ensuring that the wellbeing of our subjects, whether our research addresses them directly or indirectly, always takes precedence.

The Wilberforce Institute and Sierra Leone

Posted on December 3, 2020



Professor Trevor Burnard

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The city of Kingston-upon-Hull has been twinned with Freetown in Sierra Leone for forty years. That twinning is a natural fit given the close history of both places with the age of abolition in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and with major abolitionists, black and white, in Britain, Canada and Sierra Leone. The Wilberforce Institute has developed close links with a variety of institutions in Freetown and values very highly its connections with individuals and societies in that city and in the country of Sierra Leone.

One of our primary links in recent times has been through an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project, led by [John Oldfield](#) of the Wilberforce Institute in conjunction with the Universities of Liverpool and Nottingham. This project, the [Antislavery Knowledge Network](#) has developed community-led strategies for creative and heritage-based interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa. It includes individual projects such as one working with film makers in Sierra Leone to shed light upon vulnerable seaside communities.

A recent event connected with the Wilberforce Institute is worth noting. We have been involved with the Wilberforce Lodge in Hull (it is based in Beverley

but has a strong Hull connection) in informing members of this Masonic lodge about the person after whom both the lodge and the Institute are named. As part of its outreach activities this year, I was delighted to attend an online meeting between the three Masonic Lodges named after Wilberforce – one in Hull, one in South London and another in Sierra Leone. We took part in what we might term a Covid-inspired event, which was an online meeting between members of the three lodges, in which they shared their history and outlined their philanthropic aims and objectives, many of which connect with the vision of the Wilberforce Institute. We were delighted to receive from the Hull lodge a very generous gift of a book series – *The Cambridge History of Violence* – which is now added to our library at the Wilberforce Institute.

We very much hope these links continue and develop, especially once life returns to whatever normality is going to be in the future.



Book presentation by members of the Wilberforce Lodge to Professor Trevor Burnard outside the Wilberforce Institute.

Universal Children's Day: A time to pause and reflect upon our ongoing research on children

Posted on November 26, 2020



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PhD students researching child exploitation at the W.I.:

Charlotte Russell c.russell-2018@hull.ac.uk

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Saphia Fleury s.fleury-2019@hull.ac.uk

James Baker j.baker-2019@hull.ac.uk

The 20th November is [Universal Children's Day](#) (also known as World Children's Day), as this was the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of the Child and in 1989 the UN General Assembly adopted the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (hereafter the CRC). This November then marks the thirty-first anniversary of the recognition of children's rights and offers an opportunity for researchers working on child exploitation in the Wilberforce Institute to take a moment to pause and reflect together upon the role of children's rights within their research. [PhD students](#) James Baker, Saphia Fleury, Jasmine Holding Brown, Charlotte Russell and [Dr Elizabeth A. Faulkner](#) (Lecturer in Contemporary Slavery) all work in the area of 'children on the move', interrogating both historical and contemporary abuses of children's rights in situations where they are forced for a range of reasons to leave their homes and cross national borders.

As identified by Price and Cohen (1991) the CRC guaranteed the child's 'individual personality' rights and set the minimum rights which states should recognise for children. But though the CRC is often celebrated for its universal acceptance (with the [USA](#) being the only State that has failed to ratify), questions still arise around its provenance and representation. Notions of the child and childhood have been heavily influenced by Western discourses and a romanticised ideal of childhood. The perception that 'West is best' is perpetuated in the CRC which can be interpreted as a new imperialism brandished under the guise of 'children's rights', serving as an effective tool to 'beat' the Global South, in addition to deflecting from the continued [Western dominance within the field of children's rights](#). There are other problems too – within this construct children are residential, fixed and inherently local. What then does all this mean for us as researchers investigating 'children on the move'?

The research of Jasmine and James considers historical exploitation and abuse of children perpetrated in the twentieth century in the form of British and North American 'child saving' schemes and the British '[assisted child migration schemes](#)' to Australia. Focusing on the early twentieth century prior to the drafting and adoption of the CRC, children were arguably invisible in the international legal system. Approximately 7000 children were taken from British (and some Maltese) orphanages and sent to work in Australia's agricultural sector, living in farm schools thousands of miles from home, and many became victims of maltreatment, involving aspects of physical, verbal and sexual abuse. When such cases were reported to authorities by child migrants they were seldom believed, and even if they had been, [children's rights at the time were](#)

[far less developed than they are today](#). In this way, justifications for such projects, which emerge from ideals of ‘saving children’ and of advancing British views through education, destruction of culture and populating colonies with ‘white British stock’, are interwoven into the legacy of children’s rights. It is striking how the welfare of children, or ‘children’s rights’ as we might now conceptualise them, can be tied so effectively to the ‘national interest’ in ways that ultimately harm children, assimilation through education being a particular case in point.

If we look at children taking refuge from persecution and the consequences of conflict, this has been a matter of international concern since [Eglantyne Jebb](#) (the founder of Save the Children), in 1920, declared that ‘the world’s children stand in urgent need of better protection’. Despite the fact that the treatment of children affected by armed conflict – the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking children – had been dealt with by the [Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949](#) and the [Additional Protocol of 1977](#), they were not separately recognised in an international instrument until the adoption of the CRC in 1989 through [Article 22](#). The research of Charlotte and Saphia considers the contemporary movement of children, with the former focusing upon children within European refugee camps and the latter upon child migration in the context of climate and environmental change.

Charlotte’s research advocates for the amplification of children’s voices in line with the rights afforded under international law, with the aspiration of addressing the impasse between policy and practice regarding the enjoyment of rights afforded by the CRC. The voices of children provide a link between the contemporary and historical aspects of this research, as each of the doctoral research projects seeks to centralise children.

Saphia’s research catalogues the inadequacies of the international legal framework to address children who migrate, whether domestically or internationally as a consequence of climate change. In contrast to any other international human rights treaty, the CRC provision for the protection of refugee and asylum-seeking children remains largely absent from mechanisms designed to tackle the human impact of climate change and environmental degradation. ([Pobjoy, 2017](#); [Myers & Theytaz-Bergman, 2017](#)). The recognition of the rights of migrant children in the two Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants has been lauded as the first intergovernmental agreement to recognise climate-related migration. However, the [Compact](#) (not legally binding) is far

from flawless despite making a departure from the traditional international legal architecture that has been implemented to protect refugees. The protections afforded to environmentally displaced persons are not systematic and competing priorities in migrant protection may ultimately bury the issue of climate migration. There are also difficulties when we consider the rights of children that fall outside the traditional view of children as weak, passive and vulnerable in the context of contemporary migration, such as adolescents who have decided to migrate in search of economic opportunities, as this strikes at the heart of the international legal framework.

[Children are victims of some of the most devastating examples of state sanctioned and private human rights abuse, within the context of international law. Migration](#) is the field where children's rights come face to face with and clash with the sovereignty of states, in particular their prerogative to decide on entry, residence, and expulsion of non-nationals. The conflict between the interests of the nation state and the rights of children opens an interesting space for research into the exploitation of 'children on the move' during the past two centuries and beyond. We look forward to continuing our research and further discussions on the exploitation of children and the global challenges connected thereto.



["Children's Rights"](#) by [LindaH](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)
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An Abolitionist's Diaries: Rethinking William Wilberforce

Posted on November 23, 2020



Professor John Coffey University of Leicester

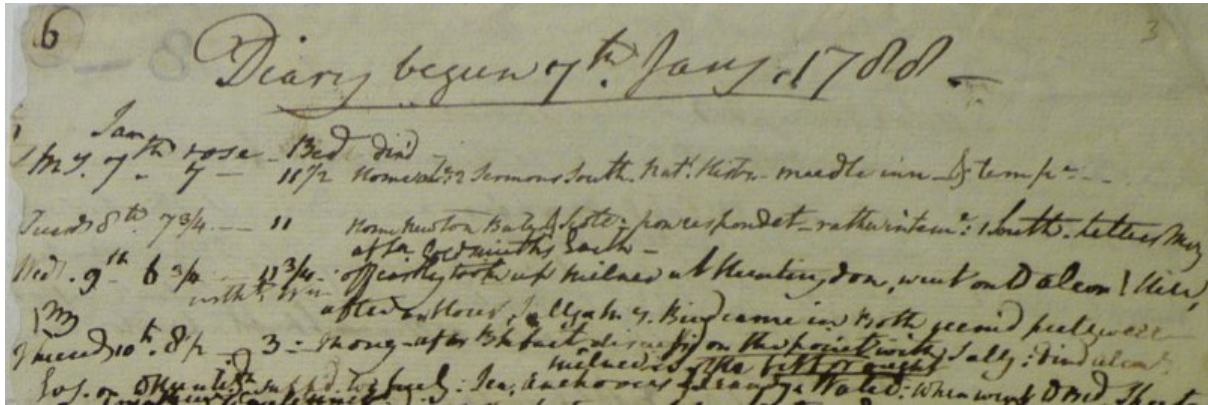
Join us on Thursday 10 December 4-6PM GMT for our latest Wilberforce Institute Webinar.

William Wilberforce kept diaries between 1779 and the year of his death, 1833. Altogether, they ran to over a million words, though some volumes are no longer extant – the total word count of the surviving diaries is c. 825,000 words. Most are held in Oxford at the Bodleian Library, though the largest volume (c.150,000 words) is in Wilberforce House Museum. The abolitionist's sons reproduced c.100,000 words from the diaries in the 1838 biography of their father, and historians have rarely ventured beyond these extracts to the original manuscripts, written in Wilberforce's sometimes indecipherable hand. The Wilberforce Diaries Project is preparing the first scholarly edition for Oxford University Press, and in this seminar John Coffey will be introducing the manuscripts and asking how the diaries might reshape our understanding of Wilberforce and British abolitionism.

Professor Coffey's research has focused on various facets of Anglophone Protestant culture. He has a particular expertise in seventeenth-century Puritanism and the English Revolution and has published widely in this area. His most recent book is *Exodus and Liberation: Deliverance Politics from John Calvin to Martin Luther King Jr.* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

To register for this free event, please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4614890404820629008>



Excerpt from Wilberforce's diary for 1788

Open Source Publication

Posted on November 19, 2020

The Antislavery Usable Past: History's Lessons for How We End Slavery (Rights Lab, University of Nottingham, 2020) ISBN 978-1-9161929-0-4 (e-book)

In 2016, the Wilberforce Institute and the University of Nottingham were successful in their bid for Arts and Humanities Research Council funding for a project designed to uncover and apply the lessons of antislavery movements of the past to contemporary antislavery efforts. The findings are presented in this new book, *The Antislavery Usable Past: History's Lessons for How We End Slavery*, a collaboration of the numerous scholars that worked on the project under the overall direction of Kevin Bales.

This is not your usual history book. The aim of the editors is for it to be a resource for anyone engaged in the business of antislavery, whether in a charity, a campaigning non-governmental organization, in local, regional, or national government, or just as a citizen committed to the antislavery cause.

Working to end or escape slavery has been a constant part of human existence. The history of antislavery offers valuable examples that can inform and support today's activism. But though many abolitionists and human rights workers have striven to abolish slavery, we are rarely aware of their existence, much less of the lessons they learned. The editors hope this volume will help these individuals speak to us from the past so that their ideas, challenges, failures and successes might inspire and guide those who follow them. By harnessing the tools of history, searching the archives and identifying past successes and failures, we can see that antislavery campaigning has rich traditions which can provide activists and scholars with a kind of 'usable past', a 'storehouse of antislavery tools' that can be applied to the problems of the present.

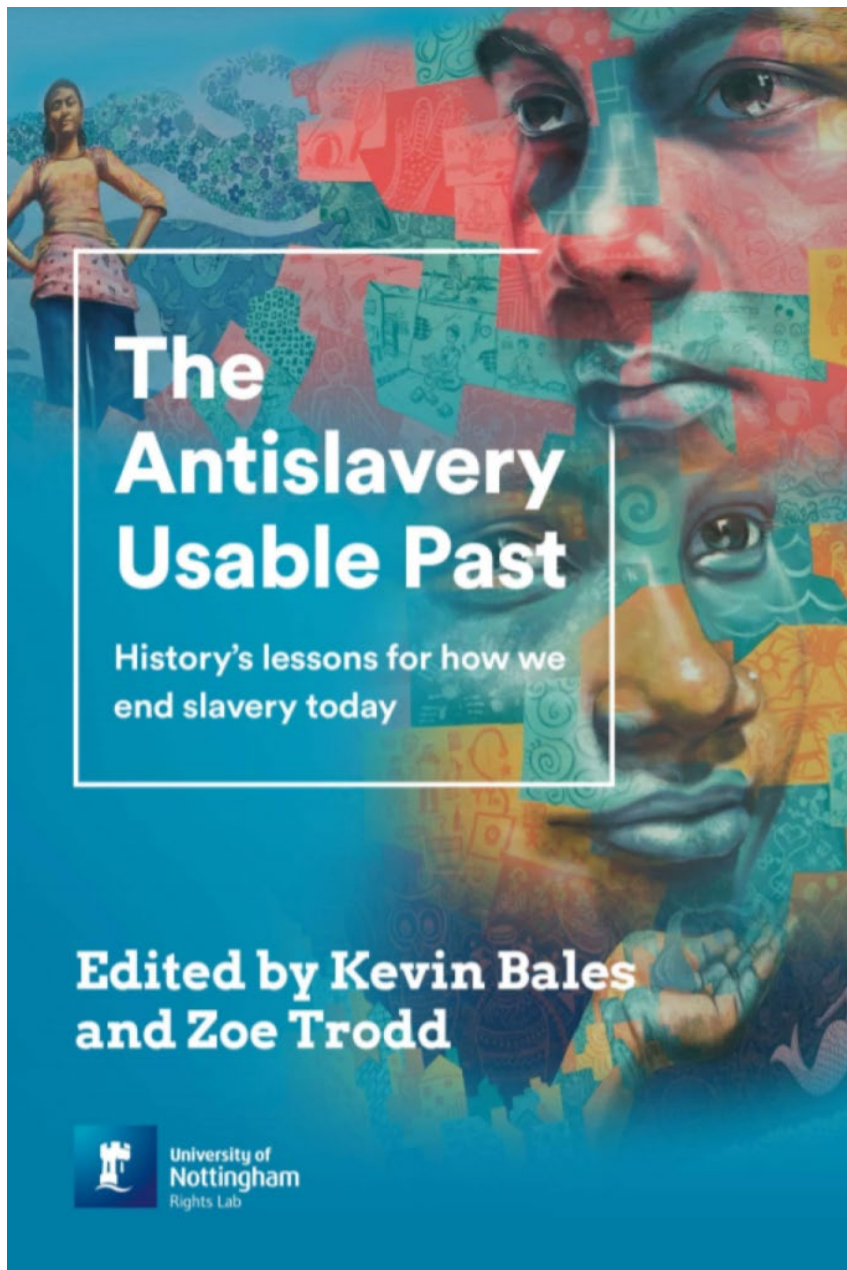
The volume draws on the breadth of expertise in the Wilberforce Institute and its experience in using lessons from historic campaigns to end the transatlantic slave trade to engage the public in fighting slavery today. It includes chapters by Institute members and associates on a range of topics, including that of Professor John Oldfield on antislavery opinion building, of Dr Mary Wills on the role of military interventions in antislavery campaigns, of PhD student Rebecca Nelson on antislavery material culture persuasion, of PhD student Sarah Colley

on the impact of the past on child sexual exploitation (with Emma Stephens from Nottingham), and of Professor Jean Allain on identifying a case of slavery.

Professor Oldfield, one of the co-investigators on the project, reflects on why it was so important for the Wilberforce Institute to be involved.

‘This is a hugely significant publication and one that vividly demonstrates the wealth of expertise available at the Wilberforce Institute, as well as our continuing role in shaping new ways of thinking about the relationship between historical and contemporary slavery. Our work has always been public-facing, and books of this kind reflect our determination to engage with a wide variety of audiences, whether educators, human rights organizations, NGOs or policymakers.’

The book is available in pdf format only and can be downloaded [here](#).



Supporting the cause of abolition: the role of a wife

Posted on November 12, 2020



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Itinerant anti-slavery speakers were key to the mobilisation of public opinion in Britain in the early nineteenth century, but they could not have spent so much time on the road without the support of others. Here we introduce excerpts from two letters written by one of those speakers, George Thompson, to his wife

during his travels. We thank the Special Collections Manager at John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, for permission to do this.

George Donisthorpe ('Tim') Thompson was born in Liverpool on 18 June 1804. Described by Morgan in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as an 'orator, slavery abolitionist, and political reformer', he is recognised as being 'the most effective British anti-slavery lecturer since Thomas Clarkson' in the run up to the abolition of slavery in 1833. Thompson first came to prominence in 1831, when the then Lord Chancellor, Henry Brougham, [recommended him as a traveling speaker](#) to the London Anti-Slavery Society. It was also in that year that he married Anne Erskine Lorraine ('Jenny') Spry, daughter of Richard, a minister in the Methodist Connexion of the Countess of Huntingdon. They had five surviving children, three girls and two boys, the first of whom, born in 1836, they named William Lloyd Garrison, after the charismatic American abolitionist.

In the first letter, Thompson was writing to his wife from the Lincolnshire market town of Brigg at midnight on Thursday 19 April 1832. He was clearly tired. It was his fourth lecture that week and there was to be another one, plus five more the following week – two in Barton upon Humber and three in Hull. But though 'quite weary and exhausted' he was keen to let his new wife know that this did not dampen his ardour. 'Yet have many and many a time risen from the sofa when I could hardly hold my pen, or guide it, and have written a long letter to my Jenny'. He was therefore disgruntled to find that she had not taken the time to write to him.

*Does your Tim with all his faults forget his wife Or his friends? –
Do multiplied engagements Cause him to forget his Jenny? – Do
over-Whelming bodily exertions cause him to forget his Jenny? . .
. tell me I conjure you why you cannot find time to assure me at
the appointed time the while I am caring for you – thinking of you
– wishing for you, and labouring ever to prostration for you, you
are also caring for and wishing for and thinking upon your Tim.*

After complaining about the 'want of attention on the part of my wife' he continued with his self-pitying attack:

Why did I leave the Sofa and the security of the kindest friends to go ½ a mile to the post office? – because I expected a letter from my Jenny. Why did I refuse to let a servant go – though entreated gain & again because I expected a letter from my Jenny and it was too grateful a task to be to any one.

He graciously agrees to let her failure to write to him pass, and, after a small pang of conscience, instructs her to send a letter to the local Post Office in Barton. He also reminds her that she carries the full weight of responsibility for his happiness.

I forgive you – must forgive you. perhaps you Did write and the letter mis carried . . . Write me by return to the Post Office Barton – Lincolnshire. Study well your responsibility – Believe O Jenny believe what I have so often said & written, that your conduct – rules my destiny as far as a human being can govern the fate of another – Love me – devote yourself to me – live for me and all is well. (Raymond English Anti-Slavery Collection [REAS]/2/1/22 University of Manchester Library Special Collections, Letters of George Thompson to his wife, April 19, 1832)

The letter finishes with a declaration of love, and a claim that he had intended no censure. Thompson's *modus operandi* was well-known in abolitionist circles. An analysis of his correspondence shows that while he was both 'charming and charismatic, he could also be vain, brittle, and self-absorbed.' Described as 'tall, handsome and articulate, with a penchant for biting sarcasm', he travelled to America with his family in 1834 to preach the abolitionist message, but so fierce was the opposition he aroused, particularly among anti-abolitionist mobs, that he had to be smuggled out of the country in October 1835, for fear of his life. Anne and the children, meanwhile, were left to make their own way home, which, in the circumstances, may well have been a diversionary tactic.

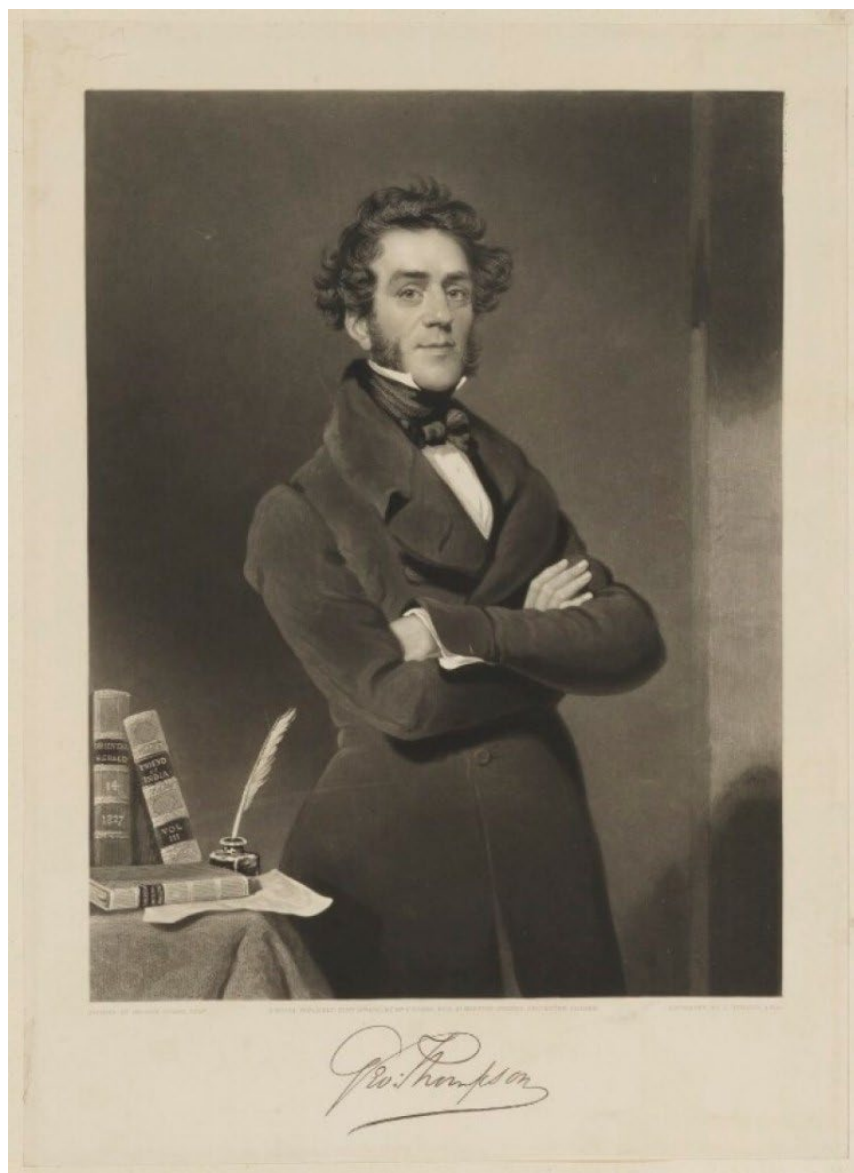
By 1838, the year of the second letter, the Thompson family had settled in Edinburgh, and though his declarations of love had disappeared the sharp tone

remains. Writing to Anne from London in February, after seven years of marriage, Thompson's demands were sartorial rather than epistolary.

I find I need not have a court dress to go to the Queen and therefore, Let me have two new Shirts – my silk stockings, a pair of dress Shoes (perhaps Mr Gregory will make me a pair). Put into a parcel and sent early to Mr Wilson[?], who will carefully pack them, with some Clothes, and send them to me. Oblige me by attending to these things.

He requested that she write to the Post Office in Hull to confirm his demands had been met: 'Remember, every thing I ask for Is wanted by the 14th!' (REAS/2/1/43, Letters, February 38, 1838.)

The strains of itinerant lecturing made an early impact on the Thompsons' marriage. He was often away for considerable periods of time, and she had to deal with the fact that the money he brought in was often barely enough to support the family. William Lloyd Garrison Thompson, who died in September 1851 at the age of 15, was buried in a pauper's grave in the Dissenters' section of Brompton Cemetery in London. Though Thompson appealed to female audiences and helped to establish many women's abolitionist societies, garnering considerable support for the abolitionist cause, as these extracts reveal, he could be petty and demanding. A self-professed radical, Thompson's youthful insistence that his wife should 'devote' herself to him jars with his professions of equality, which ranged from abolition to free trade, parliamentary reform, disestablishment and religious rights.



George Thompson by Charles Turner, published by and after George Evans, mezzotint, 12 November 1842, NPG D40424 © National Portrait Gallery, London

Conference proceedings

Posted on November 5, 2020



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In this blog Dr Elizabeth Faulkner returns to the conference she organized with Dr Laura Lammasniemi just over a year ago.

One Year On: Critical Perspectives on ‘Modern Slavery’: Law, Policy and Society, 30 October, 2019

On 30 October 2019, we welcomed speakers and attendees to the Wilberforce Institute conference ‘Critical Perspectives on “Modern Slavery”: Law, Policy and Society’. Organised collaboratively with Dr Laura Lammasniemi (University of Warwick), our one-day interdisciplinary conference aimed to explore the issue of ‘modern slavery’ through providing a platform to critique related legal, ideological, political and policy responses.

As a term ‘modern slavery’ serves as a powerful tool that invokes an extensive appeal to altruistic feeling, while simultaneously providing an expansive umbrella-like term for a range of exploitative practices. The issues of human trafficking and ‘modern slavery’ have become one of great contemporary importance and in the past decades there has been a flurry of legal and policy

responses to the issues at international and national level. Simultaneously, there has been vast amounts of scholarship on the topic, much of it critical of those responses, fiercely contesting the use of the term 'slavery' in this context. The conference generated an unprecedented amount of interest, and we were overwhelmed by the number of excellent abstract submissions. The conference featured five panels. Panel 1 critiqued the false virtue of 'modern slavery' law and policy, panel 2 addressed creative and alternative methodologies to the study of 'modern slavery', panel 3 incorporated historical and contemporary legal analysis of 'modern slavery', panel 4 looked at the institutional and corporate responses to 'modern slavery' and the final panel examined colonial and theoretical perspectives on 'modern slavery'. We were happy to be able to deliver our vision of an interdisciplinary conference.

We were honoured to welcome Professor Julia O'Connell Davidson (University of Bristol), whose research has spearheaded the critical analysis of contemporary approaches to modern slavery and human trafficking, as one of our keynote speakers. Entitled 'Learning from Histories of Marronage and Fugitivity', within which she interrogated the mainstreaming of 'modern slavery' she advocated switching the point of comparison to histories of enslaved peoples' efforts to extricate themselves from slavery and move closer to freedom. She highlighted the perspective of Douglass that the rights of locomotion/freedom of movement is a cornerstone of the human condition and essential to reform and progress. The second keynote was provided by Professor Jean Allain (Monash University & Wilberforce Institute) whose intricate analysis of the international laws of slavery shaped my own interest in the legal history of slavery.

The success of the conference was down to the great working relationship of the organisers, and made possible through support from the former Director of the Institute Professor John Oldfield who agreed to host the event, and through securing external funding from the Modern Law Review and the Society of Legal Scholars. Moreover, I am indebted to my colleagues and our doctoral students who helped in the run up to and on the day of the conference. Thank you.

So what happens next? The point of this post is to look back and reflect upon the conference and provide an update of the project as it has moved on since the conclusion of the conference in 2019. I am in the process of collating an edited collection, which features some of the conference papers and incorporates chapters from invited academics, with the aim of creating an edited volume that addresses modern slavery through an interdisciplinary lens, grounded in

contextualised studies from around the globe. The contributors are in the process of writing their draft chapters, and I am hopeful that the produced collection will surpass my expectations in a way that mirrors the success of the conference.

The Yellow Demon of Fever

Posted on November 2, 2020



Professor Manuel Barcia

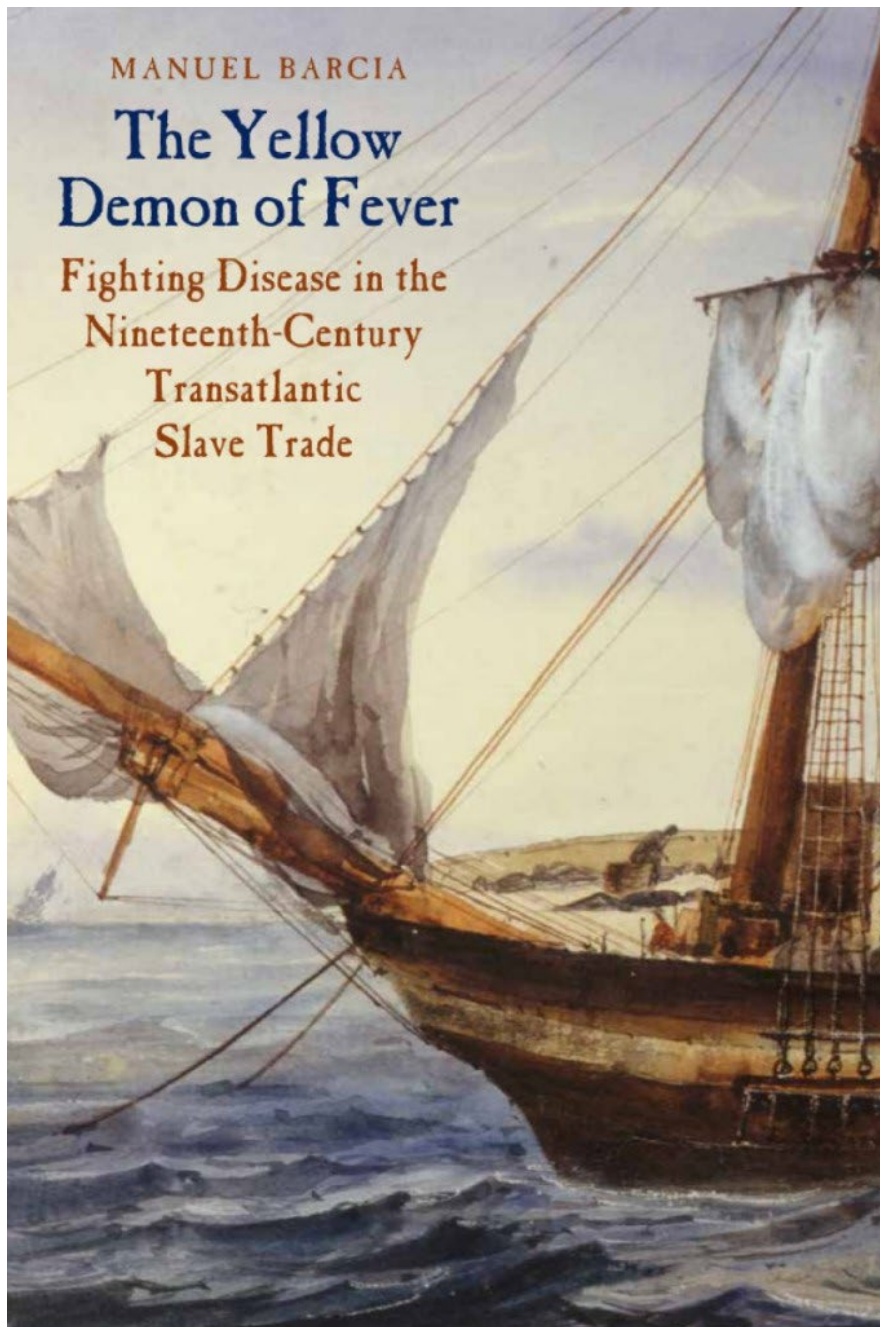
Chair of Global History

University of Leeds

Join us on Thursday 12 November 4-6PM GMT for our latest Wilberforce Institute Webinar. In this webinar Professor Manuel Barcia, Chair of Global History at the University of Leeds, will talk about the subject of his new book, *The Yellow Demon of Fever: Fighting Disease in the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Professor Barcia's expertise in slavery is wide ranging, from piracy to medical history, and he has published monographs on slave rebellion, the Great African Slave Revolt of 1825 and slave soldiers in the Atlantic World to great critical acclaim. *The Yellow Demon of Fever*, published earlier this year, is a pathbreaking history of how participants in the slave trade influenced the growth and dissemination of medical knowledge in the nineteenth century.

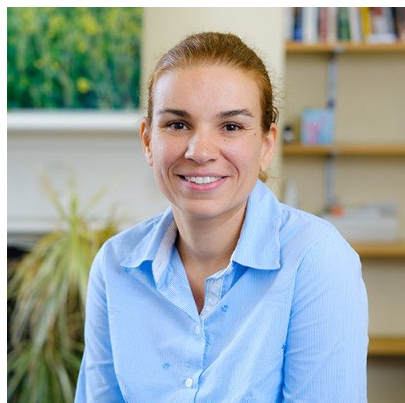
To register for this free event, please click on the link below:

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Review of recent publications

Posted on October 29, 2020



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Today Dr Lorena Arocha summarises the outcome of her collaborative research project with The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Lorena Arocha, Meena Gopal, Bindhulakshmi Pattadath, and Roshni Chattopadhyay, ‘ “Ways of Seeing”—Policy paradigms and unfree labour in India’, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, 15 (2020)

In 2019, a collaborative project between the Advanced Centre for Women’s Studies at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the Wilberforce Institute focused on exploring worker-driven initiatives to tackle exploitation in India. Many activists and organisations generously contributed to the project. In our recently published [article](#), we trace the trajectory of different initiatives to address unfree labour and their impact on workers’ capacity to aspire to and exercise their rights in India. We attempt to understand the dimensions and effects of different ‘ways of seeing’ precarity and exploitation within the larger context of economic policies, social structures such as caste-based discrimination, gender-based violence, and state indifference.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit India, we tried to contact all contributing activists and organisations to find out how lockdown was affecting their work and impacting people already in precarious and exploitative work. Here we spotlight the work of two organisations that contributed to our project – Aajeevika Bureau and Sangram.

[Aajeevika Bureau](#) was set up in 2005 and works in the south Rajasthan-Gujarat migration corridor. It offers rural migrant workers not only direct services, support and protection, but also uses advocacy and research to push for legal reform and better policy implementation, building capacity among migrant workers, especially through its efforts to mobilise and organise workers into collectives. Since the beginning of lockdown, they have been [recording](#) and [publicising cases](#) of stranded migrants, providing and distributing food supplies and other essentials, raising [funds](#) through [various crowdfunding initiatives](#), [informing](#) migrants and [others](#) what [services](#) are available, [supporting](#) existing structures among rural families to assist in containing the virus and warding against economic collapse, running a helpline, increasing [solidarity](#) and [collaborating](#) with intellectuals and other [commentators](#) on social media [campaigns](#), videos and [webinars](#) and joining forces with other [workers' platforms](#). Aajeevika Bureau launched a petition to the Prime Minister's Office to help transport migrants back home in security and dignity, given the chaotic results during the [Shramik Special Train](#) scheme.

Thanks to their efforts, we know how employers used the lockdown to [defraud workers](#) of their wages, how workers are running into debt to buy food or medicines or travel back to their home states and the discrimination they face when trying to obtain food rations or medical assistance, with [fatal results](#). Aajeevika Bureau also mounts pressure against state government decisions which favour businesses over workers, as with the cancellation of trains in the southern state of Karnataka at the behest of [construction](#) businesses, trapping migrants in, or the order by the northern state government of Uttar Pradesh, imposing a [12-hour shift](#) for workers in industrial units. On International Labour Day, Aajeevika Bureau launched a research report, '[Unlocking the Urban](#)'. In the [report](#), they painstakingly remind us that, though documenting the effects of the pandemic is important, we should avoid short-sightedness and see the crisis as an opportunity for making visible long structural exclusions. Using the twin framings of political economy and citizenship rights, they show how the

‘sedentary bias’ of most public provision policies in India allows central and state governments to make circular migrants invisible.

Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha or [Sangram](#) is an organisation which was established in 1992 in Sangli, in the southern state of Maharashtra. It works through a series of collective empowerment groups for socially and economically stigmatised communities, like sex workers and transgender groups. It is a women-led, rights-based network with a firm recognition of the structural inequalities at the heart of what these groups experience, including gender-based violence and discrimination. Sangram emerged at the time of another pandemic, that of HIV/AIDS, and are thus well versed in mobilising these collectives to address public health emergencies.

Sex workers and transgender groups have been gravely affected by the lockdown, not only because they have lost their source of income and might become homeless as a result, but their choices are often stark, when return to home states [might mean facing violence](#) and ostracism. And yet they were among the first to be aware about the risks posed by the virus and to implement measures to stall its spread as early as February 2020. Unable to access any social welfare scheme or any of the relief assistance provided by the government, they have been left to [fend for themselves](#). Without non-governmental organisations and groups like Sangram, who have been [raising funds](#) and distributing food rations and medicines, this collective would have been completely isolated. Sangram is part of other sex workers’ collectives who are mobilising for advocacy purposes and organising webinars to [voice in their own words](#) the experiences of lockdown. Without this support, and in the face of campaigns that identify these groups as [spreading the virus](#), isolation, anxiety over the future and hunger are leading to [debt](#) and [suicide](#).

As indicated in our article, our pilot research suggests that ‘ways of seeing’ workers and their conditions matter. These ‘ways of seeing’ have distinct results for workers. Never have these been more stark than since the pandemic hit, as demonstrated by what happened to the millions of invisibilised migrant workers in India and reflected in the labour law changes the current government is staunchly pursuing. Paying attention to ‘ways of seeing’ is crucial, as these lead to different dispositions and strategies in challenging and re-imagining workers’ positions and futures.



Combating modern slavery in the Humber

Posted on October 26, 2020



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Andrew Smith, Coordinator of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership, introduces the first Modern Slavery strategy for this region

To coincide with Anti-Slavery Day, the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership has launched the first [Modern Slavery Strategy](#) for the Humber region. This progressive move sets the tone for partnership action over the next three years in combatting this despicable crime.

Modern slavery is a devastating crime, often hidden in plain sight. Exploiters profit from the misery of others by forcing them to work for little or no pay, restricting movement, withholding passports, bank cards and ID documents. Threats, control, and coercion are a common theme in modern slavery, playing on the disadvantage or desperation of others to elicit profit and gain. Trafficking for labour exploitation or sexual exploitation is a common theme across the United Kingdom and we are aware that the exploitation of children by organised crime groups across county lines is on the rise.

Spanning all four local authority areas in our region, this new, overarching strategy brings together statutory and non-statutory partners including law

enforcement, academics and health and third sector professionals to give a focused and targeted approach to modern slavery and human trafficking.

Led by partnership coordinator Andrew Smith, whose position is funded by the Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner, a period of consultation helped shape the six robust strategic priorities that spearhead this strategy and speak firmly to would-be exploiters that the Humber region will not tolerate this crime.

Partnership coordinator Andrew Smith said:

‘Protecting vulnerable people, victims and survivors is at the heart of this new strategic plan. Working together in true partnership across all sectors will see us build more resilient communities that are able to deflect and dismiss those looking to exploit them.

Collaboration and coordination are recognised as the most effective way of tackling modern slavery in our communities. Creating a strong partnership approach in Humberside, where different members can bring their skills and strengths to the fight, means we are in a better position than ever before to make lasting change.

The commitment by Police and Crime Commissioner Keith Hunter to fund the partnership coordinator role and support the creation of our dedicated Operation Wilberforce

police team means that our anti-slavery efforts are now firmly part of daily business.

Using academic research to inform practice is a vital component of this fight, and together with our colleagues at the Wilberforce Institute we aim to integrate the learning from research into our response.’

Dr Alicia Kidd, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Wilberforce Institute and Vice Chair of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership said:

‘The Humber Modern Slavery Partnership was established in 2015 and it’s fantastic to see the progress made in those years. This new strategy will be

instrumental in ensuring we move forward in providing the most effective, comprehensive approach to modern slavery in our region.’

Police and Crime Commissioner Keith Hunter said:

‘Modern slavery preys on the most vulnerable members of our community. In the Humber area, police and wider partners including the Modern Slavery Partnership are committed to tackling this form of exploitation by collectively raising awareness of modern slavery, encouraging the community to report concerns, supporting victims and those vulnerable to exploitation, and bringing those responsible to justice.’

DCI Chris Calvert, Force strategic lead for Modern Slavery, Operation Wilberforce, said:

‘Although you may not see it, modern slavery exists in our communities and sadly it often goes unnoticed. Vulnerable people in our society are being exploited by organised criminal gangs for their own benefit.

Vulnerable people remain Humberside’s main priority, which is why a dedicated taskforce specialising in modern day slavery and human trafficking offences has been established.

Operation Wilberforce’s priorities are to protect the victims of modern slavery and bring the offenders to justice.

Working with the partnership is crucial to achieving our aims, raising awareness and gathering intelligence, bringing the skills and services of all our partnership agencies to protect our most vulnerable.’

To report a suspicion or seek advice, call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 0121 700 or

visit the webpage for further information and advice at www.modernslaveryhelpline.org

For further information please contact Andrew Smith on 07960 016762 or a.smith9@hull.ac.uk



Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on October 22, 2020



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Today Dr Elizabeth Faulkner summarizes two of her latest publications.

These recent publications reflect my ongoing interest in the rights and exploitation of children and international law, which emerged out of my time as a doctoral researcher within De Montfort University's Law School. The first is a collaboratively written [journal article](#) which seeks to address the colonial contours of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Last year saw the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the UNCRC, which was ratified in 1989. This commemoration presented an opportunity to examine and reevaluate the epistemologies of children's rights, their representativeness, and their intellectual utility. The article, entitled '*The Decolonisation of Children's Rights and the Colonial Contours of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*' points to the potential for the UNCRC to perpetuate colonial tendencies if accepted uncritically as a global and definitive blueprint for children's rights. We therefore sought to interrogate the power dynamics and colonial legacy upon which our views of children are formed, the colonial

contours of the UNCRC and the decolonisation of children's rights. References were made to the impact of ancillary protective legal instruments on children to provide a more holistic analysis of the legal architecture underpinning children's rights.

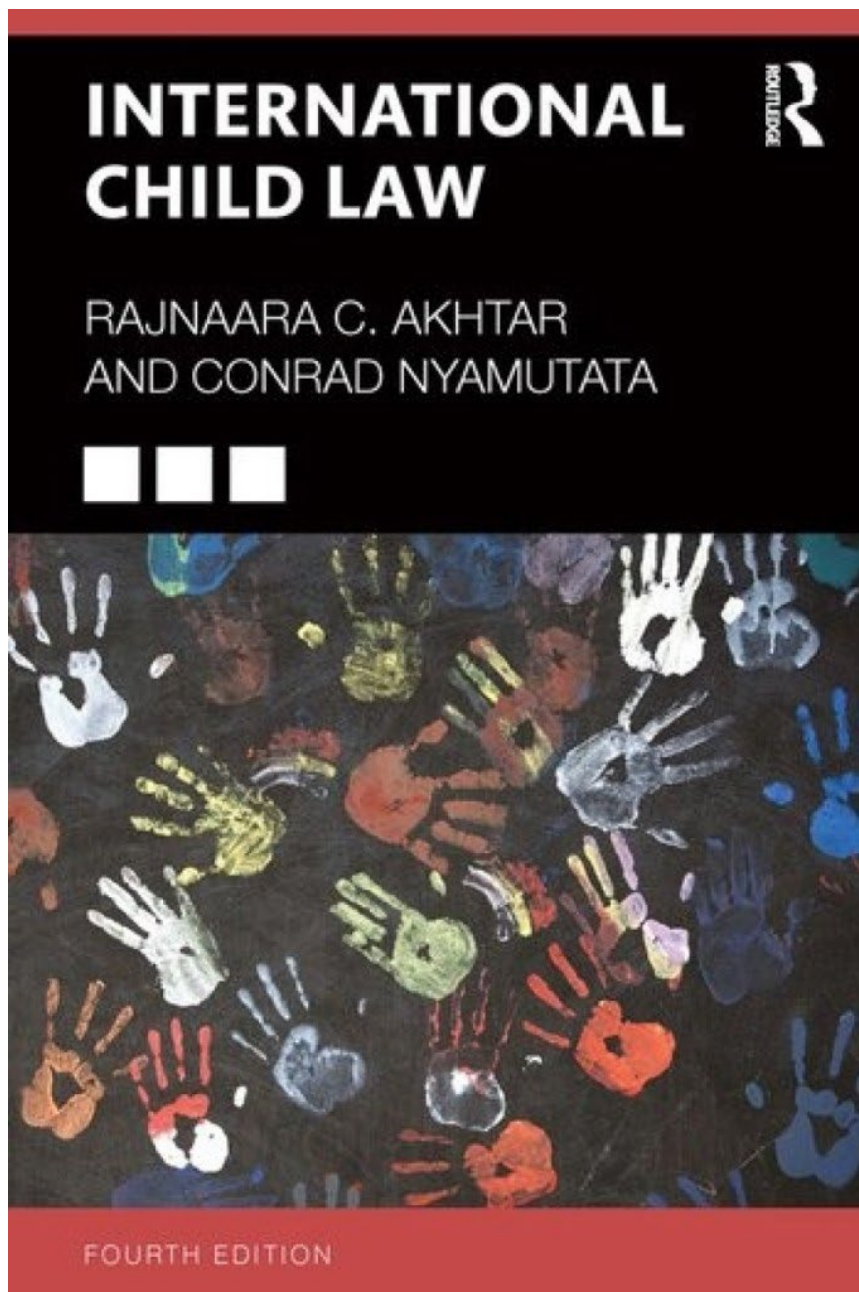
Conrad and I advocate that we, as academics, need to interrogate the power dynamics that shape the underlying presumptions upon which our worldviews are built on an ongoing basis. We used a decolonial lens to challenge both the pedagogy and scholarship of the discourse, whilst simultaneously inviting scholars to recognise and engage with the colonial legacies that perpetuate the study of children's rights. We set out an argument that scholarship on children's rights needs to be disentangled from hegemonic Western epistemologies if it is to remain relevant.

Indeed, the colonial legacy present within the discourse of children's rights needs to be challenged in a multiplicity of ways, from the development and implementation of the international legal framework, to the teaching of children's rights, to the removing of barriers to scholars from the Global South to participating in the discourse. Such factors manifest as Hokusai's wave, a wave that suppresses, prevents, and subsequently perpetuates the dominance of imperialist approaches to children's rights, knowledge and reform.

The second publication is a [book chapter](#) which analyses how international law seeks to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, and appears in the fourth edition of Professor Trevor Buck's *International Child Law* Routledge text, edited by Dr Rajnaara Akhtar and Dr Conrad Nyamutata of De Montfort Law School. The book examines the rights of the child using the global framework of the UNCRC. Through examining both public and private international legal aspects, this interdisciplinary text promotes a holistic understanding of the ongoing development of child law, children's rights, and the protection of the child. Chapter 8 of the *International Child Law* text ('Sexual Exploitation') acknowledges that the sexual abuse and exploitation of children has occurred throughout human history but did not emerge upon the international agenda until the 1990s. The chapter grapples with the issue of definitions, as the expansion of the discourse since the turn of the twenty-first century has arguably rendered any definition of 'child sexual exploitation' as vague and ambiguous. The fact remains that international law does not offer a

distinct definition of the sexual exploitation, but the international legal apparatus has sought to address this through the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography ([OPSC](#)). The chapter on sexual exploitation in previous editions had mentioned trafficking, but not explicitly addressed the Trafficking Protocol and its role in combatting the sexual exploitation of children. Although trafficking is frequently perceived as synonymous with commercial sex work or 'sexual enslavement', this is not the case. The issue of quantification of the issues and the profits rendered from the sexual exploitation of children are touched upon, as they shape and inform the international action of global bodies that have a mandate to combat child sexual exploitation, such as The United Nations and the Group of 7 (formerly G8). The key difference between global and regional mandates is that regional ones ordinarily involve localized action. Examples of regional instruments include the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

The chapter finds resonance with the journal article above, through highlighting that the discourse of child sexual exploitation 'is produced by and reproduced by the dominant discourse of childhood in the West, and more specifically, a discourse of female childhood in which female sexuality is constructed within a sexual double standard'. This analysis coincides with the fact that the most active geopolitical region seeking to combat child sexual exploitation is Europe. Moreover, this chapter sought to introduce the emerging critical scholarship upon the issue of 'modern slavery' and challenge the assertion of the previous edition that 'trafficking ... has become a modern-day slave trade'.



Podcast: Anti-slavery day, 18 October 2020

Posted on October 18, 2020



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Every year since 2010 the 18 October has been designated Anti-Slavery Day. Created by the Anti-Slavery Day Act of that year, a [Private Members Bill](#) introduced Anthony Steen CBE, now Chair of the Human Trafficking Foundation, this day provides an annual opportunity to raise awareness of modern slavery and encourage everyone, whether as individuals or as part of

their company, local authority, charity or government, to do what they can to root out and address the problem of modern slavery. The purposes of Anti-Slavery Day, as stated in the Act, are listed [here](#).

This year two members of the Wilberforce, Cristina Talens, Director of Risk Assessment Services and Andrew Smith, Coordinator of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership, were invited to discuss the issue of modern slavery for a [Good Enough for Jazz](#) podcast.

It is estimated that there are approximately 40.3 million people who are in modern slavery around the world, and about 13,000 of those are in the UK. Modern slavery hides away, manifesting in restaurants, nail-bars, hotels, car washes and private homes, an unseen crime that takes place under our very noses.

Victims of modern slavery have no typical face. Men, women and children of all different ages, ethnicities and nationalities can find themselves subject to it. But those that are most vulnerable in our society, within minority and socially excluded groups, are most at risk. But what exactly is modern slavery? What are the laws against it and how effective are the laws? How can you raise awareness in your organisation or company around this topic and how can you affect change? For some answers to these question, please visit the podcast at: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1109693/5924176>

Episode 21
The ongoing fight against Modern Slavery

GOOD ENOUGH FOR JAZZ!

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| Andrew Chamberlain, Managing Director, Consort Strategy Ltd | Cindy Sparrow, Director, Consort Strategy Ltd | Jimmy Brannigan, Director, NetPositive Futures jimmy@netpositivefutures.co.uk | Cristina Talens, Head of Business Risk Assessment Service at the Wilberforce Institute, C.Talens@hull.ac.uk | Andrew Smith, Co-ordinator, Anti-Slavery, Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull, A.Smith9@hull.ac.uk |

Disclaimer: Any information in this podcast is for general information only and is correct as of the date of recording. This podcast is not intended to be, and should not be used as, a substitute for taking formal professional advice in any specific situation.

Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on October 15, 2020



Professor Trevor Burnard

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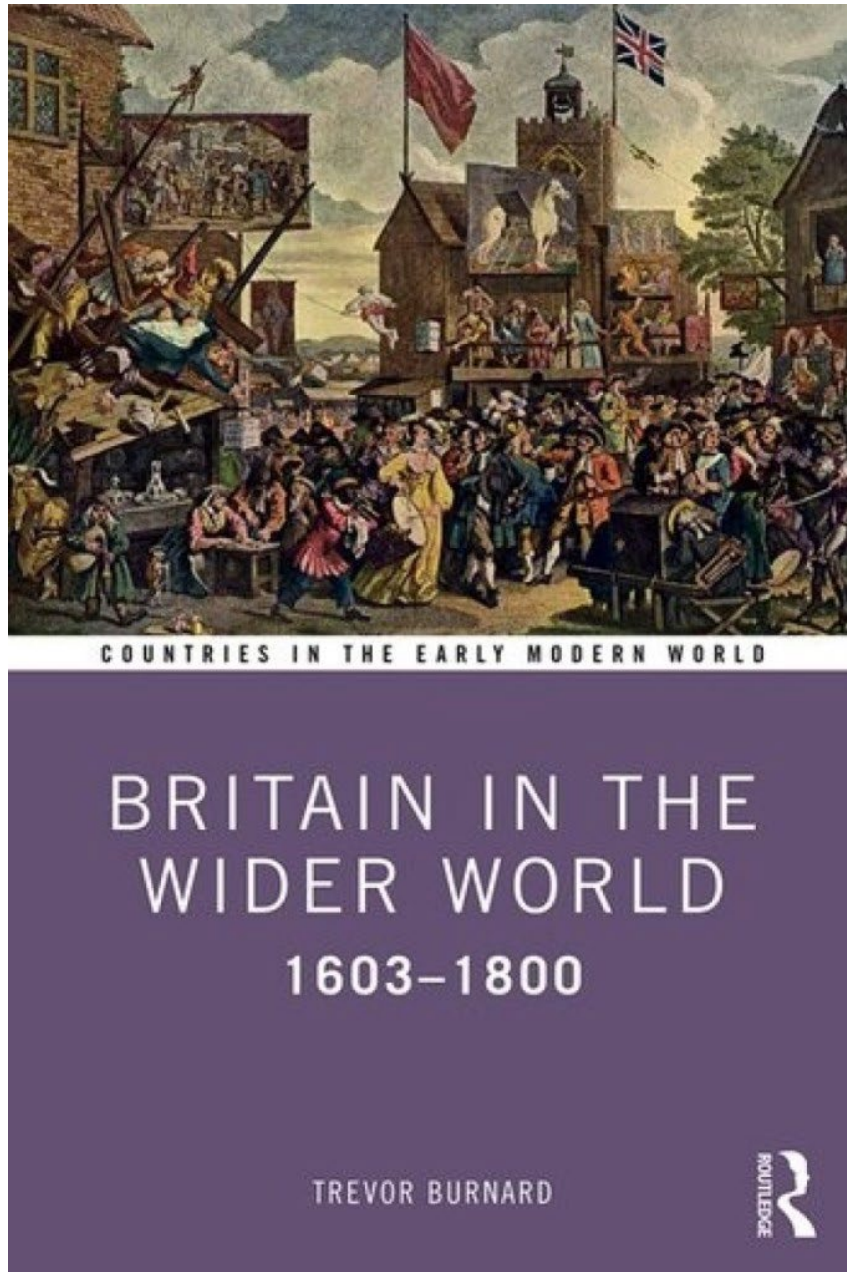
Today Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute, provides a summary of two of his recent publications.

Britain in the Wider World, 1603-1800 (London: Routledge, 2020)

2020, it now seems clear, is a decisive year in British history, however it ends. It is a year that has seen the disaster of a major pandemic, will probably see Britain's withdrawal from Europe and possibly even herald the breakdown of the United Kingdom itself. Just potentially, 2020 will see the final end of a process that began as long ago as 1603, when England/Wales and Scotland were joined together through a common monarch, coming together properly in 1707 and being enlarged by the addition of the kingdom/colony of Ireland into a new polity in 1801 called the United Kingdom. 1603 preceded by a couple of years the founding of the East India Company, giving England and then Britain a toehold in India, which became much bigger after Britain's victory in the Seven Years War in 1763. It was followed by the tentative start of a British Empire in the Americas, begun in a chaotic and disastrous fashion in England's first settlement in North America, in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. By 1800, that empire, despite the

political loss of the 13 colonies and the creation of the USA, was extremely large and world-spanning. My book on how England and then Britain went through this dramatic transformation between 1603 and 1800, one that might be on the verge of finally collapsing, is a British history as written by an historian of the Atlantic world. It explores how the British nation was made in this period and how England/Wales moved from being the pariah of Europe – insular nations devoted to Protestantism and the killing of monarchs – to near global dominance, with a powerful empire and an even more flourishing economy. Britain by 1800 had become a mighty world power and through the Industrial Revolution the richest country in the world, overturning in a few decades China's millennium-long presence at the top of wealthy nations. I pay particular attention in my book to three things: imperialism, economic growth and changes in gender relations.

Within these three topics, slavery is important, though it is only one of many themes that I cover in this survey of a lengthy period in British history. I deal with slavery here less than I do in other works but I take for consideration Barbara Solow's famous statement that 'it was slavery that made the empty lands of the western hemisphere valuable ... [and] what moved in the Atlantic ... was predominantly slaves, the output of slaves, the inputs of slave societies and the goods and services purchased with the earnings of slave products.' America was valuable to Britain because it had plantations and it had plantations due to the work of enslaved Africans. Britain became the most important slavery nation in the eighteenth century. That this was the case makes us pause when thinking about imperialism and the development of settler societies in North America and Australasia. Britain's movement into the wider world was immensely successful for Britain itself, not least for its poorest inhabitants, who got goods that they wanted from the colonies and could improve their standard of living by moving out of Britain. It came, however, at great cost, including the immiseration of thousands of enslaved people, living miserable lives as coerced workers. The gap between British prosperity and the misery Britain caused its non-white imperial subjects was something that increasingly bothered thinking Britons, not least of whom was a young Hull-born politician and evangelical, William Wilberforce. Born in the triumphal year of 1759, when Britain acquired Canada, Senegal and Bengal, he lived his life in a time when Britain and its empire were important in the world in ways never seen before.



'Terror, Horror and the British Atlantic Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century' in Robert Anthony, Stuart Carroll and Caroline Dodds Pennock, eds, *The Cambridge World History of Violence* vol. III 1500-1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 17-35

The Cambridge World History of Violence is a path-breaking four volume series, edited by Australian scholars Joy Damousi and Philip Dwyer, which argues that violence was a key driver of history from ancient to modern times. My chapter on violence in the Atlantic slave trade is in the early modern volume, running

from 1500 to 1850. It contributes to an intensive, profoundly meaningful and often disturbing conversation about how violence speaks to critical issues such as the problem of civility in society, the nature of political sovereignty and the state, the legitimacy of conquest and subjugation, the possibilities of popular resistance, and the manifestations of ethnic and racial unrest. I start with J.M.W. Turner's 1840 masterpiece, *Slavers Overthrowing the Dead and Dying* and connect to a notorious incident in the history of the Atlantic slave trade, from 1781. That incident was the murder of 122 African captives on the *Zong*, becalmed off south-west Jamaica, in order to make an insurance claim. I use this and other cases of violence in the Atlantic slave trade to argue that one of the effects of that slave trade was the evocation in slaves of the emotion of terror – the apprehension of worse things happening if one did not obey commands. To show how this worked, I analyze James Field Stanfield's *The Guinea Voyage* to explore the workings of terror and horror (a related but different emotion to terror) through violence as it operated in the Atlantic slave trade. I conclude with a consideration of how the terror that was involved in the British Atlantic slave trade inspired abolitionists, not least William Wilberforce, though I concentrate in this chapter on Thomas Clarkson and John Newton, to protest against the slave ship as a place of radical disorder, an essentially lawless place presided over by cruel tyrants. Without the revulsion that was aroused in metropolitan Europeans and Americans about the terror that resulted from the multiple acts of violence that characterized the Atlantic slave trade, abolitionism and humanitarianism would have taken a different shape – and possible been less immediately successful.

Two ceremonies of voluntary enslavement

Posted on October 8, 2020



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Historians of slavery are very aware that enslavement in the past took a number of forms. One of the more unexpected of these for us today is voluntary enslavement, which presents us with something of a conundrum. We imagine slavery as the most extreme form of legal coercion, and so find it difficult to imagine anyone would enter of their own choice. Yet agreeing to enslavement in return for the means to survive was a well-known practice across many societies in which slavery was accepted in law. Where agreements survive, we can see that there were some differences between voluntary enslavement and its more coercive chattel form, and the idea of contract itself is often cited as a way to distinguish between the two types. Choosing to enter slavery voluntarily might mean that the conditions in which you served were more favourable, and your treatment was better. You may also have signed up for the option to exit unilaterally, that is, without the need for permission from your master. This was often the case with defaulting debtors and usually required payment of the appropriate redemption cost: your outstanding debt; or the provision of a substitute slave. But there was no guarantee of freedom, and during the period

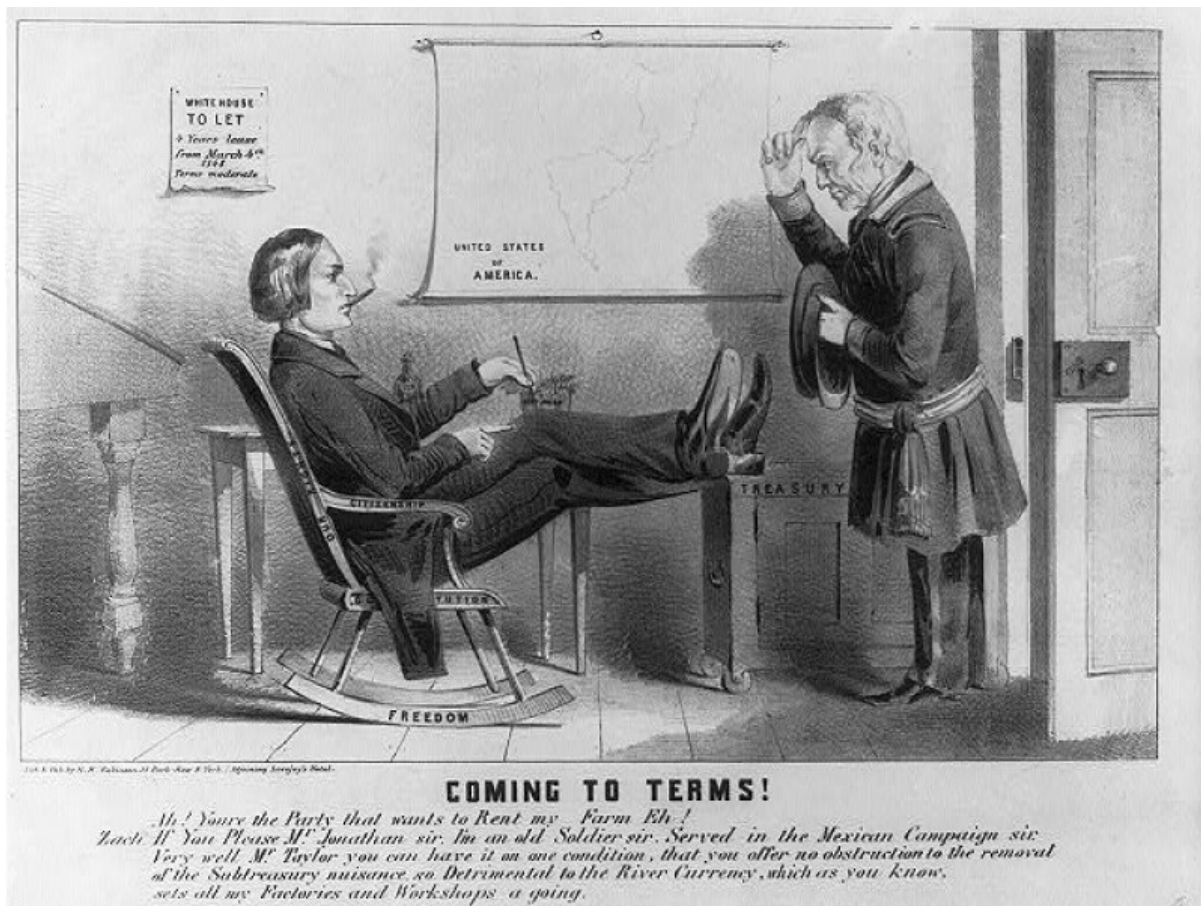
of your slavery, however long that might be, you were a chattel slave, and so were any children born to you during your enslavement.

There are examples in which people appear to have used voluntary enslavement strategically (when survival was not directly threatened), while at some periods and in some places such enslavement was illegal. What is clear is that societies recognised from an early point in time that voluntary slavery presented opportunities for exploitation, and tried to limit them: the decision of a Hebrew slave to remain in slavery in perpetuity in Exodus 21: 6 required him to make a declaration of love for his master before a judge and have his ear pierced as a sign of his condition. It was important to demonstrate as far as possible that those who chose to enter slavery voluntarily were doing so willingly and provide a means whereby the community and the enslaved had evidence of this change in status. As a result, voluntary enslavement had to be a public event, and could sometimes involve a symbolic act, undertaken to signal the changed status of the participant.

In this blog I introduce two medieval ceremonies of enslavement, one in England and the other in Scotland, that mirror the elements in this biblical example. As in biblical law, such events are described through a masculine lens, because women were rarely free to act independently. The process in England is relatively well-known. In the legal code known as the *Leges Henrici Primi* – the Laws of Henry I – the process of becoming enslaved by choice is clearly laid out. The *Leges* insisted that any voluntary enslavement had to be undertaken in a court, which in medieval England meant either the hallmoot, hundred or village court, depending on the ‘jurisdictional competence’ of the would-be master in relation to that court. Equally important was the public nature of the act: the declaration had to be made before witnesses. In addition, a toll was to be paid as physical evidence of the event, to ensure that the subject did not attempt to deny the enslavement later. Finally, the change in status required a symbolic ceremony in which the individual concerned was to ‘take up a sickle or a goad or the arms of slavery of this kind, and shall place his hands and head in the hands of his lord’. (See L.J. Downer, ed., *Leges Henrici Primi* (Oxford, 1972), 78: 2 and 78: 2c.) In giving his head to his lord, historians believe the enslaved symbolised handing over his mind and his will to the control of his master. But that was not all. Those men who entered slavery voluntarily committed all children born to their wives after their declaration to a life of perpetual enslavement too.

In medieval Scotland, as in England, the decision to enter enslavement voluntarily was inscribed in law, and in Scotland this action also had to be done in a public court. But the early fourteenth century Scottish law code known as the *Quoniam Attachamenta* prescribed a slightly different ceremony: the symbolic tugging of the subject's forelock as evidence of voluntary subjection. The Latin phrase in question – '*per crines anteriores capitis sui*' – literally translates as 'through the hair at the front of his head', but this is usually thought to have referred to a tugging of the forelock. The law also allowed for the master to recover anyone who had enslaved themselves voluntarily '*per nasum suum*', meaning 'through his nose'; this presumably referred to the use of a nose ring. The law was clear about the reason for this. 'A free man is able to relinquish his liberty, if he chooses, in the king's court and in some other courts. But once thus relinquished, it cannot be recovered in his lifetime'.

Unlike the English ceremony, this action of symbolic tugging has gained wider international currency, although current definitions of 'tugging the forelock' give no hint of its previous connection with enslavement. Described as '[a traditional gesture of respect to the higher classes](#)', it is nevertheless associated with '[obsequious or overly deferential behaviour](#)'. This appears to have been the intention of the mid-nineteenth century American political caricaturist [Henry R. Robinson](#), whose image of forelock tugging, still valuable as a measure of [sycophancy](#) today, satirised the ambitions of Major General Zachary Taylor as he sought election to the American Presidency in 1848. Taylor stood for the Whig Party, and though Robinson was a Whig supporter, he was clearly sceptical about Taylor's Whig credentials. But what is perhaps more interesting in this context, is that Taylor was a slaveholder and plantation owner himself. As an echo of voluntary enslavement, the continuing relevance of forelock tugging today reveals surprising links between subordinating social practices in our present society and ancient forms of slavery.



Zachary Taylor tugs his forelock in the cartoon from 1848 as he is interviewed for the American Presidency. Image: [Library of Congress](#)

Rethinking British Anti-Slavery

Posted on October 5, 2020

The Alderman Sydney Smith Annual Lecture

Wilberforce Institute Webinar, Thursday 15 October 2020, 4-6PM BST



Professor Catherine Hall
Emerita Professor of Modern British Social and Cultural History
University College London



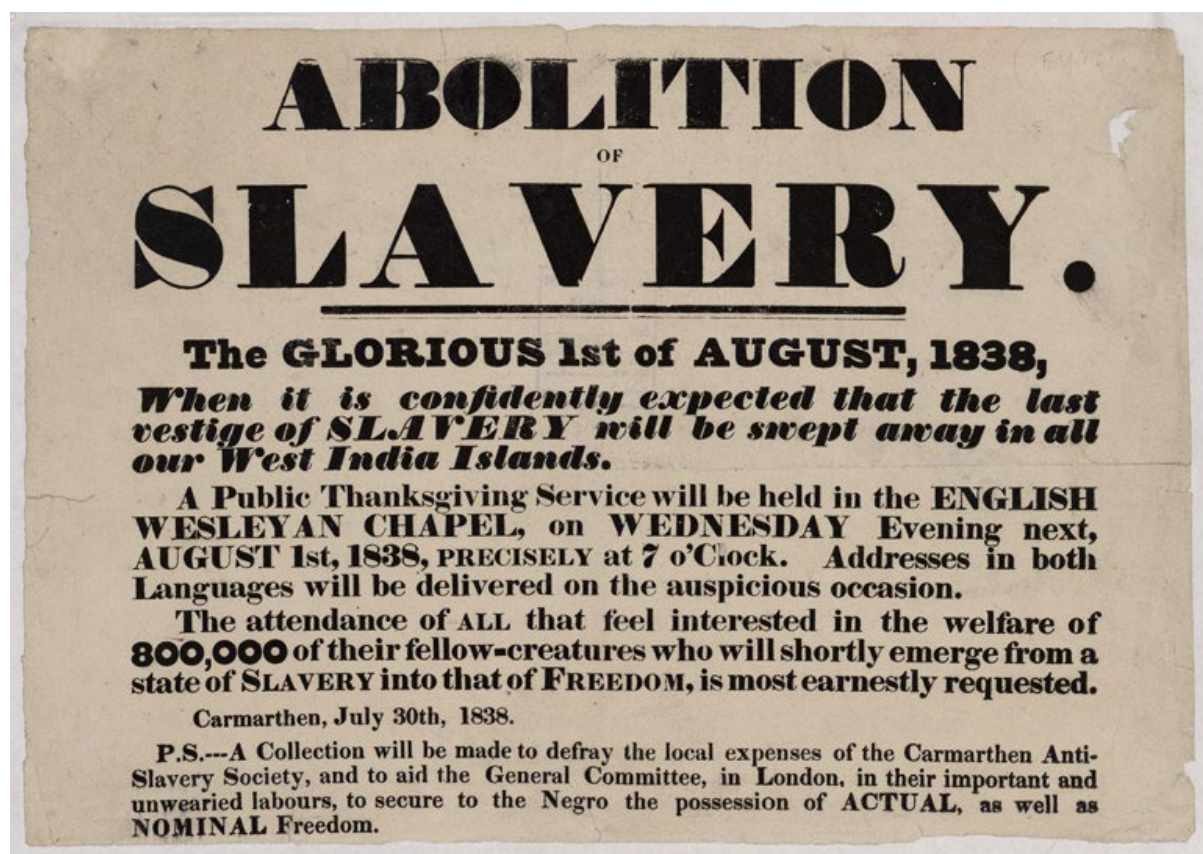
John Oldfield
Professor of Slavery and Emancipation
Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

Join us on Thursday 15 October at 4pm for our annual Alderman Sydney Smith Lecture. This year Professor John Oldfield, former Director of the Wilberforce Institute, is joined by Professor Catherine Hall, Emerita Professor of Modern British Social and Cultural History at University College London, and principal investigator of the Legacies of British Slave Ownership Project. Professor

Oldfield, a specialist in the history of abolition, will reconsider British Anti-Slavery, and Professor Hall will offer a response. As we draw ever nearer to 2033 and the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean, Professor Oldfield argues that there is a pressing need to re-evaluate British anti-slavery. In his lecture, he will map out some of the challenges facing scholars and practitioners, drawing particular attention to recent historiographical trends in the UK and the USA. 'Distilling all of this work emphasises the need for a more "integrated" history of British anti-slavery that not only takes into account black agency but also pro-slavery ideology and culture, transatlanticism and the wider world outside Westminster.'

To register for this free event, please click on the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4356875706984109582>



Accepting shared blame – offering allyship to the BLM movement

Posted on October 1, 2020



Charlotte Russell

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The death of George Floyd at the hands of a white US police officer in May this year sparked wider and more vocal support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Those supporting the movement have expressed the lack of ‘innocence’ in nations beyond the US. International narrative has indicated the structural racism woven into the fabric of societies worldwide. This has prompted us to examine our role individually and institutionally in building a racism-free UK. That racism pervades throughout our society today, and continues to place Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people at disadvantage cannot be disputed. From education to socioeconomic opportunity, representation in the workplace to beauty norms, racial profiling to healthcare standards, cultural appropriation to covert racism, it is clear that we have a long way to go. What remains less clear is the most effective and appropriate ways to offer allyship to the BLM movement.

While demonstrations of support are certainly beneficial, many individuals and institutions have been quick to celebrate their role or self-view as anti-racist, or

perhaps 'colour-blind' (See: Emmanuel Acho: [Seeing Colour](#)). But both the human mind and social structures are so innately complex that we cannot reliably declare either to be wholly any one thing. Thus the vocal admission and discussion of our culpability, from a personal to a structural level, is vital in preventing implicit denial of fault in our self-assertion as allies.

Allies wishing to demonstrate anti-racism must be careful not to do so in such a way that we distance ourselves from the reality of ongoing racial inequality and our role within it. Until 2015, the UK were paying off £20M of compensation to 46,000 slave owners for '[loss of human property](#)'. Tweeting about this, the Treasury framed the present day taxpayers' contribution to the compensation of slave owners in a positive light, presenting the information in such a way as to encourage the self-congratulation of both the [institution and the reader](#).

This was removed a matter of hours later after an outcry about the details of the payment agreement, which were omitted from the Tweet. Even discounting debates over malintent versus ignorance, this occurrence indicates just how easily our national history can be misrepresented and 'whitewashed'. Focusing on abolition whilst staying silent on the centuries of slave-trading and slave-owning which preceded it demonstrates the risk we face when reducing an action which concerns human rights to its bare elements.

The question I feel we as individuals and as institutions should consider is the extent to which our denouncement of racism can achieve tangible change without open discussion of our own culpability in ongoing mistakes. Be it conscious or unconscious, it can only be through ongoing actions that structural racism continues. However, when we examine what admitting this requires, we can see all too clearly the challenges which we face. In admitting to ongoing 'blame', non-BAME people risk both their personal comfort and a degree of control over their reputation. In the first instance, individuals feel threatened when the image of themselves as 'not racist' is contradicted; secondly admission opens individuals up to scrutiny of their imperfections, not only in the past but the *present*. We are far more vulnerable in admitting these uncomfortable truths than we are in vehemently denouncing racism or declaring that we will now be anti-racist moving forward. Thus we see non-BAME people appearing far more comfortable with denunciation of racism which is in some way distanced, in their view, from their own lives. But to raise and discuss these same issues as having been committed, allowed, or unquestioned by themselves leads to far

more personal and social vulnerability. It is human nature to avoid this risk and discomfort, but to do so maintains a firm barrier to social progress.

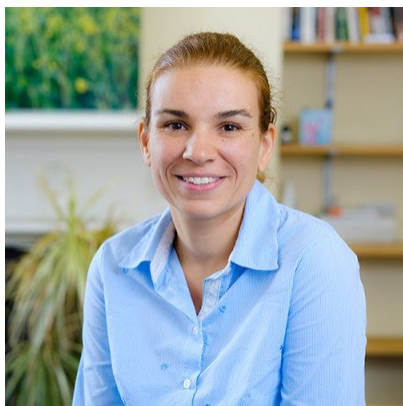
At the Wilberforce Institute, we seek to learn from historical slavery and related humanitarian crimes in order to reduce their existence today and in the future. What we can be sure of is that in seeking to address these issues we have to continue to question the stereotypes and assumptions that are embedded in our culture, and provide a platform in which admission of *ongoing* mistakes is exemplified and normalised. We must be open not only regarding the reality of the past but of the resultant situation of racial inequality in our society today. Fundamentally, it will be a willingness both to admit this and to learn accordingly which enables social progression.

Pushing against racism is a task that applies to everybody. By focusing upon a self-image we believe is not racist, we as allies risk prioritising self-soothing over the change we are outwardly pursuing. This practice sees individuals and institutions indulging in self-congratulation regarding behaviour we believe to be anti-racist, celebrating actions taken towards racial equality without acknowledging ongoing fault and trauma, denouncing racism without addressing our past culpability and ongoing mistakes, or distancing ourselves from the label of 'racist' when our behaviour has knowingly or unknowingly been so. Instead, we ought to seek vocal acceptance of not just past, but ongoing mistakes. Trying to distance ourselves from the label of 'racist' isn't going to create an environment where we can call one another out, accept misgivings and accept correction without taking personal offence. Only through the cultivation of a culture in which this acceptance of culpability is normalised can we move towards genuine societal growth, learning and ultimately, change.



‘Living with the Consequences of Slavery’ PhD Cluster

Posted on September 24, 2020



Dr Lorena Arocha

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This month we are delighted to welcome three new PhD students to the Wilberforce Institute. They are all part of the ‘Living with the Consequences of Slavery’ PhD Cluster, a strategic investment for the Wilberforce Institute and the University of Hull in this field.

The position we have taken with this PhD Cluster is that it is not evil people that create victims but systems. Criminal justice studies have historically been more concerned with the punishment of the offender, but our new students’ research sits with recent moves to re-centre attention critically on the relational shared experiences of victims/survivors and non-victims. Each of these individual projects therefore explores key questions that go beyond the individual person affected by these practices, examining instead the effects of systematic and rooted processes of exploitation, its relation with processes of victimhood and their intersection with questions of social justice and social rights.

The ‘Living with the Consequences of Slavery’ PhD Cluster examines contemporary forms of slavery from three different angles of critical victimology. The first project is led by Jennifer Nghishitende, who will be looking

at what happens after people have experienced exploitation, how people make sense of these experiences and how they then move on with their lives, especially in the longer-term, with an emphasis on questions of dignity and rights.



Jennifer Nghishitende

'Living with the Consequences of Slavery' PhD Research Cluster

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The second project is led by Isabel Arce Zelada, whose investigation centres on testimonies, in asylum courts and beyond, and the extent to which these deliver justice.



Isabel Arce Zelada

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The third project, led by Mavuto Kambochola Banda, focuses on tea plantations in Malawi. Mavuto will examine the unintended consequences of policy measures which are put in place to tackle contemporary forms of slavery. Such interventions can adversely affect the lives of those they intend to assist.



Mavuto Kambochola Banda

'Living with the Consequences of Slavery' PhD Research Cluster

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The 'Living with the consequences of slavery' Cluster will therefore look at these problematics from opposite directions: on the one hand, from the perspective of those who have experienced exploitation and its relation with victimisation processes in contemporary forms of slavery; and, on the other, from the perspective of those who have been disadvantaged as a result of humanitarian anti-slavery measures. This, we believe, offers an exceptional opportunity to gain a more comprehensive picture of the complexity of practices and processes that drive exploitation experiences as well as an in-depth understanding of the impact of these experiences in the long term.

The theme of critical victimology, which marks a new direction for the Wilberforce Institute, is composed of two strands. Alongside our investment in the PhD scholarships we are introducing an MA programme in Contemporary Slavery Studies and Critical Victimology, due to start in February 2021. The MA offers our new PhD students a platform and a community with whom to share their research. We are hoping they will inspire others to engage in this critical area of study.

We have high expectations for our new PhD students, and are looking forward to guiding and supporting them through their studies. They will be based at the Wilberforce Institute when they are not away on research, working with a team of supervisors across various disciplines, in Human Geography, Social Sciences, Criminology and Law. We are excited by the prospect of seeing their research projects develop as they grow as scholars.



Oriel Chambers, High Street, Hull – the home of the Wilberforce Institute.

Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on September 17, 2020



Professor Trevor Burnard

Director of the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

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Today Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute, provides a summary of two of his recent articles on Jamaican history.

'Slaves and Slavery in Kingston, 1770-1815,' *International Journal of Social History* 65 (2020), 39-65

If you wander down to the magnificent Kingston waterfront, you will see nothing which marks the fact that Kingston was the 'Ellis Island' of African American life in British America. It was the place where nearly 900,000 Africans were landed to begin a usually miserable and often foreshortened life as slaves working on sugar and other plantations and occasionally enjoying a slightly better life as an urban enslaved person in Kingston. Slavery and the slave trade were central to eighteenth-century Kingston and in turn Kingston is vital as a place to study so that we understand Jamaican and Atlantic slavery in the period of the Atlantic slave trade. But our knowledge of Kingston and its slaves is very limited. This article looks at slavery in Kingston from when the slave trade was at its height, between the early 1770s, through to the immediate aftermath of the ending of the slave trade in Jamaica in 1807.

This article summarizes what we know about slavery in Kingston already and provides some empirical data which can be helpful in drawing attention to Kingston's importance in the history of slavery. The Atlantic slave trade in Kingston was easily the largest business in eighteenth-century British America and had a very distinctive character. Contrary to popular legend, African captives were seldom sold directly from ships in what was described as a 'scramble', when potential buyers pushed and shoved each other in order to acquire valuable property. Slaves cost too much money for any factor selling slaves to allow such chaos to occur. Instead, Africans were purchased in large lots by carefully selected merchants and were moved to merchant houses where they were corralled ('like sheep', Olaudah Equiano lamented) and then sold usually in small lots to planters. In short, the slave market in Kingston harbor was a wholesale market and was followed by retail sales. Everyone took their cut at all times and the money that flowed was so substantial as to make Kingston and its slave merchants very wealthy.

The manner of slave sales meant that enslaved Africans experienced the transformation of themselves into 'commodities' first in Kingston. That was a profound, and profoundly disturbing, human moment. From Kingston, they were dispersed throughout Jamaica, in ways that made enslaved populations very polyglot – Africans from various ships from various places in West Africa were purchased together and sent to very ethnically diverse plantations. Some enslaved people, of course, stayed in Kingston, and I discuss what they did as tradespeople, domestics and sailors in the article.

One would think that the end of a lucrative slave trade would spell disaster for Kingston and its wealthy merchant class. Surprisingly, this did not happen. Why not? What seems to have occurred, although much more work needs to be done on this subject, is that Kingston moved quickly from being a major slave trading entrepot to being the centre of trade with Spanish America. It was a depot from which British manufactured goods were dispersed throughout the Spanish American empire. In an ironic restatement of the famous thesis by Eric Williams that slavery created capitalism, after 1807 capitalism remade slavery as capitalism in the form of British manufactured goods stimulated the slave system and slave economy in places like Cuba.

The slave trade ended in 1807 but slavery remained in Kingston, I finish this article with the perspective of the enslaved, and their participation in festivals, such as Jonkunnu. A spatial inversion occurred during these carnivals, during

which black entertainers invaded the spaces of white authority. Slavery was complicated and diverse in Kingston, as in the rest of Jamaica.



James Hakewill (1875), *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica: Kingston and Port Royal*

'Security, Taxation, and the Imperial System in Jamaica, 1721-1782,' *Early American Studies* 18, 4 (Fall, 2020)

Aaron Graham of Oxford and myself have written an article, soon forthcoming in *Early American Studies*, which examines the question of how white Jamaicans ensured their security in a colony where the majority of the inhabitants were enslaved people who hated them and which was periodically subject to severe challenges to white authority coming from black people. The most serious eighteenth-century challenges were the first Maroon War in the 1730s and Tacky's Revolt in 1760-61. These challenges were existential threats to the Jamaican state and the people – in Britain and among colonial elites – who ran that state. What these threats showed was that Jamaica was a society at war.

Societies at war needed to be well funded – something Britain was very good at in the eighteenth century as it developed and perfected a fiscal-military state, designed to fight wars without incurring state bankruptcy.

White Jamaicans welcomed a strong fiscal-military state as the basis for colonial rule because they realized the perilous nature of their rule in their peculiar society. White Jamaicans were willing to pay relatively high rates of taxation to support a powerful and assertive state in schemes of settlement and security. The schemes for settlement did not work, mainly due to dire demographic conditions for white people, but white Jamaicans' security concerns were generally answered, leading to a settler society that was reasonably content with what the state offered (unlike in the settler societies developed by their American cousins, which opted for rebellion in the 1770s) right up until the end of the American Revolution. White Jamaicans paid relatively high taxes willingly because they were satisfied with what they received from the state and because they were wealthy enough to afford high rates of taxation. Furthermore, in this period white Jamaicans believed that they had a significant stake in the processes by which taxes were collected and spent. Jamaica provides a case study of how the imperial state worked satisfactorily for imperial rulers and those colonists whom they ruled when both the state and colonial settlers shared common beliefs and where negotiations made it clear that the interests of all parties coincided.

Though an extreme example, by virtue of its exposed strategic position, the demographic imbalance between whites and blacks, and its economic importance, Jamaica differed in degree rather than kind from other colonies and territories of the British Atlantic. Eighteenth-century statesmen as different as Charles Townshend, Benjamin Franklin and Edmund Burke understood these imperial realities. Less sophisticated thinkers like Lord North and George Grenville, however, were seduced by plans that forced the empire into one colonial model and thought that the same solutions were applicable to the problems throughout the empire. The American War of Independence resulted from a failure to understand this fundamental reality about the need to treat colonies within an imperial framework according to their local circumstances, rather than as if they were all Jamaica and equally committed to the expansion of the colonial fiscal-military state.



Map of Jamaica with relief and other marks, 1763.

What is freedom to you?

Posted on September 15, 2020

Wilberforce Institute Webinar, Tuesday 22 September 2020

On Tuesday 22 September between 16:00 and 18:00 BST, Cristina Talens, Head of Business Risk Assessment Services in the Wilberforce Institute, will be leading a major discussion on the nature of freedom today: 'What is Freedom to You?'

This is not a discussion between academics. Instead it involves individuals who work at the forefront of identifying exploitative practices on the ground today – you will find their details below. Cristina Talens has assembled a stellar panel of experts from a diverse range of backgrounds in the areas of ethical trade and supply chains. Our speakers will be talking about what freedom means to them, and about the one thing they believe would have the greatest impact in ensuring that people can be free from exploitation. If you would like to join us, please click on the link at the bottom of the page.

[Cristina Talens](#) – Head of Business Risk Assessment Service at the Wilberforce Institute. Cristina Talens has more than 20 years' experience in ethical trading, sustainability and supply chains. She has worked with migrant workers on modern slavery issues in the UK, France and Italy. In 2000, she joined the United Nations (UN) Global Programme Against Trafficking and Smuggling of Human Beings, and today she regularly conducts social audit assignments and risk assessments on behalf of major UK supermarkets.

[Alfonso Herias Garcia](#) – an Ethics and Human Rights specialist currently heading the Ethics team at G's Fresh, one of Europe's leading fresh produce companies. He has over 10 years' experience in the fields of social sustainability, and is responsible for the strategic direction and delivery of G's Fresh Human Rights Programme, covering over 10, 000 direct workers in places such as the UK, Spain, Eastern Europe, Senegal, and the United States. Alfonso has been an active member of the Food Network for Ethical Trade and the Spanish Ethical Trade Forums. He holds a degree in Political Science and a Masters in International Relations.

[Sam Ludlow Taylor](#) – Ethical Trade Manager at the John Lewis Partnership with a focus on the Waitrose brand, a role she has held for 2 years. Sam began her

career working as a merchandiser at Homebase and then joined Debenhams where she moved into ethical trade and human rights about 12 years ago. Sam also spent time working for a UK based clothing agent and a soft drinks brand, looking at Tier 1 factories, raw material and commodities sourcing.

[Rosey Hurst](#) – founded Impactt in 1997 to make what works for workers work for business. She founded Sedex and launched the Benefits for Business and Workers Programme which links improving productivity with a better deal for workers. She is passionate about re-humanising the workplace, serves on the Ecovadis Technical Committee and is a member of the Responsible Investment Advisory Council at BMO Global Asset Management.

[David Camp](#) – Founder and Chief Executive of allianceHR, a not for profit/profit with purpose consultancy. He delivers collaborative programmes to drive systemic human rights improvements in global supply chains. This includes *Stronger Together*, a multi-stakeholder collaborative initiative supporting organisations to tackle modern slavery; *Fast Forward*, a next generation supply chains labour standards audit and improvement programme; and the *Responsible Recruitment Toolkit*, a one-stop capacity-building online toolkit to support supply chains to embed responsible recruitment management systems. David is the Chief Executive of the Association of Labour Providers and received the 2018 Marsh Award for Outstanding Contribution to the fight against Modern Slavery.

[Nick Kightley](#) – Strategic Lead for Food, Farming and Fisheries at the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). His overseas working experience includes 13 years in the rural Southern Philippines supporting small farmers and their communities and setting up his own rural enterprise there. He worked for 12 years at Traidcraft Exchange as Asia Programme Manager, promoting fair trade businesses, and for 8 years with the Waste and Resources Action Programme, working with SMEs and community based environmental sustainability enterprises. In his ETI role, Nick is able to influence the way business is done and industry functions on a global scale.

[Steve Gibbons](#) – Co-founder of Ergon with over 25 years' experience in labour and human rights issues. He has provided consultancy for the International Labour Organisation, the World Bank Group, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Commission, London 2012, the ETI, the UK Department for International Development and the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe. Steve has particular expertise in facilitating stakeholder dialogue and in devising and managing grievance and dispute resolution mechanisms in line with the UN Guiding Principles. He is an expert member of the Independent Complaints Mechanism of the sustainable investment company DEG, and FMO, the Dutch development bank. He is a UK-qualified lawyer, a regular conference speaker and the founder of the UK's leading online training company for lawyers, CPDCast®.

[Hannah Davis](#) – more than 15 years' experience managing international development programmes, with a focus on sustainable and ethical supply chains and the empowerment of smallholder farmers. She has worked with cocoa, coffee, sugar and nut producer organisations across sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America to support improvements in agricultural practice, product quality, market access, governance and women's participation. Since 2018, Hannah has worked for UK charity the Lorna Young Foundation, developing and promoting its Farmers' Voice Radio initiative. This brings together smallholder farmers, agricultural experts and supply chain partners to share their knowledge, experience and expertise.

[Pins Brown](#) – Head of Ethical and Sustainable Sourcing at The Body Shop. Her working life has involved both suits and muddy boots and has focussed on improving labour conditions in supply chains especially for the least powerful. This has seen her involved in a wide variety of ventures from Mali to Kazakhstan, from agriculture to oil and gas and ASOS to Oxfam, working with large and small businesses, NGOs, trade unions and international organisations. She has also served on advisory panels on UK prison labour and for the Better Cotton Initiative.



Cristina Talens in the field

Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on September 10, 2020



John Oldfield

Professor of Slavery and Emancipation

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Today Professor John Oldfield provides a summary of his new book on transatlantic abolitionism.

The Ties that Bind: Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Reform, c. 1820-1865 (Liverpool University Press, September 2020).

My new book, *The Ties that Bind*, explores two inter-related themes that are at the heart of my ongoing interest in anti-slavery. The first of these is opinion building; that is, the means whereby activists created a constituency for 'abolition'. The second is international anti-slavery, or, for these purposes, the Anglo-American origins and complexion of a lot of abolitionist activity.

During the 1820s and 1830s, the abolitionist movement entered a new phase, as 'second-wave' reformers switched their attention from the slave trade to the institution of slavery itself. While it is tempting to see the drive towards the abolition of slavery ('emancipation') as part of specific national histories (1833

in the case of Britain; 1865 in the case of the USA), anti-slavery also rested on dense international networks that transcended national or state boundaries. American activists, to take an obvious example, were greatly encouraged by passage of the UK's Slavery Emancipation Act of 1833. As I make clear, these 'Atlantic affinities' ran deep, evident in the deference that American activists, black and white, paid towards figures such as William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, as well as the elevation of 1 August 1834, the anniversary of emancipation in the British Caribbean, to a central place in the American abolitionist calendar. In these different ways, American activists drew inspiration from Britain's example, just as in a lot of their public discourse they created a continuous link between the British past and the American present, a way of looking at anti-slavery that underscored its distinctive origins and history.

In the same way, American activists adapted many British strategies, particularly when it came to opinion building. On both sides of the Atlantic, anti-slavery rested on organizational structures that stressed the importance of grass-roots activism. The circulation of books and tracts, anti-slavery images and artefacts were all part of ongoing efforts to create unity and purpose, even in the face of determined opposition. So, too, was the employment of itinerant anti-slavery 'agents' or lecturers. First pioneered in the UK, the agency system reached its apogee in the USA. These men and women were lightning rods whose job it was to keep the anti-slavery flame alive. As figures such as William Lloyd Garrison, Abby Kelley and Frederick Douglass demonstrated, an eloquent agent could electrify audiences, seemingly bending them to their will. The proliferation of anti-slavery agents, particularly during the 1830s and 1840s, speaks volumes about the organizational skills of American activists, as well as the ongoing relevance of Britain's influence and example.

Then there was the question of politics. From its early origins, abolitionism had always been conceived of as a political movement, hence the emphasis on petitions and petitioning. During the nineteenth century, however, activists on both sides of the Atlantic stepped up their pressure on elected representatives through the 'pledging' of prospective MPs, or what in the USA was called the 'interrogatory system'. First developed during the 1820s, these tactics challenged the independence of representatives, at the same time forging a new kind of popular politics that was at once loud and insistent. Above all, this was a transatlantic dialogue. While it is true that there were important differences at play here, not least the importance that some American activists

placed on third-party politics, political abolitionists increasingly spoke a common language that set a premium on a style of confrontational politics that proved difficult to silence or ignore.

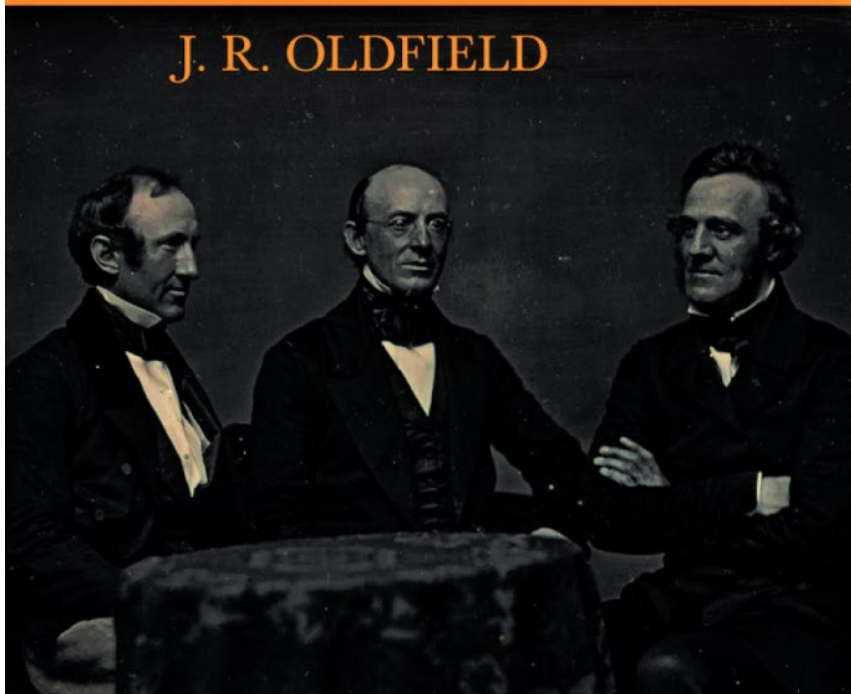
However, American anti-slavery was always more than a pale imitation of British anti-slavery. As I reveal, American activists developed their own distinctive (anti-slavery) culture, revealing a willingness to innovate that sometimes set them at odds with their British counterparts. Nineteenth-century debates over the reception of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), for instance, reveal a growing sense that American abolitionism posed a challenge to British norms and values, as well as to the ability of British activists to control a message that they were sometimes inclined to regard as peculiarly their own. Nevertheless, interventions of this kind undoubtedly helped to re-energize British anti-slavery, particularly during the 1840s and 1850s. The same thing was true of anti-slavery songs (another American innovation), sensational slave narratives and lectures tours undertaken by prominent African-American abolitionists, chief among them Frederick Douglass, who delivered no fewer than 300 lectures during his nineteen-month tour of Britain in 1845-6. These black visitors brought immediacy and authenticity to the anti-slavery movement. Yet, at the same time, the spontaneity of their performances, as well as their willingness to take risks, could sometimes blur the distinction between 'instruction' and 'entertainment', making for experiences that challenged many British expectations.

Anti-slavery was one of the most successful reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Part of that success was down to inspirational leadership and, among rank-and-file members, a passionate dedication to the cause. But, as I argue, organizational skills played a part, too. Turning ideas and sentiments into deliberate action is a complex, multi-faceted process, demanding a ready appreciation of market dynamics, as well as an awareness of social, political and cultural trends, especially when it comes to understanding how people access information. Historians are understandably wary about drawing lessons from the past. Nevertheless, there is something highly instructive about the opinion-building techniques developed by nineteenth-century abolitionists; their engagement with the electoral process; their attention to grass-roots activism; and, above all, the emphasis they placed on international co-operation.

THE TIES THAT BIND

*Transatlantic Abolitionism in the
Age of Reform, c. 1820–1865*

J. R. OLDFIELD



Children Falling Through the Net

Posted on September 3, 2020



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The Wilberforce Institute is home to a number of students whose PhD research focuses on child migration and exploitation, in both historical and contemporary contexts. Four recently came together to explore the connections and the points of difference between their studies. James Baker, Jasmine Holding Brown and Saphia Fleury are first year students in the Falling through the Net cluster, and Charlotte Russell is in her second year. They share their thoughts below.

Our connections:

All four of our research projects are concerned with the situations and processes, emerging in the context of migration, that place children at risk of

exploitation. Although approached in different ways, and applied in disparate geographical, cultural and historical contexts, there are common concerns relating to issues of vulnerability and victimhood.

Vulnerabilities are understood, in part, as a condition of childhood, since to varying degrees children depend on adults for protection and survival. However, settlement in unfamiliar territories brings with it cultural and linguistic displacement and furthers the risks of exploitation. This raises important concerns regarding children on the move, who not only have specific needs but are also the bearers of rights. This in turn focuses attention on the power differentials between adults and children and the relationships between children and the state. It is notable in all our projects that the experiences of migrant children are varied and complex, but also, crucially, that their perspectives are often missing.

Victimhood represents the second of our common concerns. We all seek to balance the acknowledgment of vulnerabilities with the risk of imposing culturally determined images of victimhood upon migrant children. In managing these issues our work is linked by a critical approach, not the notion of 'victim' in itself, but to the imposition of a particular form of passive victimhood upon children who have experienced or are experiencing trauma or harm in relation to forced migration.

Our differences:

James and heritage

My particular focus is on how heritage has been utilised to preserve and represent the experience of forced child emigration. As a historian who is interested in memory studies and public history, I am concentrating largely on how museums and memorials have chosen to represent the topic of forced child emigration from Britain to Australia. This research raises a number of important issues; not only do I need to investigate the role that former child migrants themselves have played in defining their own heritage, but I also need to understand how the wider public relates to this history and their contemporary moral judgments of child migrant schemes. I will also be looking to make a comparative analysis of the British and Australian heritage regimes at large, in addition to how the creation of heritage markers in relation to the Home Children can facilitate the wider process of historical redress and reconciliation.

Jasmine and rescue

My project focuses on child rescue – the development of social movements aimed at ‘rescuing’ children, the agencies involved and the ideologies underpinning their practices. I am looking at forced child migration (from Britain to Canada) and compulsory residential schooling (for Indigenous Canadian children) in the 20th Century, to explore the ways in which these drastic, and, ultimately harmful practices were legitimised. Factors that were significant in cementing these forms of ‘child rescue’ include, I suggest, the assumed moral authority of white middle-class philanthropists, religious institutions and other agencies of the state, in addition to the alignment of child rescue with imperialist and colonial political agendas, namely white settlement and assimilation. These cases raise important questions about the nature of the ‘parent state’: who is entitled to act on behalf of children; how are these arrangements constructed, which potentially conflicting interests do they also serve, and to whom are they accountable?

Saphia and the environment

My research looks specifically at modern-day child migration in the context of environmental change, particularly climate change. In my analysis of legal frameworks for the protection of children, I found that, while sufficient legal protections do exist, these are frequently not applied to children on the move. Moreover, there is a protection gap for people migrating as a result of environmental change, who do not fit the category of ‘refugees’. As a result, many are pushed into exploitative situations, or suffer abuse or an inability to realise their human rights. As climate change reduces the number of people who can sustain a livelihood at home, we might expect the international community to provide support and sustainable solutions for those who need to move. Yet in the context of climate change, the issue of ‘agency’ becomes muddled; more so when considering the decisions made by children who leave their homes in search of a better life.

Charlotte and encampment

In my research, the refugee camp becomes the focus of attention as I assess the role of power and responsibility in the management of such camps. My study seeks to evaluate how these power dynamics, operating within the bounded and politically contested zone of the refugee camp, influence the embodiment

and enactment of a rights consciousness among the young refugees living within them. Children who have experienced or are experiencing trauma suffer the imposition of a particular form of passive victimhood or harm in relation to forced migration. As a result, a key issue which my work aims to address is the effective representation of the experiences of young refugees in camps, without homogenisation or groupism. I'm seeking to balance evidencing young refugees' expressions of agency with the acknowledgement of their complex and varied individual experiences of 'childhood'.

Thank you for your interest in our research. We will be adding other blogs as our work develops.



Children photographed as they prepare to leave Britain in the 1960s.

Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on August 27, 2020



Professor Trevor Burnard

Director of the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

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Today Trevor Burnard, Director of the Wilberforce Institute, provides a summary of two of his recent articles on slavery, capitalism and labour

*'Slavery and the New History of Capitalism,' (with Giorgio Riello), *Journal of Global History* 15, 2 (2020), 1-20.*

In this largely historiographical essay, Giorgio Riello and I look at the relationship between slavery and capitalism, made famous 75 years ago by Eric Williams, by looking in particular at scholarship produced by an American-based historiographical movement that goes by the name 'the New History of Capitalism.' The new history of capitalism (NHC) places a great deal of emphasis on slavery as a crucial world institution. Slavery, it is alleged, arose out of, and underpinned, capitalist development. This article starts by showing the intellectual and scholarly foundations of some of the broad conclusions of the NHC. It proceeds by arguing that capitalist transformation must rely on a global framework of analysis. The article considers three critiques in relation to the NHC. First, the NHC overemphasizes the importance of coercion to economic growth in the eighteenth century. We argue that what has been called 'war

capitalism' might be better served by an analysis in which the political economy of European states and empires, rather than coercion, is a key factor in the transformation of capitalism at a global scale. Second, in linking slavery to industrialization, the NHC proposes a misleading chronology. Cotton, produced in large quantities in the nineteenth-century United States came too late to cause an Industrial Revolution in Britain which, we argue, developed gradually from the latter half of the seventeenth century and which was well established by the 1790s, when cotton started to arrive from the American South. During early industrialization, sugar, not cotton, was the main plantation crop in the Americas. Third, the NHC is overly concentrated on production and especially on slave plantation economies. It underplays the 'power of consumption', where consumers came to purchase increasing amounts of plantation goods, including sugar, rice, indigo, tobacco, cotton and coffee. To see slavery's role in fostering the preconditions of industrialization and the Great Divergence, we must tell a story about slavery's place in supporting the expansion of consumption, as well as a story about production.

We conclude that scholars need to consider, in discussing slavery's contribution to economic growth in eighteenth-century European empires, that we need to return to the global. If we accept the NHC's totalizing tendency, the Americas, later narrowed to the United States, become the new core in a Wallersteinian narrative. This narrative is to the detriment of explanations that have emphasized a multiplicity of factors in the connections between capitalism and slavery; that have adopted comparative methodologies (between Europe and China, or Europe and India); and that have provided much thought on the economic mechanisms at play, beyond the commonplace view that the violence of thugs always wins. Thugs may win a great deal, but they win only when the structures that maintain their power make their thuggery viable.

"I know I have to Work." The Moral Economy of Labor Among Enslaved Women in Berbice, 1819-1834'

In Trevor Burnard and Sophie White, eds. *Hearing Enslaved Voices: African and Indian Slave Testimony in British and French America, 1700-1848* (New York: Routledge, 2020), ch. 9.

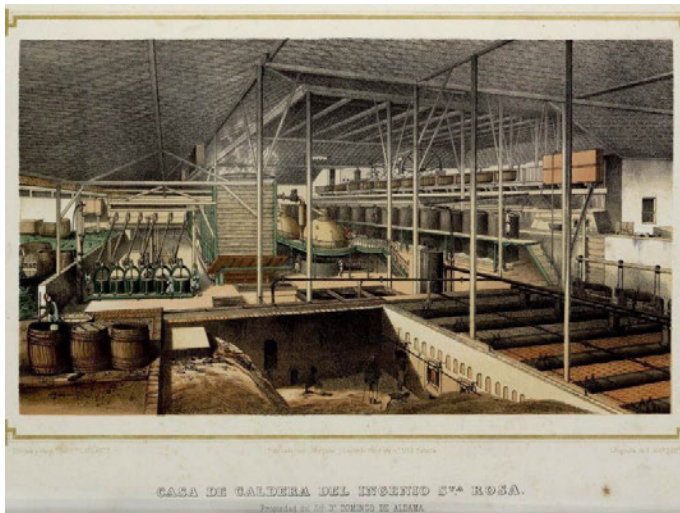
I have contributed a chapter to a co-edited book, coming out this northern hemisphere summer with Routledge, edited with Sophie White of Notre Dame, in which I look at an aspect of enslaved women's lives in the sugar colony of

Berbice, later part of Guyana, in north-eastern South America. It looks at slave testimony (as opposed to the better-known nineteenth-century genre of the slave narrative). Most chapters in this book, including mine, look at how enslaved people shaped testimony, often when they were in court and often when they were in great trouble. My court documents are a little different, as they are collected from women who are complaining about their treatment, usually unsatisfactorily, rather than enslaved people being charged with offences.

This chapter will feed into a larger project, utilising a very rich set of documents preserved at the National Archives – the Fiscal and Protector of Slaves records – in which enslaved people often give close to direct testimony about their lives and circumstances. In this project allied to the book I show how the Fiscal's Records of Berbice, 1819–1834, provide rich evidence, direct from enslaved people, about what mattered to slaves trapped within enslavement and about what remedies they sought for their problems. Enslaved women were able to bring complaints before the Fiscal and the Protector of Slaves. A great majority of their complaints concerned the work they were forced to do as plantation workers. Such work was not gender-neutral. Enslaved women were employed as field workers more than were men and suffered enormous hardship to their health and even more to their ability to look after their families, especially infant children. This chapter shows that enslaved women had clear expectations on what they were owed from their master, based on their understanding of the moral economy between planters and enslaved women where the relationship was viewed by them as reciprocal, if unequal, in which both sides had rights and obligations that needed to be followed.

I concentrate on women's complaints about work, as this is the area which elicited easily the most complaints about unfairness and mistreatment. Women were insistent that they should be expected to perform a reasonable amount of work defined according to customary rules and adjusted to the strength and competence of individual workers. Moreover, it had to be adjusted so that women's special expectations relating to child care could be respected. Women complained even when, as was common, their complaints were dismissed. They wanted their voices to be heard. The Fiscals' returns are a rich body of sources that outline at length the numerous times when women sought to have their concerns aired. Those concerns changed over time and as British officials attempted to circumscribe masters' actions through such things as the Amelioration Act of 1826.

Women frequently made complaints after that date that they had been illegally whipped. The many post-1826 cases indicate that managers continued to fail to realise that enslaved women in Berbice were involved not just in production but also in reproduction – they were mothers as well as workers. The testimonies embedded in the Fiscal and Protector’s records allow us to recover a little bit of the perspective of the enslaved in the period of amelioration.



Interior of a Cuban sugar mill

Wilberforce Institute Webinars at the Freedom Festival

Posted on August 24, 2020

Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th September, 2020.

Whilst September marks the return to learning in British schools and universities, for the City of Hull it also heralds the beginning of a four-day festival that has grown to become one of the cultural highlights of the year. Since 2007 the [Freedom Festival](#), beginning on Friday 4th September this year, provides the opportunity for artists and champions of freedom in all its forms to raise awareness about human rights. Whilst this year's activities are centred firmly on virtual cultural gatherings, the [programme](#) provides something for everyone.

The [Wilberforce Institute](#) has played a key role in supporting the festival since its foundation during the [Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade in 2007](#). This year we are delighted to be contributing four 'Freedom Talks' that are part of their exciting programme. From the director of our Institute, to PhD students at the beginning of their academic journey, members of the Institute are looking forward to sharing the fruits of their research with audiences around the world. All four events are free to attend, delivered online, and don't require any booking. In this blog we aim to provide you with a taster of these activities that we hope will encourage you to join us to find out more.

Black Peril

Throughout this summer, British streets, squares and bridges that were the scene of violent race riots in 1919, were transformed into dynamic stages, galleries and plinths to creatively explore this past. It's easy to get the idea that mobs of 'woke' millennials are suddenly forcing Britons to confront 'diversity' for the first time. However, from Glasgow to Barry (via Hull), and indeed Chicago and New York the entire western world was engulfed in racial conflict over 100 years ago. The backdrop of today's civil unrest, statues being torn down and serious soul searching across Britain, mean that there has rarely been a more opportune moment to explore ignored British history, radically challenging the way 'British', 'White' and 'Working-Class' identities have been constructed. As

Soweto Kinch has argued, '1919 established and entrenched hierarchies of racism that have yet to be undone'.

Two times Mobo Award winning, Mercury nominated British Saxophonist [Soweto Kinch](#) will be talking to [Dr Nicholas Evans](#) from the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull about the Race Riots that took place in Hull in 1919-1920. This talk precedes the online performance of [#BlackPeril2020](#) for five nights between Monday, 14th and Friday, 18th September 2020.

Watch at <https://www.freedomfestival.co.uk/freedom-talks-black-peril-2020/> on Saturday, 5th September 2020, 1-2pm.

Join the live Q&A at [@WilberforceHull](#) or [@FreedomFestHull](#) on Saturday, 5th September 2020, 2-3pm using the hashtag #FreedomTalks.

Tacky's Revolt

This webinar assembles a stellar cast of academics, all with specialist knowledge in the area, to discuss the largest slave revolt in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world, an uprising that laid bare the interconnectedness of Europe, Africa, and America, shook the foundations of empire, and reshaped ideas of race and popular belonging. Chaired by [Diana Paton](#), William Robertson Professor at the University of Edinburgh (author of *The Cultural Politics of Obeah*), five academics discuss their understanding of [Tacky's Rebellion](#).

The panellists include: [Vincent Brown](#), Charles Warren Professor of History at Harvard University (author of *Tacky's Revolt*); [Edward Rugemer](#), Associate Professor of History at Yale University (author of *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance*); [Lissa Bollettino](#), Associate Professor of History at Framingham University (author of the forthcoming *Slavery, War and Britain's Eighteenth Century Atlantic Empire*); [Robert Hanserd](#), Assistant Professor of History at Columbia College, Chicago (author of *Identity, Spirit and Freedom in the Atlantic World*); and our very own [Trevor Burnard](#), Wilberforce Professor in the Wilberforce Institute (author of *Jamaica in the Age of Revolution*).

[Erica Charters](#), Associate Professor of History at the University of Oxford (author of *Disease, War and the Imperial State*), will offer a final commentary.

Watch at <https://www.freedomfestival.co.uk/freedom-talks-tackys-revolt/> on Saturday, 5th September 2020, 3-5pm.

Join the live Q&A at [@WilberforceHull](#) or [@FreedomFestHull](#) on Saturday, 5th September 2020, 5-6pm using the hashtag #FreedomTalks.

Falling through the Net

Around the world it is the most vulnerable who are often the victims of coerced labour. Such bondage is nothing new, and yet explorations of why children are especially at risk from exploitation has not received as much scholarly attention as other aspects of slavery studies.

Three members of the 'Falling through the Net' research cluster at the Institute, [James Baker](#), [Jasmine Holding Brown](#) and [Saphia Fleury](#) will each talk about their individual projects in this webinar. James' focus is on how heritage has been utilised to preserve and represent the experience of forced child emigration to Australia. Jasmine is looking at child rescue in Canada – the development of social movements aimed at 'rescuing' children, the agencies involved and the ideologies underpinning their practices. Saphia's research concerns migration in the context of environmental change, particularly climate change.

Watch at <https://www.freedomfestival.co.uk/freedom-talks-falling-through-the-net/> on Sunday, 6th September 2020, 1-2pm.

Join the live Q&A at [@WilberforceHull](#) or [@FreedomFestHull](#) on Sunday, 6th September 2020, 2-3pm using the hashtag #FreedomTalks.

- Modern slavery in Humberside

The [Humber Modern Slavery Partnership](#) is a strategic partnership of front line organisations across the Humberside Police area dedicated to tackling all forms of modern slavery. Over 60 agencies have joined together to fight slavery and trafficking, and their Coordinator [Andrew Smith](#) and Vice Chair [Alicia Kidd](#) explain how forms of modern slavery are found in this region.

In this webinar, they discuss the local picture of modern slavery, looking at who the victims are and what they experience, how they become exploited, how they

manage to leave the situation, what happens to them once they are out of exploitation and what the practitioner response looks like. They also consider the impact of Covid-19 and how this has changed the way that exploiters operate.

Watch at <https://www.freedomfestival.co.uk/freedom-talks-modern-slavery-in-humberside/> on Sunday, 6th September 2020, 4-5pm.

Join the live Q&A at [@WilberforceHull](https://twitter.com/WilberforceHull) or [@FreedomFestHull](https://twitter.com/FreedomFestHull) on Sunday, 6th September 2020, 5-6-pm using the hashtag #FreedomTalks.



Image by kind permission of Soweto Kinch.

Covid-19 and the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

Posted on August 20, 2020



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During the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, 'stay at home' measures have paid significant dividends in reducing disease contagion and rates of infection in areas where they have been heeded. While such measures should continue to be encouraged until it is safe to venture out, they have simultaneously been matched with increased risks to children of online sexual exploitation.

Online activity and increased risk to online sexual exploitation

Following worldwide lockdown measures and attendant increases in screen time on the part of children, there have been significant increases in reports of the suspected *online sexual exploitation of children* – a term denoting the third-party engagement of a child in online sexual activities. Such activities could include an online predator encouraging and receiving from a child a sexually explicit image which is then distributed to child porn groups. The online sexual exploitation of the child could likewise involve the use of an initial sexually explicit image sent by the child as a tool to threaten him/her into sending

additional photos and/or money or else face the risk of the exposure of such images to family, friends and/or other members of the public. The risks posed to children from online exploitation during the Covid-19 pandemic have been compounded by a reduced capacity of technical staff to monitor and respond to both real and potential cases, as some content moderators work from home.

As seen in a U.S. context, the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is said to have recorded a [106% increase](#) in suspected cases of child sexual exploitation (via CyberTipline reports) when March 2019 and March 2020 reports were compared. Canada has similarly seen a spike in online reporting with its online sexual exploitation of children tipline – [Cybertip.ca](#) – recording a [6.6% spike](#) in reports in April when compared to the three previous months. While such figures are not representative of actual confirmed cases of online child sexual exploitation or the extensiveness of the online risks posed to children from around the globe, they do show an alarmingly higher reporting pattern than other reporting periods, demonstrating increased possibilities for the exploitation of children. Serving as a complement to the increased reporting of the online sexual exploitation of children has been evidence of the increased demand and access to sexually explicit content featuring children. The Indian Child Protection Fund (ICPF), for example, has reported that following the imposition of restrictive lockdown measures on March 23, 2020, there was an [increased search](#) for online content using featured words and phrases such as “child porn”, “sexy child” and “teen sex videos” between March 24 and March 26, 2020. The European law enforcement agency, Europol, has likewise indicated a rise in those seeking child abuse material online.

Shared responsibility for the online security of children

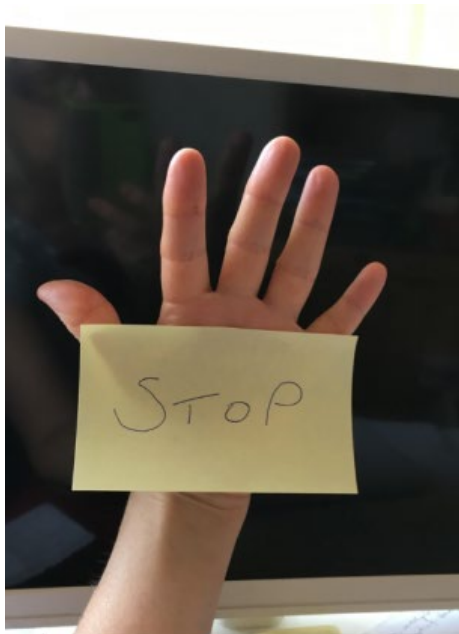
The right of the child to protection is enshrined in international law, most notably under the landmark child rights convention – the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – under which most states are legally bound. Amidst other specific expressions in favour of the protection of the child, an unmistakable balance has in some instances been made between a recognition of the duty of the state towards children, and a recognition and consideration of the role of parents in the care, maintenance, and upbringing of the child. For example, Art 3(2) of the CRC states that “States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her...”. In light of the current pandemic

and the increased risk of children to online sexual exploitation, the international legal juxtaposition of the protective duties and considerations of states towards children and the responsibilities of parents and guardians towards them serves as a reminder of the shared efforts that need to be taken towards the protection of the child. The need for multiple stakeholder involvement in the protection of the child is further reinforced by the recognition provided in the Preamble of the Convention on Cybercrime of (i) the need for co-operation between states and private industry in combating cybercrime and (ii) the belief that an effective fight against cybercrime requires increased, rapid and well-functioning international cooperation in criminal matters.

Bolstering action

In times of normalcy as in times of turmoil the greatest test of humanity is often how we treat and respond to the most vulnerable. As nations and people grapple with Covid-19, associated health concerns, and changes to accustomed lifestyles, care needs to be taken to ensure that the protection of children is given priority, and that specific, strategic and concerted attention and action are directed towards preventing and effectively responding to the online sexual exploitation of children. In the latter regard, action could include, but should not be limited to: the fostering of open communication with children by parents and guardians and the use of parental controls on devices used by children; the provision of training on online safety to children by educational establishments; government efforts to ensure that child protection teams are equipped to raise awareness and provide protective support to children and families, even if working remotely; industry efforts to install barriers that would limit the avenues through which online predators could gain access to children; and civil society efforts to report real and suspected cases of the online sexual exploitation of children to local authorities and site administrators, while also desisting from sharing sexualised content of children to unofficial parties.

As we face an unprecedented health crisis, there is some strength and comfort that could be drawn from the fact that fervent and effective action in the face of adversity is by no means unprecedented!



WARNING

*KNOW THE
SIGNS*

STOP CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Modern Slavery Partnership Workshops

Posted on August 13, 2020



Dr Alicia Kidd

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I am currently leading on a project funded by the Modern Slavery Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. This project sees the development of a resource pack of innovative training workshops which aim to improve practitioner responses and engagement around various aspects of modern slavery. This resource will be shared with all regional [Modern Slavery Partnerships](#) across England and Wales in order to provide them with the tools they need to be able to deliver engaging training sessions to their partners at a pace, and in an order, that suits the needs of their region.

To ensure that each workshop is of maximum relevance to its audience, I am supported on this project by partners from the [Humber Modern Slavery Partnership](#), the [University of Nottingham's Rights Lab](#), the [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority](#) and [Fresca Group](#) (a supplier of fruit and vegetables to the UK). These partners are using their expertise to provide real life insight into the experiences of victims of different forms of modern slavery in the UK, and

also to offer advice on best practice for prevention, response and victim support both for frontline practitioners and for businesses.

In order to develop effective and engaging workshops, each one is written as a standalone exercise and is targeted at a different audience. There are workshops specifically for businesses, recruitment agencies, non-governmental organisations and frontline practitioners such as police, healthcare providers and local authorities. Each workshop is developed with its specific audience in mind and is supported and contextualised by legislation and policies relevant to the target audience which have been developed into accessible handouts. These handouts offer attendees straightforward summaries of complex information outlining key statutory responsibilities, points to consider and ways in which the provisions of policies can be implemented in different situations.

Instead of offering training in the 'regular' sense, of one expert running through definitions and statistics of modern slavery, signs to spot and possible ways to respond, these workshops place the attendees as the experts of their respective organisations. There is no single 'leader' of the training, but instead, attendees are divided into groups with peers that they would not normally work with in order to maximise the potential to learn about the capacities and capabilities of other organisations local to their own. Each group is supported by a facilitator with knowledge of modern slavery. From running pilot versions of these workshops, we have discovered that open conversation training like this allows for attendees to share experiences, insights and knowledge which they rarely have the chance to divulge in typical teacher-student training.

Each workshop is based on a different scenario of modern slavery, whereby attendees receive small sections of information as the session progresses. Each piece of the scenario builds upon the previous piece and, as in a real life situation, the attendees must use only the information they have in order to identify what the situation could be indicative of, whether a response is required and when, who would be responsible for leading a response and what the most effective ways of dealing with the situation would be. After each section of the scenario has been discussed, the groups are brought back together to share and debate ideas. Here, the facilitators are also able to offer the advised actions that the project team has devised in response to each section of the scenarios.

The scenarios have all been developed based on the experiences of victims of modern slavery in the UK and they include situations of criminal, labour and

sexual exploitation as well as domestic servitude. The scenarios include adults, children, males, females, British nationals as well as EU and non-EU nationals in order for attendees to recognise and respond to the different rights and entitlements available for different cohorts of the population.

This project equips Modern Slavery Partnerships with the tools required to be able to run successful and impactful partnership learning exercises for a range of organisations, depending on the needs in their region. The workshops are innovative training tools, enabling partners to identify best practice, share knowledge and experience, improve prevention and victim care, and identify gaps in knowledge or provision. The Modern Slavery Partnerships will then be able to use the findings from the workshops to set actions in order to plug any identified gaps before they are experienced in reality.

If you'd like more information, please contact Alicia via email.



Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on August 10, 2020



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Today Alicia Kidd, postdoctoral researcher at the Wilberforce Institute, provides a summary of two of her recent chapters on human trafficking.

Both can be found in Julia Muraszekiewicz, Toby Fenton and Hayley Watson, eds, *Human Trafficking in Conflict: Context, Causes and the Military* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), at <https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030408374>

‘Unavoidable Exploitation? Conflict, Agency and Human Trafficking’

In this first chapter, I look at those who find themselves caught up in human trafficking and conflict. Both are topics that have received significant attention within the Social Sciences. However, there is little literature that looks explicitly at the intersections between the two, or that considers if – and how – conflict might impact a person’s risk of being trafficked. What does exist focuses predominantly on child soldiers and post-conflict zones.

As a result I begin with a summary of the literature surrounding child soldiers. It concentrates on how child soldiers fit the definition of being victims of human trafficking, the ways that child soldiers are recruited, their experiences whilst attached to an armed force or group, and how their experiences continue to affect them long after they leave, or after the conflict ends.

My focus then turns to post-conflict zones and how the long-lasting effects of conflict can continue to put people at risk of trafficking even after the conflict has ended. The existing literature highlights a range of issues leading to human trafficking in post-conflict situations including economic and political restructuring, corruption and poverty, as well as the vulnerabilities faced by refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and children; these topics are all discussed.

Whilst this chapter summarises current knowledge of the links between conflict and human trafficking, I build upon this knowledge by introducing the findings gathered from in-depth face-to-face interviews with individuals who have fled conflict to the UK. These findings provide personal insights into experiences of how conflict can increase a person's vulnerability to becoming a victim of human trafficking.

Understandings of human trafficking often revert to an assumption that all agency must have been removed from the victim. While some victims of trafficking have no agency in the lead up to their trafficking experience, others have some level of choice in the decisions that lead towards their exploitation. Collating the existing literature and the findings from the interviews, I argue in this chapter that conflict impacts a person's agency to the extent that it increases a person's risk of being trafficked. Conflict restricts the choices available to a person, leaving them to choose between limited options which are commonly all imbued with risk. But while their choices may all be undesirable, people do exercise agency within the narrow range of options available to them, and some of these choices will lead to exploitation. As such, I argue that victimhood and agency should not be understood as a binary, but on a spectrum.

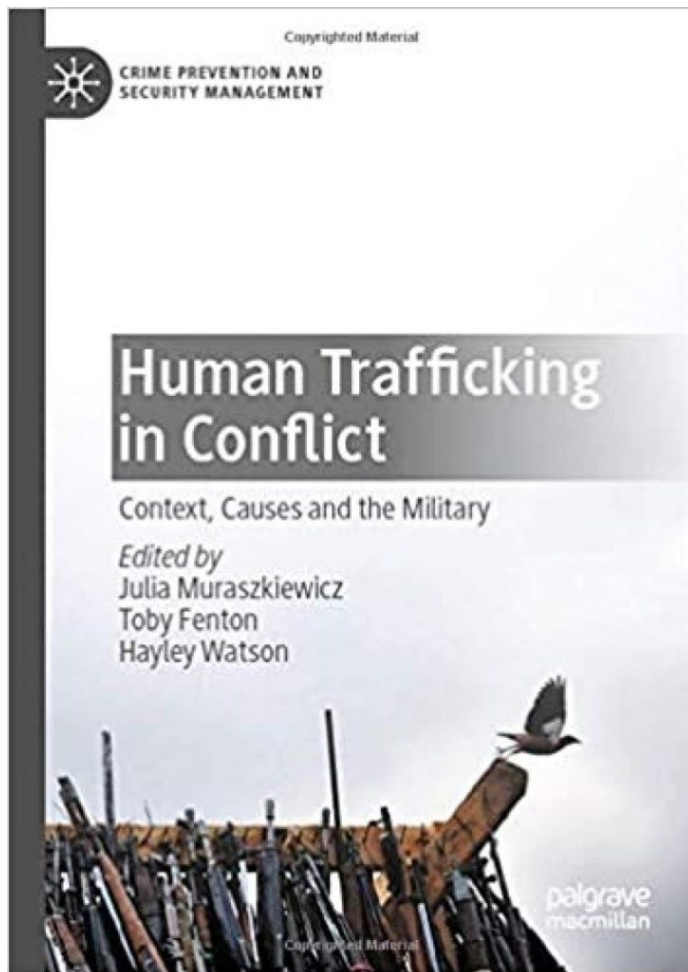
'How Definitions of 'Child Soldiers' Exclude Girls from Demobilisation Efforts'
(with Dr Ally Dunhill)

The definition 'child soldier' is commonly understood to refer to any person under 18 used in any capacity by armed forces or groups; this includes armed

combatants, but also those in ancillary roles such as cooks, 'wives' and guards. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes exist to encourage soldiers to give up their weapons, to take them out of service, and to resettle them into civilian society. Such programmes aim to create stability, re-establish security and create the conditions needed for peace. However, while DDR programmes claim to be aimed at everyone involved in armed forces or armed groups, regardless of their role, in practice, they often use much narrower definitions for child soldiers, focusing predominantly on those who carry a weapon; this serves to exclude many roles typically undertaken by girls.

In this chapter, co-written with Ally Dunhill, we examine the remit and outcomes of DDR programmes to understand why they differentiate between the gendered experiences of child soldiers. Using examples of these programmes, we analyse how children are identified and recruited into such initiatives. We contemplate whether children's experiences as being part of armed forces (belonging to a state) and armed groups (not under the clear control of a state authority) are adequately considered, and whether the gendered treatment in these programmes is conducive to long term recovery and reintegration into civilian communities. We explore how girls are often overlooked in definitions of child soldiers and highlight the harmful consequences of this. We then assess how the outcomes of the programmes impact the futures of those both included and excluded in the remit of the programmes.

We find that in failing to recognise girls as victims in these situations, DDR programmes are leaving them in precarious situations whereby they have left a trafficking situation only to find themselves in a vulnerable position, facing a lack of support and a high risk of re-exploitation. Building on existing literature on female child soldiers, this chapter highlights the need for further research and concludes with recommendations for generating more effective and inclusive efforts to support female children associated with armed forces or armed groups.



Human Trafficking in Conflict: Context, Causes and the Military (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), at <https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030408374>

Africans in Yorkshire

Posted on August 6, 2020



Gifty Burrows

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To mark her appointment as Honorary Fellow at the Wilberforce Institute, Gifty Burrows, Project Lead, talks about the African Stories in Hull and East Yorkshire Project.

The history of Black presence in Britain is evident in the sensational rediscovery of human remains among [Anglo-Saxon](#) and [prehistoric](#) burial sites. However, given that Britain had an empire with subjects in colonies around the world, it is puzzling that many people still have some difficulty in understanding the longevity of Black presence in British society. This is not surprising however, given the paucity of [historical research](#) to show that people of African descent have lived, worked and visited Britain for hundreds of years. Instead, there is a persistent myth that Black presence began in the 1950s with the call for workers from its territories, heralded by the arrival of the Empire Windrush ship. Indeed, it is ironic that although Black people are hypervisible as a minority group in society, they are rendered invisible in terms of their narratives and their achievements too are diminished.

There is very little representation of Black people as individuals in fiction or nonfiction. Stories of their direct experience in historical narratives are rare and when they appear, they are often written by a second hand who has the power to edit their truth. It is also the case that despite Black people being the global majority, any aspect of history about them is consigned to a label of 'Black history', separating them from the main discourse and preventing them from influencing a long-established view of traditional beliefs. This can leave voids where context is omitted, and what is left is a truncated and incomplete picture. In 2015, [African Stories in Hull and East Yorkshire](#) was created to rebalance this absence at a local level and bring the hidden stories of remarkable everyday lives to the fore as a reflection of an honest and inclusive view of British social history.

The project

The strength of African Stories in Hull and East Yorkshire was that this type of study had not been done before. It gained support from the Heritage Lottery Fund with a remit of looking at the presence and contributions of people of African descent from the Wilberforce era of 1750 up until 2007. It was bold and challenging to look at a region that has never been demographically diverse.

Stories were difficult to unearth. A disheartening parallel between the past and the present (that quickly became apparent) is that race is often only deemed important in criminality. Therefore, for the majority of ordinary people for whom that was not relevant, careful survey and meticulous research of local and national archives was needed to yield results. The [emergence of themes](#) such as maritime, religion, education, service members, judiciary, occupations, sports, activism and the arts demonstrated a broad Black presence in Hull and East Yorkshire. The outcome was helped by the project's design, inspiring energy and contributions from a broad sweep of people from various backgrounds.

The project was further bolstered by a number of families who directly asked for their histories to be included as a celebration and acknowledgement of their presence in this region. This, together with the [Contemporary Voices](#) oral history series, represented over two hundred stories, providing an archive on the website that remains in the public domain.

Legacy

The African Stories project has been hugely successful. The unearthed material had the potential to expand further by the end of the funded period, and the level of interest has remained very high. To maintain the integrity of the project, requests to expand its scope were rejected as well as stories with insufficient proof of presence. That said, for people who wish to research the stories further, accurate references and signposts have been included in all entries so there is a factual base to work from.

The reception of the project outcomes has engaged and surprised many. It has fed into media broadcasts, online articles and six [exhibitions](#), as well as inspiring similar research by other local historians and academics. This demonstrates an appetite for an inclusive history that would be more reflective of modern society and address an absence in national education.

The continued interest in the African Stories archive shows that the passion for local history does not stay local. Rather, it feeds into the social history of the nation itself. The stories provide an insight into historic and contemporary life experiences with aspects that will resonate. Indeed, if it is the case that the value of research is in its relevance and impact on society, then it can be said that African Stories has been successful by having started a much needed conversation about Black presence – particularly in light of the current discourse about Black lives and as we continue halfway into the [UN International Decade for People of African Descent](#).

For the African Stories website go
to: <https://www.africansinyorkshireproject.com/>

For a virtual library focusing on Africa and the African diaspora go
to: <https://www.theafricanist.co.uk/>



Exhibiting the African Stories in Hull and East Yorkshire

What would you do to survive? Voluntary enslavement and the fear of death

Posted on July 30, 2020



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The arrival of COVID-19 has not only delivered us a sharp reminder that human existence is fragile and impermanent, but raised it to a new level of priority, as politicians in many parts of the world privilege the survival of their citizens in ways that only a few months ago would have been unimaginable. From the opposite perspective, we as citizens expect it. The role of government is in the first instance to protect those it serves from external threat. The classic statement of this is perhaps Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, which describes a world of unrelenting insecurity in the absence of a government able to protect its citizens from each other as well as from foreign attack. As we now know only too well, that attack can take biological as well as military form.

I've been trying for a long time to understand why societies in the past not only allowed the enslavement of some of their citizens but legislated for it. Roman civil law is interesting in this context. It ruled that slaves, or *servi*, were given

this title because generals in war did not kill their prisoners but allowed them instead to survive (from the Latin *servare*). This linguistic derivation may have been spurious, but it seems that those who were saved from death were understood to owe their lives to those who spared them, and as a result became slaves for the rest of their lives.

This brings me back to today. Though there is no sense that we owe our government a debt for saving our lives, those who leave hospital having beaten COVID-19 are keen to reveal how much they owe to the medical staff who brought them through. There is no understanding that such a debt requires repayment, however, nor would the medical staff expect it: the utterance is an expression of gratitude rather than a recognition of obligation. Those who feel particularly strongly have been known to act, usually by engaging in money-raising ventures for organisations that saved their lives or the lives of their children, but we all know that a life debt can never be adequately repaid.

Or do we? What if we were able to offer up our lives in exchange for the opportunity to survive? What would that look like? In reality, as the Roman example above reveals, we already know – enslavement. The idea of slavery in exchange for survival is a consistent theme throughout the period in which slavery existed as a legal institution. Those taken in war tended to have slavery thrust upon them, but there were also cases in which such actions were undertaken voluntarily. Some of this, as we might expect, took place in a religious context. In the demotic papyri of Ancient Egypt we find a woman offering herself, her children, and her children's children to a deity to secure her good health, for example. But illness could also encourage individuals to enslave themselves to healers as a way to access the medical care they needed. Chanana, who examined slavery in Ancient India, found stories in the ancient texts of a mother who offered herself as a slave in return for the cure of her eye disease, and a sex-worker who did the same to save her life. Widespread episodes of infectious disease could also instil such high levels of fear that individuals were prepared to give up their freedom for the chance to stay alive. 'People caught in an epidemic offer themselves to Jivaka, the famous physician, if only he were to treat and cure them.' (See D.R. Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, New Delhi; People's Publishing House, 1960, 67.).

Such practices offer a whole new slant on the fear of death and the power of medical knowledge, as well as a reflection on the distance we as a species have travelled. Not all the stories have concrete evidential bases in the form of

contracts or agreements, but they point to the existence of an idea in which control over the life of an individual could be exchanged for the opportunity to live. And it's not just that; such stories indicate that in life-threatening circumstances, a transfer of this sort could have been expected, even demanded. For much of human history, it seems that a loss of authority went hand in hand with survival, and those who faced death with no power to evade it often had little alternative but to accept enslavement, if they wanted to remain alive.



Image: Anthony Wildgoos, *In Divine Meditations on Death* (1640) <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2240871183?accountid=11528> (accessed July 25, 2020).

Then and now, campaigning against Modern Slavery in Hull and the Humber

Posted on July 23, 2020



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Times change, as does the seemingly endless tide of social and humanitarian injustice that weighs on some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Brought to the forefront of the public consciousness once again and increasingly apparent this last decade is the global epidemic of modern slavery and human trafficking. Here in Hull the focus and determination to fight is as stout as it has always been.

Hull has long played a leading role in campaigning to abolish slavery, from the work of William Wilberforce who was the leading parliamentary spokesperson in the movement to abolish the slave trade (c.1759-1833), to Christian preacher and antislavery advocate Salim Charles Wilson (c.1859-1946). Our efforts in Hull have always been focused on one aim, a safer community.

But where are we today? In a somewhat fitting homage to the original Hull Anti-Slavery Committee, our efforts are channelled and coordinated in part by the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership currently based at the Wilberforce Institute next to Wilberforce House Museum on High Street in our historic old town. Today's efforts are much more of a whole partnership response across statutory, third sector and business organisations. We still focus on the ideas of freedom, equality and social justice as our forebears did but in an updated and more contemporary way.

I have had the enormous pleasure to work in the social sector for the last ten years in my role as founder of a small local homeless charity after my own experience of losing everything. Our approach is holistic at its core, with the aim of – you guessed it – creating safer communities. Over this time, I have seen our collective approach towards at-risk adults and children change, mostly for the better, but I know you will agree that our task is harder than ever before.

It feels to me that poverty, destitution, homelessness, conflict, our fragile global economy, our unquenchable consumer greed and strained public services are making it almost effortless for organised crime groups to exploit our most vulnerable. Be it through forced or bonded labour, sexual exploitation or sex trafficking, county lines, domestic servitude or forced criminality, the trade in human misery is lucrative with often seemingly minimal risks for the perpetrators. The world has shrunk there is no doubt, and in many ways our now close-knit global community is more susceptible to crisis and abuse than ever before. It is often easy to feel like we live in a tiny Tupperware microclimate of injustice and some unseen power is holding the lid down so we can't breathe. The time has come for us get together and punch some air holes in the side, or even lift the lid.

So, what can we do? I am certain we can use the positives of our condensed world to our advantage, much like exploiters and the countless menacing organised crime groups do. Using instant methods of communication, data sharing, awareness, training, campaigning and positive social action we can strengthen our net to protect victims and make sure the trade in human suffering is no longer an attractive prospect for these criminals. In Humberside we are working closely in partnership across the whole region better than ever, certainly in my professional life, to bring together everyone who can make a difference. Local authorities, the NHS, criminal justice organisations, charities, businesses, the University of Hull, the Wilberforce Institute, places of learning

and worship and local support services share a vision of keeping people safe from abuse and making the area around the Humber a hostile environment for would-be exploiters.

Looking honestly at the factors that make people vulnerable to slavery will help us understand the steps we all need to take to make our communities more resilient. If we can prevent homelessness in more cases, empower children to say no to criminal gangs, or help people understand their healthcare entitlements for example, we will stop more people being in a situation of impending risk. Many young people and vulnerable groups on the fringes of our communities are not always aware of what support mechanisms we have in place to prevent crisis; they are, simply put, slipping through the net.

Over the next few years we will continue to make unwavering strides to identify and plug these gaps in provision with meaningful and substantive solutions that will afford everyone equal access to the full range of services that keep us all safe. A community is as good as the people in it, and I believe wholeheartedly that there is no place in Humberside for this woeful and rancid crime. I know that by learning from our past, and adding a spoonful of innovation and lashings of passion, we have a recipe that will transform our region into a safe space for everyone regardless of social or economic status.



#HiddenInPlainSight campaign at the University of Hull.

See <https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/more/media-centre/hidden-in-plain-sight>

Wilberforce Institute Event: Tacky's Revolt

Posted on July 20, 2020

On Thursday 23 July, from 17.00-19.00 BST, the Wilberforce Institute will host a webinar on the subject of Tacky's Revolt.

Tacky's Revolt, or the Slave Rebellions in Jamaica, 1760-61, was the largest and most significant revolt in eighteenth-century British America and the most important revolt undertaken by enslaved people in the Caribbean before the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804. It was a series of attacks made by enslaved people, many of whom were African and usually thought to have been Coromantee people from the Gold Coast of West Africa, in several parts of Jamaica. Jamaica at that time was Britain's most valuable tropical colony and one in which the population was divided starkly between a small minority of privileged and often very wealthy whites and a large majority of harshly treated enslaved people of African descent. The rebels who joined in the revolts killed many whites, destroyed much plantation property and showed they were a formidable internal foe of British imperial rule. They very nearly succeeded in overturning white rule on the island. The rebellions were put down only with maximum effort and through the combined actions of British regulars, Jamaican Maroons (autonomous communities of people of African heritage) and the white militia. The imperial state's retribution against rebels was ferocious, reflecting the terror a population of white Jamaicans experienced about how close they and their island society had come to disaster.

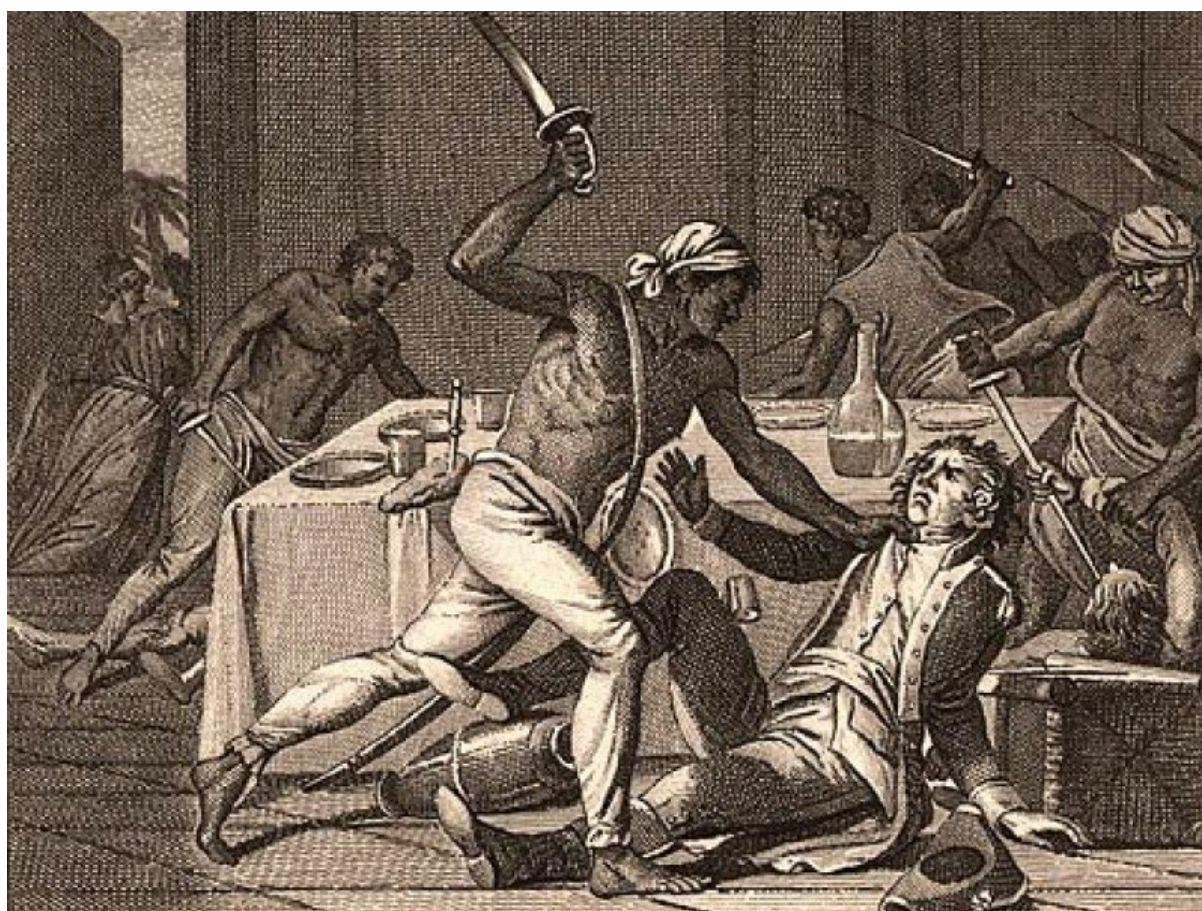
This webinar will involve a stellar cast of invited academics, all with specialist knowledge in this area. Diana Paton, William Robertson Professor at the University of Edinburgh (author of *The Cultural Politics of Obeah*) will chair the session, which will see five academics discussing their understanding of the revolt. Our panellists are as follows: Vincent Brown, Charles Warren Professor of History at Harvard University (author of *Tacky's Revolt*); Edward Rugemer, Associate Professor of History at Yale University (author of *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance*); Lissa Bollettino, Associate Professor of History at Framingham State University (author of the forthcoming *Slavery, War and Britain's Eighteenth Century Atlantic Empire*); Robert Hanserd, Assistant Professor of History at Columbia College, Chicago (author of *Identity, Spirit and*

Freedom in the Atlantic World); and our very own Trevor Burnard, Wilberforce Professor in the Wilberforce Institute (author of *Jamaica in the Age of Revolution*). Erica Charters, Associate Professor of History at the University of Oxford (author of *Disease, War and the Imperial State*), will offer a final commentary, before we open the floor for questions.

The aim is for each of the panellists to talk for a maximum of 10 minutes, beginning with a short discussion of their sources and the problems they present, before moving on to reveal the causes of the rebellion. The aim then is to give everyone present an opportunity to think about the different ways in which an event as important as Tacky's Revolt can be interpreted when historians have only some of the sources they would like at hand.

This webinar has now taken place. If you would like to see a recording of the event, please click on the link below. This will take you to a library of all our recorded webinars.

<https://www.gotostage.com/channel/0e07d733caea46689b29898dfab15e44>



Summary of author's recent publications

Posted on July 16, 2020



Trevor Burnard

Wilberforce Professor of Slavery and Emancipation and Director of the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull

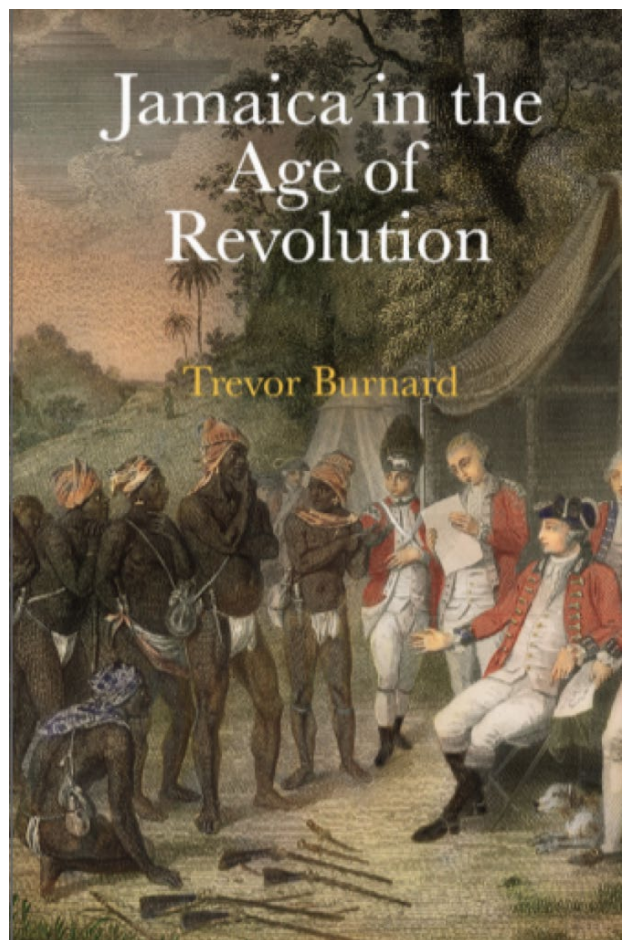
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Today, Professor Burnard discusses two of his recent publications on Jamaica.

Jamaica in the Age of Revolution (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020)

Between the start of the Seven Years War in 1756 and the onset of the French and Haitian Revolutions after 1789, Jamaica was the richest and most important colony in British America. White Jamaican slaveowners presided over a highly productive economic system, a precursor to the modern factory in its management of labour, its harvesting of resources, and its scale of capital investment and output. Planters, supported by a dynamic merchant class in Kingston, created a plantation system in which short-term profit maximization was the main aim. This led to a powerful planter class, a dynamic slave system and impoverished and oppressed enslaved people, living lives of desperation and unhappiness.

My aim in this book is to explore through a series of interlinked essays how this brutal, rich, extraordinary, modern, and highly exploitative society worked. I start with Jamaican planters and their vision of the ideal plantation order, as seen through the lens of Thomas Hobbes as a theorist of societies held together by fear and through the writings of the proslavery racist but very astute historian, Edward Long. Long was a fervent promotor of the Jamaican planter class but he also saw their faults, notably their addiction to short-term profit making and in their 'rage to develop their estates' how they exposed themselves to enormous risk from a brutalized enslaved majority. The enslaved population, I argue, were the victims of a profitable and efficient plantation system that was based at bottom on a pernicious doctrine whereby the exploitation of enslaved people was vital for the success of the system. Enslaved people were systematically ignored and their interests neglected, making them the worst treated group in all of British America. Jamaica was a society at war. It was a place divided between entrepreneurial but vicious white (and occasionally mixed-race) planters and merchants and brutally mistreated enslaved people. Sometimes this 'Cold War' became a hot war, as in [Tacky's War in 1760-61 – the event, I argue, which was pivotal in the internal history of eighteenth-century Jamaica](#). Tacky's War was one of several defining events in Jamaican history, all of which led Britons to question the morality of imperialism in this realm, no matter the material benefits that plantation agriculture brought to Britain at a time when Britain was developing new forms of mercantile and industrial capitalism. I look at two of these events – the Somerset legal case of 1772 and the *Zong* scandal of the early 1780s – and the disruptions of the American Revolution in order to re-evaluate Jamaica in a period when its white residents were at a height of prosperity while its enslaved population was at the nadir of its colonial experience. The question for white Jamaicans in this period was whether their happiness, self-satisfaction and undeserved wealth was sustainable. My answer is that it was not. They learned in retrospect that the halcyon years of the American Revolution were the last period in which white Jamaicans exercised real power and autonomy.



Jamaica in the Age of Revolution (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020)

On Thursday 23 July 5-7pm, the Wilberforce Institute will host a round table of distinguished international experts on the causes and consequences of Tacky's Revolt from 1760 in Jamaica.

Please use [this link](#) to register.

'Living Costs, Real Incomes and Inequality in Colonial Jamaica,' *Explorations in Economic History*, 71 (2019), 55-71 (with Laura Panza and Jeffrey Williamson)

I wrote an article in 2001 in *The Economic History Review* where I argued that estimates of the wealth of Jamaica needed to be revised substantially upwards. That argument showed that Jamaica was the richest colony in British America in 1774. What I might have emphasized more strongly is that this wealth accrued to a tiny percentage of the population – wealthy planters and merchants. The great majority of the population, by contrast, were among the poorest people in the world, with the worst living standards of any early modern population. Utilizing

a large body of quantitative evidence about Jamaican incomes and commodity prices put together to furnish 'baskets' that can be used to evaluate standards of living, myself and my two economist collaborators constructed cost of living and purchasing parity indicators. Our new analysis *lowers* Jamaica's per capita income compared to the rest of the Atlantic economy.

We note that while the wealth of Jamaica was substantial, and made it very valuable to imperial statesmen, it also, as a net food importer, had extremely high costs of living. These living costs rose sharply during the American War of Independence, placing extreme strains on the enslaved population of the island. Enslaved Jamaicans were in the uncomfortable position of being extremely poor in a land of great plenty and extreme riches. They lived at the best of times at a subsistence level. In harsh times, they faced famine and dearth.

Jamaica was the most unequal place yet studied in the pre-modern world and inequality also extended to much of the white population. Nevertheless, white people were shielded from the worst of such income inequality by a remarkably generous but racially discriminatory system of welfare. Putting enslaved people front and centre of our analysis means suggesting caution when describing Jamaica as Britain's richest eighteenth-century colony. If places like Pennsylvania were, as Benjamin Franklin heralded and which has been confirmed in recent literature, the best poor person's place on earth, then Jamaica was the worst, particularly for its majority enslaved population.

Labour Exploitation in Supply Chains

Posted on July 13, 2020



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Dr Kidd is particularly interested in bridging the gap between academia and practice in relation to modern slavery and, alongside her academic post, is the Vice Chair of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership, a position she has held since 2016. She also works with the Risk Assessment Service at the Wilberforce Institute, which supports businesses in identifying and mitigating risks of labour exploitation in supply chains. The blog below was commissioned by *Crimestoppers* to coincide with their recent campaign on modern slavery. We have replicated the piece here so that it can be made available to a wider audience.

Modern slavery is a term used to refer to extreme forms of exploitation including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation and even organ harvesting. These crimes affect both adults and children and aren't limited to gender or nationality. In fact, in 2019 [UK nationals](#) constituted the largest single nationality of people referred into the [National Referral Mechanism](#) – the UK government's system for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery.

Since the introduction of the [Modern Slavery Act](#) in 2015, many businesses have become aware of the term ‘modern slavery’, because of the requirement the Act places on businesses. [Section 54](#) of the Modern Slavery Act is the Transparency in Supply Chains clause which, in summary, requires any business which operates (at any level) in the UK with an annual turnover of £36 million or more to produce an annual modern slavery statement which is publicly accessible.

While the compliance rate fluctuates (currently around [79% of companies](#) required to publish a statement have done so), so too does the quality of the reports, which often betray a limited understanding of the crime, how it might affect a business and how best to respond (though it must be noted that the content of the statements is not officially assessed; compliance rests entirely on whether or not a statement is published, regardless of what the statement says).

Labour exploitation is the most [common form](#) of modern slavery identified in the UK and it is important that businesses have a good working knowledge of how to protect their supply chains from it. Below are some practical steps that businesses can take to limit risk.

1. First of all, when you begin to look for labour exploitation in your supply chain, you should expect to find it. Exploiters will always aim to be at least one step ahead and concerns may not initially be apparent. Those who are being exploited may be reluctant to come forward, so the onus is on you to identify an issue rather than relying on it being brought to your attention.
2. While it is important for directors and management to be aware of what modern slavery is and how it presents, especially in regards to developing a high-quality modern slavery statement, they are unlikely to be the ones that come into contact with exploitation within the supply chain. Training should be targeted at the lowest level, to ensure that those who are likely to come into contact with potential victims are aware of what to look for and what they should do if they have concerns.
3. You should create safe reporting mechanisms within your organisation so that potential victims, or those that have concerns, have somewhere to ask for support or share information. Guidance on how to report into this mechanism should be readily available to all staff. However, don't share *how* you will act on intelligence, as once this information reaches an exploiter, they will find a way to work around it. Consider it a positive when concerns are raised as this means that your reporting mechanism is effective.

4. While a 'zero tolerance' approach to modern slavery might seem logical, it could actually encourage rather than deter exploitation. Instead of ending a contract with a supplier you have concerns over, provide them with a list of issues they need to fix and a deadline by which these must be done. Only if that date comes and significant progress has not been made should you end the contract. To end the contract at the first concern runs the risk of allowing the exploiter to continue to operate elsewhere and potentially failing to get assistance to the people who need it.
5. Provide all staff with information on their rights and entitlements in languages they can access.
6. If possible, run regular informal worker interviews with all staff so that you have the chance to speak with workers individually. If this is established as standard practice then it provides the opportunity to have private conversations with staff members without raising alarm bells for exploiters. Getting to know your workers in this way is also a method of demonstrating that you are proactive about due diligence.

If you have concerns about exploitation in your supply chain, the [Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority](#) (GLAA) may be able to offer assistance. The GLAA exists to protect vulnerable and exploited workers and investigate reports of labour exploitation, human trafficking, forced labour, illegal labour provision and offences that sit under the National Minimum Wage Act and The Employment Agencies Act. You can report a concern to GLAA on 0800 432 0804.



Workers in the agricultural sector can be at high risk of exploitation and abuse

The Impact of Covid-19 on Child Carers in the UK

Posted on July 9, 2020



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There are an estimated 700,000 young carers in the UK. These children already face huge responsibilities within their families and are at a higher risk of mental ill-health and lower educational attainment than their peers. Due to the nature of caring, it is likely that many of these children will be looking after a relative who is vulnerable to Covid-19. The lockdown and resulting economic downturn have put these children and their families at increased risk of vulnerability, including exploitation and abuse, and make it more difficult for them to realise their human rights.

Mental health impact

[Research on mental health](#) in the general population found that anxiety and depression spiked following the lockdown announcement in late March. Child carers are already at heightened risk of low self-esteem, anxiety and depression, so may be considered extremely vulnerable to worsening mental health at this time.

[Research](#) on carers' experiences, conducted in the early stages of the UK lockdown, found high levels of anxiety amongst carers. The mental pressure of isolation, not being able to see friends or go outside for a “breather”, plus the stress of supporting a family's everyday needs in difficult circumstances, will inevitably increase during the lockdown period. This may be compounded if household income is reduced during or following the lockdown due to underemployment or austerity measures.

Food and other essential goods

In theory, supermarket delivery slots have been reserved for the most vulnerable. However, [The Guardian](#) newspaper found that “large numbers of disabled and older people are being excluded from the scheme due to the highly selective criteria”; these criteria may impact on child carers. Penalties for shopping for fewer items, plus delivery charges, increase the overall cost of shopping online. Equally, delivery services rely on access to the internet, email and a credit or debit card, which young carers may not have. Poorer families are less likely to have been able to “stockpile” essentials at the start of the outbreak and may have subsequently struggled to buy basic goods. These issues are compounded for child carers, who are already [more likely to experience poverty](#) than other children.

Families on low incomes are disadvantaged by the rising cost of some items and the need to shop frequently for smaller amounts of goods. Children may be afraid to leave the house to shop in case they contract the virus and become ill themselves, or pass it to vulnerable members of their household.

While some carers [noted](#) that they were receiving practical and emotional support from their local community, this is *ad hoc* and cannot be counted on as a long-term solution. Due to stigma, fear, or lack of social networks, child carers may be less likely or able to seek practical support within the community.

Accessing healthcare

Despite government assurances that the NHS is still open for business, fear of contracting Covid-19 appears to be keeping people away from hospitals. Child carers face a difficult decision if they see a decline in the health of a relative, which may be compounded by long NHS 111 waiting times and the unavailability of face-to-face GP services. This responsibility is likely to put enormous strain on the mental health of the child carer, as well as putting the health and wellbeing of their family members at risk.

Education

Child carers' education already suffers because of their caring responsibilities. Child carers miss an average of [48 days of school](#) and may struggle to find time to concentrate on homework. In the absence of a parent or teacher to guide them, these children may see a further decline in their ability to learn. This will be compounded by additional stresses and highly time-consuming activities such as shopping for essentials (see above), brought on by the circumstances of the lockdown. In this way, child carers face a double-hit in terms of access to education.

Vulnerabilities

Child carers tend to be highly competent, organised and capable, often as a result of the skills they have acquired from their caring responsibilities. But they may also have mental or physical disabilities, be refugees or members of minority groups, experience child poverty or be the victims of exploitation or abuse.

Indeed, some of these characteristics may be exacerbated by the lockdown itself. Children who are driven further into poverty, mental ill-health and isolation by the lockdown situation may become more vulnerable to situations of exploitation and abuse. In the worst cases, these situations can manifest as sexual and economic exploitation, including forced criminality, which have serious long-term effects on the health and wellbeing of the child.

It is important to contemplate these intersecting sources of vulnerability when considering the impact of Covid-19 on child carers. Being forced by the lockdown to stay away from school, friends and the community at large may mean that children who are at risk may not be seen and offered support. Above all, despite their capabilities, they must still be considered as children, with all the rights and protections due to those under the age of 18.



A Way Forward for Colonial Heritage in Europe?

Posted on July 2, 2020



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A headline in the media in recent weeks brought to the fore the lingering role of colonialism in current affairs. In a media show in France, two scientists were invited to reflect on the ongoing health crisis and the quest for a vaccine. The scientists are reported to have suggested at some point that the best testing ground for a vaccine study would be Africa, where weaknesses in local health systems might lead to more accurate results. While the reaction of the two scientists is solely reflective of their own views, not of their respective institutions or countries, it still raised some harrowing and, at the same time, interesting reflections on the persistence of colonial mentalities. In a [press briefing](#), the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, condemned the comments of the two scientists as racist, adding that: “the hangover from the colonial mentality has to stop”. Part of the challenge we have set for ourselves on the [EU-funded ECHOES project](#) is to suggest some improvements in the way we address Europe’s colonial past, so as to hopefully prevent such embarrassing public displays in the future.

Heritage diplomacy at the centre

On the ECHOES project, we work mainly with the concept of ‘heritage diplomacy’ (for conceptual discussions see [Winter 2015](#) or Clarke 2018[1]). We relate this to the currently used term ‘international cultural relations’ (ICR), or ‘[culture in external relations](#)’. Whereas the latter inter-related concepts have the potential to bring about significant change in engaging with partners across the world, our research has highlighted that official discourse and related practices in both EU institutions and member states’ representative institutions still reflect Eurocentric discourses.

We argue that drawing on long-standing narratives of European exceptionalism can be detrimental to addressing the deep wounds of Europe’s colonial past. Moreover, such narratives run the risk of occluding the experiences, knowledges and memories of those groups who might be described as the ‘victims’ of colonialism. It is for this reason that we believe alternative strategies are needed to address these pitfalls, while at the same time maintaining fairer international partnerships based on reciprocity and trust. For further details, please see our [policy brief](#).

Official and unofficial agents

The ECHOES’ understanding of heritage diplomacy builds on a complex network of agents that operate at different levels. Relating our work on ECHOES with what we are currently experiencing in the ongoing health crisis, it is evident that

information-sharing is not only happening at state level, but that scientists, medical research institutions and others are finding ways to collaborate that were not previously considered.

Similarly, a complex web of museums, artists and NGOs or community groups working on the ground can bring about significant changes in collective understandings of colonial heritage's legacy. Addressing issues such as persistent racial inequality or disparities between North and South comes naturally to these agents, as does accepting and working through the resentment generated by former colonial relations. With current digital technologies, even individuals can spark international reactions, as the example presented at the beginning of this post shows.

On this point, we recommend that policy makers should 'revise existing models for collaboration for heritage diplomacy to include networks and movements that are influential at local, national and international levels'. Research in ECHOES from different countries has highlighted time and time again how changes are brought about by such unofficial agents (see more in our [prepared outputs](#)).

Indigenous knowledge

One of the domains in which a Western bias is maybe most clearly seen is that of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledges are often relegated to the margins and while official positions have been presented by different indigenous groups' representatives, these have limited reach. In relation to the recent health crisis, the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues within the [UN remarked](#):

“Indigenous peoples can contribute to seeking solutions. Their good practices of traditional healing and knowledge, such as sealing off communities to prevent the spread of diseases and of voluntary isolation, are being followed throughout the world today.”

The impact of such declarations is difficult to measure, as Western representatives and institutions dominate public opinion and knowledge production. In our work we emphasise the importance of intercultural dialogue that can bring new forms of collaborations to the fore.

Conclusion

At first glance, we are currently experiencing a health epidemic, yet its implications are much wider, spilling over into different fields of activity. Although ECHOES deals mainly with cultural heritage, we have found many parallels with the current situation. This is fittingly so, as different indigenous knowledge systems often emphasise holistic approaches, while at the same time rejecting Cartesian divides between nature and culture, or clear demarcations of scientific fields. The ongoing crisis with its impetus for international solidarity can therefore present a further opportunity to reflect collectively on the importance of colonial legacies in shaping behaviour and policy.



The ECHOES Project logo

[1] Clarke, A. (2018) Heritage Diplomacy. In Handbook of Cultural Security, edited by Yasushi Watanabe, 417–36. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Covid-19 and Modern Slavery: Historical Perspectives

Posted on June 25, 2020



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The study of historical epidemics is not an esoteric subfield for the interested specialist but is central to understanding historical change in general. Infectious diseases are as important to understanding societal development as economic crises, wars, revolutions and demographic change.

Throughout human history, infectious diseases have been far more devastating in their medical and social effects than other causes of illness. Their history is far from over.

We have been terribly complacent about infectious diseases. In 1969, the US Surgeon General declared the end of infectious diseases. This mood of optimism led to the closure at top universities like Harvard and Yale of departments of infectious medicine. There are some counter-currents, such as the US establishment of the Center for Disease Control and the great effort of the World Health Organisation and other international agencies against SARS, but the longstanding belief that pandemic disease was both controllable and could

be consigned to the past has been noticeable, including in works of history. Our optimism has had catastrophic results.

Similarly, we were highly optimistic in the mid-twentieth century that slavery would disappear, after discourses of human rights were established in the late 1940s and slavery was made illegal everywhere in the world from the late 1970s. On the contrary, forms of modern slavery have increased and mutated (not altogether dissimilar to infectious diseases like SARS, Ebola and Covid-19) since the beginning of this century so that now many millions of people, mostly in the developing world but also in developed countries, experience precarity and vulnerability in their working and personal lives. That the increase in modern slavery and in the social effects of infectious disease have occurred simultaneously is not an accident.

Many of the features of a globalized society render the world acutely vulnerable to pandemic disease and the re-emergence of slavery: population growth, climate change, rapid means of transportation, the proliferation of megacities with inadequate urban infrastructure, warfare, persistent poverty and widening social inequalities.

Epidemic diseases are not random events, let alone 'acts of God', but medical events which reflect underlying social structures, standards of living, and political priorities. They need to be studied as major social events with significant economic and political consequences, conditioned by political choices. Medical crises have a significant impact, in particular, on the lives and political power of marginalized groups – in the past that has led many in those vulnerable groups into enslavement.

One way to think of pandemics as medical events with social causes and consequences is to adopt the term 'syndemic' which was a term developed by medics and medical anthropologists in the AIDs crisis of the 1980s and 1990s. A 'syndemic' occurs when two or more diseases form a cluster of epidemics affecting a given population in social contexts that perpetuate that disease and exacerbate its effects. Covid-19 is an excellent example of a syndemic as it interacts with underlying health conditions and seems to be disproportionately dangerous for specific sectors of society, notably people with underlying medical conditions and who are poor and vulnerable. Classic syndemics in the past include the Black Death and the 'destruction of the Indies' as measles and

smallpox entered populations that had no resistance to them. The effect of these syndemics was to change the relationship of Europe with the rest of the world.

History is both a guide to epidemic disease and a means of realizing that what we are doing today – shutting down much of the economy in an attempt to restrict the spread of the disease – is unprecedented. In the past, we either did not have the ability to stop or reduce an infectious disease epidemic or else, as in recent years, the epidemic never got large enough to affect significant numbers of the population.

Public authorities draw on previous epidemics to fight new ones. Over the centuries, they have invoked strategies from the past to fight new threats. Doing this gives the impression of a forceful and energetic response, thereby providing the population with some sense of protection. What is seldom done is for authorities to consider the long-term effects of disease on such things as slavery, forced labour and the impact of disease on the poor and the vulnerable.

Epidemic disease has had an enormous social effect and has coincided with slavery in numerous ways, such as the following:

- The Black Death 1348-53 ended serfdom and slavery in late medieval north-western Europe
- The reduction of the population of the Americas by as much as 90 percent after the arrival of Columbus in 1492 meant that European settlers turned to millions of important Africans as chattel slaves
- Continued disease in the Caribbean made that region dependent for centuries on the Atlantic slave trade
- The death of thousands of European soldiers from disease was a major factor in ending slavery in Saint Domingue in 1804, which led to the creation of the world's first black republic of Haiti
- The Spanish flu of 1918-20 contributed to a sense of crisis in Germany, fuelling the rise of Hitler and the eventual restart of slavery in slave labour camps in Europe during World War II.



A hospital in Kansas in 1918 during the Spanish flu epidemic.

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/medicalmuseum/3300169510/>

On the Ground: Front Line Observations

Posted on June 18, 2020



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Through our associations with modern slavery partnerships and front-line practitioners across the country, we have been able to access some of the direct observations that have been made regarding the impact that Covid-19 has been having on vulnerable populations. It is key to note that many of these experiences will not be caused entirely by Covid-19, but will be a result of an

amalgamation of the impacts of the disease, coupled with wider political, economic and societal structures that tend to most significantly impact those in lower socio-economic groups.

Impact on modern slavery support services

The government has announced that anyone in National Referral Mechanism (NRM) safehousing will not be required to leave the safehouse for three months in light of the heightened risk they would face as a result of Covid-19. The modern slavery helpline and Salvation Army referral line remain open and it is still possible to refer people to the NRM in the current climate.

However, Covid-19 has put significant strain on a large proportion of first responder organisations, victim care contract providers and third sector organisations who support victims of modern slavery. This has led to reduced services, furloughed staff and a closure of drop-in centres, making it much more difficult to offer direct support to those who need it. Face-to face visits are now only made on very rare occasions, with support workers remaining at a safe distance from the clients, and most check-ins are conducted over the phone. Many clients rely on gas and electricity cards which have to be topped up at shops. With many of these shops now shut, clients are unable to top up their cards and are faced with limited gas and electricity supplies.

Counselling and support services have decreased, as have the number of staff able to work simultaneously in safehouses, meaning an increase in lone working. This is to the detriment of victims and survivors, as well as to those working to support them.

Impact on work

We are identifying that in light of Covid-19, low paid workers are being sacked rather than receiving statutory sick pay. The closure of restaurants, carwashes and nail bars is also resulting in the eviction of workers from their accommodation. These workers are then reporting as homeless, which is pushing them into desperate situations in order to find work to be able to survive, therefore increasing their risk of exploitation. Coupled with this risk is the reduction in labour regulation inspections as a result of social distancing, meaning there are fewer checks to ensure worker welfare. We are also aware that exploitative labour has moved away from those businesses that have shut as a result of Covid-19 and is now moving into agriculture and packing which are

getting busier. Soup kitchens have been identified as locations for labour force recruitment and county lines dealing.

Agencies supporting sex workers are reporting that, while the paying for sex has reduced as a result of social distancing, workers are now predominantly moving on to webcam work. Some of the workers have no recourse to public funds, no job security and now no income source.

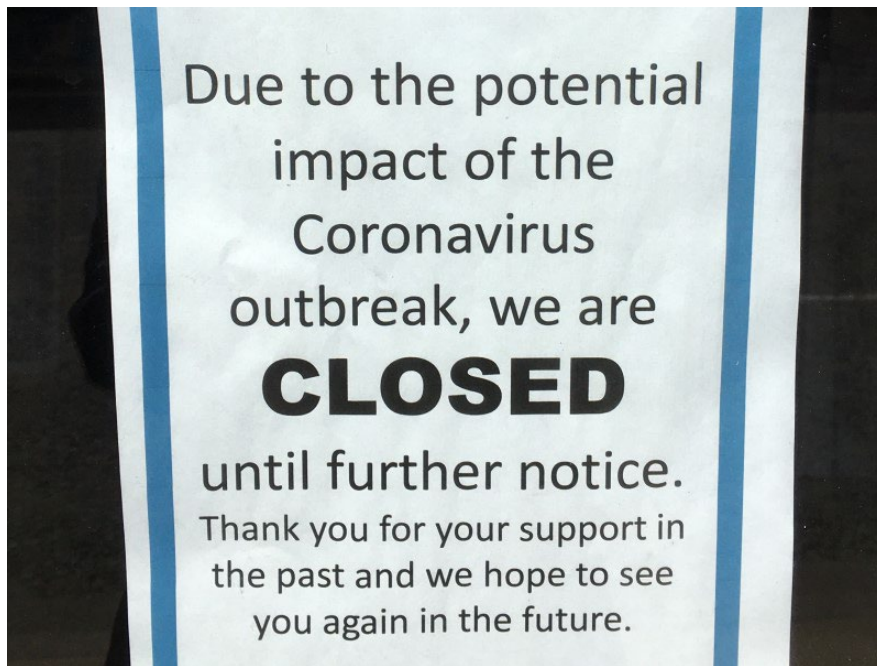
Impact on those with substance misuse issues

As a result of Covid-19, extremely vulnerable cohorts have faced real difficulties in obtaining prescriptions for methadone, etc. Those who are struggling are finding supplies of alternative drugs to use in place of these and, as a result, are vulnerable to dealers, drug debts and unsafe substances. Drug users who are isolated, who may be substituting drugs and subsequently overdosing and becoming unwell, have less access to emergency care because of isolation and a lack of ability to contact those who can help. The Wilberforce Institute and local partners have already identified that there has been an increase in known drug users dying alone whilst isolated from their support networks as a result of Covid-19.

Some support agencies are reporting an increase in clients' alcohol consumption, with a correlated increase in aggression by clients, both towards other clients and towards support staff. There has also been an increase in self-harm and suicide attempts.



Local businesses forced to close during lockdown



Local businesses forced to close during lockdown

The centenary of race riots in Hull

Posted on June 8, 2020



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Recent events across the UK and America remind us of the continual struggle for black and ethnic minorities to secure the equalities most of us take for granted. Despite Britain championing the historic and contemporary crusades against slavery, it has not prevented outbursts of violence scarring our nation. This month marks the centenary of widespread anti-black violence in Hull, what was then the third largest port in Britain and home to the world's largest fishing fleet.

Whilst both the city and port of Hull showed sustained growth during the long nineteenth century, the outbreak of the First World War brought an end to both commercial and urban expansion. Following the outbreak of the war, Hull's position as one of the world's largest migrant entrepôts came to an abrupt end. During the war a shortage of maritime labour was supplemented by the casual employment of large numbers of non-white seafarers, especially on long haul routes to Asia and Africa. Despite valiantly staffing vulnerable steamers ploughing through bomb ridden waterways, and being paid less than their non-white counterparts, at the end of the conflict most non-white mariners were dismissed as military personnel returned from active service and demanded their jobs back.

For non-white seafarers, further misery followed as a [wave of xenophobia swept British ports](#), including London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Cardiff, Salford, Hull, South Shields, Newport and Barry between 1919 and 1921. Despite being British subjects, competition for jobs fuelled blatant prejudice against the non-white seafarers. As [Jacqueline Jenkinson](#) has observed, this was not just related to the end of the war, but instead “evidence of a persistent anti-black sentiment in British society which, at times, in specific circumstances, spilled over into violence.” Though organisations in Hull tried to forcibly resettle mariners back to Africa or the Caribbean where they had originated, a colour bar on vessels bound for those destinations meant they could not work their passages back home.

Violence followed in June 1920 as those left stranded became the scapegoats for sustained outbursts of racial violence. Focusing upon Osborne Street, Pease Street and Lower Union Streets, close to the Paragon Railway Station, events reached a crisis when in one incident over 200 people were seen attacking a [“negro child”](#). To try to bring some degree of order, the nearby pubs banned all non-white men, yet further attacks prevailed. Attempts were made to bribe sailors to leave Hull, but these too were largely ineffective. Meanwhile the wives and children of interracial unions were left traumatised.

Accounts published in local newspapers detail how xenophobia prompted Hull’s non-white population to decline to between 60 and 100 people by the close of 1920. In its aftermath the city developed a trend for growing intolerance to those seen as racial outsiders. Despite its proud record of accepting waves of migrants and refugees for centuries, the economic challenges of the interwar period made life for Hull’s ethnic minorities challenging. That racism emerged as the economic well-being of the port city diminished reinforced the close ties between austerity and racial intolerance.

Yet as we approach the centenary of these events, a real stain on Hull’s racial past, perhaps we need to pause and reflect upon how inclusive the city is to racial and ethnic minorities today. Despite the great work by organisations including Hull City Council, Hull Culture and Leisure Limited, Humber All Nations Alliance, the Freedom Festival, the University of Hull, and the creation of education resources like the [Africans in Hull and East Yorkshire website](#), anti-black racism is again on the rise. Speaking to those who have chosen to make Hull their home in the past few decades, the pervasiveness of prejudice is once

again alive. We all need to stand up during this centenary year for everyone.
#BlackLivesMatter!

* This blog entry is based on Nicholas J. Evans, 'The making of a mosaic: Migration and the port-city of Kingston upon Hull', in D. J. Starkey, D. Atkinson, B. McDonagh, S. McKeon, & E. Salter (eds.), *Hull: Culture, History, Place* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), pp. 144 – 177



The headline of a report about the riots in the Hull Daily Mail, 21 June 1920.

Racial Precedents to COVID-19

Posted on May 25, 2020



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As part of the 'Falling Through the Net' cluster my work examines children and childhoods that are exposed to exploitation. In the first six months of my PhD the focus of my research has shifted, more than once. Currently my interests lie in exploring ideas relating to rescue: the rescuers and the rescued.

The two central topics of my comparative study, British child migration and Indigenous Canadian child removal (between 1850 and 1970) were, on the surface at least, supposed to 'save' children from something: poverty; sin; poor parenting; limited social and economic opportunities; indigeneity. Frequently these 'rescued' children were placed in highly exploitative and harmful situations.

To stretch the initial analogy further though, there are children that these particular 'nets', however poorly designed, were never designed to catch. I suggest that by looking closely at the particular characteristics of the 'rescued', including the 'non-rescued' and the 'rescuers', we can attain a clearer understanding of the social dynamics at play. The intersections of class, gender and race in the development of policies drastically altered the lives of hundreds

of thousands of children, and left many in mass unmarked graves. I intend to explore the underexamined role that 'white womanhood' played in the formulation of these child-focused social movements, and their relation to broader settler-colonial projects.

Ultimately, I am interested in the relevance that these issues have to contemporary practices and the protection of 'vulnerable' children and young people, dilemmas regarding the ethics of intervention, the distribution of resources and how 'best interests' are conceptualised.

The current global health crisis has brought some of these vulnerabilities into stark relief, exposing the rampant social and health inequalities that exist within societies. Despite children being one of the least affected groups in relation to the virus itself, the wider implications of the COVID-19 disease pandemic will undoubtedly impact some young people more than others. This includes the inability to access outdoor spaces and the internet; reduced contact with support services; and the increased pressures of lockdown on family dynamics for the estimated 2.3 million children in England considered to be at significant risk, but not currently receiving support [from social services](#).

In addition to class distinctions, racial disparities in relation to COVID-19 are now being discussed openly. Analysis conducted by The Guardian called for the recognition of [race, and racial inequalities as risk factors](#) for COVID-19. [Afua Hirsch](#), writing in the same newspaper has been highlighting these concerns since early April, when the emerging data appeared to corroborate what many suspected, that individuals from black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) groups are [dying in significantly greater numbers](#) relative to their representation in the population as a whole: in the UK this means [a 27% higher rate](#) than would be expected. An official [inquiry](#) into the issue was recently announced.

The statistics for black American deaths are even more telling; in Chicago black people constitute a third of the population but accounted for [72% of deaths](#) at the beginning of April. It will be some time before we fully understand the correlation between BAME individuals and COVID-19, although it's likely that socioeconomics, housing, high-risk occupations and higher levels of co-morbidities will be factors. It suggests that the tragic consequences of COVID-19 will also be felt disproportionately by the children of racial minority groups.

The social determinants of health are perhaps even more apparent, when looking at the potential impact COVID-19 could have for [Indigenous communities](#). In Canada, especially areas [without access to clean running water](#), frequent hand washing is not always feasible. Social distancing and isolation are not viable choices in overcrowded living arrangements, and where there are [chronic shortages of adequate housing](#). A significantly higher proportion of the population have underlying health conditions, and there is a very high prevalence of respiratory illnesses. Inuit children, for example, suffer from [tuberculosis at 300 times the rate of non-Indigenous Canadians](#), and, experience the [highest rates of chronic respiratory disease in the world](#). These issues are compounded by limited access to healthcare services, with some remote areas only accessible by air, and others having no resident medical personnel. For these communities the [impact of COVID-19 could be devastating](#).

The legacies of colonialist and racist mentalities have been exposed, in some quarters, in the ways in which the current pandemic has been articulated. Historically, [Indigenous children were used as guinea-pigs](#) for [experimental](#) and often [brutal treatments](#). An idea invoked recently by a French doctor suggested a [potential vaccine could be trialled in Africa](#). The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccine, commonly known as the BCG, which is currently being examined for its potential use against COVID-19, was [tested on Indigenous children in the 1930s](#) to counter ‘Indian tuberculosis’, an example of racialised and pathologizing language that echoes the current American President’s use of the term [‘Chinese virus’](#).



Brandon Sanitorium for Indians, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. November 1947.
Racially segregated hospitals originally operated to contain '[Indian tuberculosis](#)'.
Library and Archives Canada: [Available here](#)

From a personal perspective the pandemic has, to some degree, limited my ability to access resources. It has made connections with others more difficult to achieve, and it means events have been cancelled or postponed. They are difficulties though that seem largely trivial, given the struggles many people are facing to access even basic sanitation in order to protect themselves.

Research in the Time of COVID-19

Posted on May 11, 2020



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Humanity, it seems, is capable of grappling with just one crisis at a time. Worldwide searches on Google for 'climate change', fairly constant since the beginning of the year, fell dramatically after 14 March 2020 when the world was getting to grips with COVID-19.^[i] Despite being a climate change scholar, I played my own tiny part in this trend, frequently being distracted from my studies by breaking news of the pandemic.

My research topic is child exploitation in the context of climate and environmental change. My hypothesis is that, as climate change alters people's environments and pushes them to migrate in precarious circumstances, opportunities for child trafficking, child labour and other forms of exploitation will increase. Human migration is one aspect of the wider climate crisis, which until recently held top spot in the public psyche for 'Catastrophe Most Likely to Destroy Us'. The recent groundswell of interest was partly due to Greta Thunberg's [headline-grabbing emotive speeches](#) and her adventurous exploits, such as [sailing across the Atlantic](#) to attend the climate summit. Nevertheless, public engagement in the topic has been steadily rising for years, as tales of

rising seas in Asia, drought-stricken farmland in Africa, and instances of flooding closer to home began to make regular headlines.

The advent, therefore, of the compelling and tragic COVID-19 drama being played out in real-time is doubly bad news for those of us who want to keep climate change high on the agenda. No doubt, halting the pandemic will take all our efforts. Yet policy-makers and researchers alike must keep a weather eye on our changing climate to avoid missing crucial deadlines for mitigation and adaptation.

[The postponement](#) of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Glasgow, UK, this year is a case in point. Top climate experts urged UK Prime Minister Johnson to keep to the original timetable for the meeting, arguing that the momentum for real global action would be lost if the talks were moved back to 2021. 'Cancelling it immediately might mean action on climate change gets ignored this year and people on the frontlines in poorer countries can't afford that', [argued climate advocate](#) Mohamed Adow. Yet, along with the Tokyo Olympics, the Cannes Film Festival and Glastonbury, postponed it was.

COVID-19 may be the biggest threat we face today, but climate change remains the biggest threat we face tomorrow. Our understanding of the nature of the latter relies on constant research, not only on weather patterns, but on social, economic and ecological trends. Monitoring of meteorological systems [may stall](#) due to the inability of scientists, particularly in developing countries, to take measurements in the field. Surveys on climate-related environmental damage have also been delayed, and a major [five-year Nasa project](#) to monitor storms in the stratosphere has been suspended indefinitely.

Academic research is also jeopardised by the current crisis. Uncertainties around funding, restrictions on travel, as well as the current ban on academics meeting face-to-face to contribute ideas and work together on shared projects, mean major delays to planned research and the likelihood that some potential ventures will never get off the ground at all.

My own research centres around the experiences of child migrants, including those travelling to Europe from Viet Nam. To future-proof my research plans against further travel bans, I have shifted my focus to those migrants who are already on my doorstep. With the assistance of UK-based community organisations and NGOs, I plan to trace two separate diasporas to record the

experiences of migrant children. If we are lucky enough to see free movement reinstated within the following year, then I retain the option of expanding my research to other parts of Europe.

Meanwhile, two academic conferences that I planned to attend, on slavery and migration, are likely to be called off, and a PhD workshop organised by Wilberforce Institute students, including myself, will be postponed. Keeping in touch with the research community and building one's academic network, which is crucial to all in academia but particularly to new research candidates, will require creative solutions. By its nature, doing a PhD can be a largely solitary process, and this is now being exacerbated hugely by circumstances of lockdown and quarantine. Zoom and Skype are lifelines in the new social-distancing era, allowing the continued free-flow of ideas as well as maintaining a sense of community and solidarity in what can otherwise be a very lonely time.

The irony is that, while I have tools at my disposal to adapt to the current landscape, my research subjects may not. The two pillars of my study – climate change and migration – will ultimately be altered by the current pandemic. Factoring in, or perhaps filtering out, the 'coronavirus effect' will be vital to my research. For example, it will be important to differentiate between migrants' experiences before and after COVID-19 and evaluate possible changes to the climate regime as a result of the pandemic, in order to make predictions about future trends and policy needs. In these uncertain times, this will be my greatest research challenge.



A protester holds up a sign during a climate demonstration in London, UK.

[i] Google trends analysis for all searches of “climate change” worldwide between 10 January and 10 April 2020.

Researching Forced British Child Emigration

Posted on April 27, 2020



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I am one of three funded PhD researchers within the Wilberforce Institute's 'Falling Through the Net' research cluster concerning child migration. My particular area of interest is the forced emigration of British children from the United Kingdom to Australia during the twentieth century. Many of these child migrants had previously been raised within the British care system and were coerced to migrate abroad with the promise of a better quality of life. However, many child migrants were treated poorly, and [have shared their experiences of abuse and exploitation while in care overseas.](#)

My dual affiliation with the University of Hull's Department of History and the Wilberforce Institute has granted me a unique vantage point from which to analyse this topic. Not only have I been able to research the testimony and experiences of former child migrants, but I have also been able to explore how this movement fits into broader issues of slavery and exploitation around the world, both in historic and contemporary societies. This interdisciplinary framework has also helped me to understand that in this case and many others, forced emigration, poverty and exploitation are all one singular human rights issue. This is particularly true in the case of children where [discussions surrounding their protection and rights is a relatively recent development in international law](#).

Events this year, and in particular following the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19, have brought many new challenges into my research process. As a student in my first year of research, this was the academic year for me to begin to present tentative ideas at conferences and create networks with researchers in similar fields to mine. However, the cancellation of academic conferences across the board, coupled with travel restrictions both domestically and overseas, have meant that many of these plans are on hold. Fortunately, conferencing apps such as Skype and Zoom, in addition to social media networks including Twitter, have enabled me to remain in contact with my fellow researchers at the Wilberforce Institute as well as to discover any new opportunities to discuss research in [online academic forums](#).

This global disease pandemic has also witnessed the rapid digitisation of archival material by [the National Archives](#) and other such repositories, in addition to [books and journal articles](#) being made available online to a wider audience. There are however still a number of limitations that are still present in my current methodology. Digitising archival material is a gradual process and much of what I will need to not currently online, and a number of relevant museum exhibitions that were due to open this academic year have been postponed indefinitely. This includes [Departures – 400 Years of Emigration from Britain](#), an exhibition concerning British immigration worldwide due to be held at the Migration Museum in Lewisham, London. It is also impossible to know how long certain restrictions will last and the extent to which this will impact any field work I decide to conduct in my second year of research. These are all factors that I will need to find ways to remedy in the coming months.

Arguably the most profound impact of COVID-19 has had in relation to this topic has been in the process of reuniting former child migrants with their families. In March 2020, the Child Migrants Trust announced that [all prospective travel linked to the Family Restoration fund would be halted with immediate effect](#). The trust, alongside the national governments of Australia and the United Kingdom, have done excellent work in [reuniting former child migrants with their long lost families](#) in recent years. This process can already be a difficult one for many former child migrants as some were long unaware that they had living relatives, and sadly the Family Restoration Fund came too late for others whose parents and siblings passed away before they had the chance to [reunite](#).

The emotional toll of bringing families together has been exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and the restrictions that have been put in relation to overseas travel. Given the advanced age of many of these former migrants, these restrictions are understandable and have been put in place with their best health interests at heart. Safety is of course the first priority in these difficult and unprecedented times. Let's just hope that in the technological era that we live in, former Home Children will be able to find new ways to connect with their families and that their voices to continue to be heard in the ongoing process of reconciliation.



A local memorial dedicated to child migration in South Australia.