

# Slavery and the British Country House



# Slavery and the British Country House

Edited by Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Published by English Heritage, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH  
www.english-heritage.org.uk  
English Heritage is the Government's lead body for the historic environment.

© Individual authors 2013

The views expressed in this book are those of the authors and not necessarily those of English Heritage.

Figures 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 3.16 and 12.9 are all based on Ordnance Survey mapping © Crown copyright and database right 2011. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.

First published 2013

ISBN 978 1 84802 064 1

Product code 51552

#### British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The right of the authors to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

#### All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Application for the reproduction of images should be made to English Heritage. Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and we apologise in advance for any unintentional omissions, which we would be pleased to correct in any subsequent edition of this book.

For more information about images from the English Heritage Archive, contact Archives Services Team, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH; telephone (01793) 414600.

Brought to publication by Jess Ward and Victoria Trainor, Publishing, English Heritage.

Typeset in Charter 9.5pt on 11.75pt

Additional historic research by Miranda Kaufmann

Edited by Toynebee Editorial Services

Indexed by Ann Hudson

Page layout by Andrea Rollinson, Ledgard Jepson Ltd.

Graphics by John Vallender

Printed in the UK by Butler Tanner and Dennis Ltd.

#### Frontispiece

*South front of Marble Hill House, built for Henrietta Howard in 1729 partially from the proceeds of investments in the South Seas Company.*

(K960734 © English Heritage)

#### Front cover

*Portrait of Edward Southall, the Hon Mrs Southall and Edward Southall later Lord de Clifford when a boy c 1737, by Charles Phillips. The portrait is of particular interest as a young servant of African origin is included in the family group who are here pictured on the Kingsweston House estate near Bristol. When the painting was exhibited in 2002 as part of the "In the Public Eye" exhibition organized by Sotheby's and held at the Holburne Museum in Bath, the presence of the Black servant was not mentioned.*

(DP140422 Reproduced by permission of Lord de Clifford)

## CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i> .....	vi	<b>8 Atlantic slavery and classical culture at Marble Hill and Northington Grange</b>	
<i>List of contributors</i> .....	vii	Laurence Brown .....	91
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	x	<b>9 Slavery and the sublime: the Atlantic trade, landscape aesthetics and tourism</b>	
<i>Notes on measurements</i> .....	xii	Victoria Perry .....	102
<i>Introduction</i> .....	xiii	<b>10 West Indian echoes: Dodington House, the Codrington family and the Caribbean heritage</b>	
<b>1 Slave ownership and the British country house: the records of the Slave Compensation Commission as evidence</b>		Natalie Zacek .....	113
Nicholas Draper .....	1	<b>11 Contesting the political legacy of slavery in England's country houses: a case study of Kenwood House and Osborne House</b>	
<b>2 Slavery and West Country houses</b>		Caroline Bressey .....	121
Madge Dresser .....	12	<b>12 Representing the East and West India links to the British country house: the London Borough of Bexley and the wider heritage picture</b>	
<b>3 Rural retreats: Liverpool slave traders and their country houses</b>		Cliff Pereira .....	132
Jane Longmore .....	30	<b>13 Re:Interpretation: the representation of perspectives on slave trade history using creative media</b>	
<b>4 Lodges, garden houses and villas: the urban periphery in the early modern Atlantic world</b>		Rob Mitchell and Shawn Sobers .....	142
Roger H Leech .....	46	<i>Notes</i> .....	153
<b>5 Slavery's heritage footprint: links between British country houses and St Vincent plantations, 1814–1834</b>		<i>Index</i> .....	176
Simon D Smith .....	57	<b>6 An open elite? Colonial commerce, the country house and the case of Sir Gilbert Heathcote and Normanton Hall</b>	
<b>6 An open elite? Colonial commerce, the country house and the case of Sir Gilbert Heathcote and Normanton Hall</b>		Nuala Zahedieh .....	69
Nuala Zahedieh .....	69	<b>7 Property, power and authority: the implicit and explicit slavery connections of Bolsover Castle and Brodsworth Hall in the 18th century</b>	
<b>7 Property, power and authority: the implicit and explicit slavery connections of Bolsover Castle and Brodsworth Hall in the 18th century</b>		Sheryllynne Haggerty and Susanne Seymour .....	78
Sheryllynne Haggerty and Susanne Seymour .....	78		

## FOREWORD

There are few things more emblematic of England's heritage than the great country houses which grace our landscape. However, such properties are not to be viewed simply as objects of architectural and curatorial or artistic interest. They are also expressions of wealth, power and privilege, and as new questions are being asked of England's historic role in the Atlantic world, and in particular about slavery, new connections are being unearthed between the nation's great houses and its colonial past.

In 2007 English Heritage commissioned initial research by Miranda Kaufmann into links with transatlantic slavery or its abolition among families who owned properties now in its care. This was part of the commitment by English Heritage to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade with work that would make a real difference to our understanding of the historic environment in the longer term. This scoping report surveyed 33 properties and found 26 which had some connection to slavery or abolition, and so stimulated many interesting questions for further research. As a result, more detailed surveys of four sites (Bolsover Castle [Derbyshire], Brodsworth Hall [South Yorkshire], Marble Hill [Twickenham, London] and Northington Grange [Hampshire]) were commissioned in 2008.

Their findings and those of other scholars and heritage practitioners were presented at the 'Slavery and the British Country House' conference at the London School of Economics in 2009, which English Heritage co-organised with the University of the West of England and the National Trust. This conference brought together academics, heritage professionals, country house owners and community researchers from across Britain to explore how country houses might be reconsidered in the light of their slavery linkages and how such links have been and might be presented to visitors.

Since then the conference papers have been updated and reworked into a cutting-edge volume which represents the most current and comprehensive consideration of slavery and the British country house as yet undertaken. English Heritage is proud to be publishing work on which historians, educators and heritage professionals can all build to develop new understandings of this challenging and important part of our national story.

Baroness Andrews  
Chair, English Heritage

## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

**Caroline Bressey** graduated from the University of Cambridge with BA Honours in Geography in 1997. In 1998 she joined the University College London Geography department as postgraduate student and was awarded her PhD 'Forgotten Geographies: Historical Geographies of Black Women in Victorian and Edwardian London' in 2003. For the following four years she researched the Black Presence in Victorian Britain and the role of the anti-racist community as an Economic and Social Research Council postdoctoral student and research fellow. In 2007 she became a lecturer in human geography and founded the Equiano Centre to support research into the Black Presence in Britain. For the bicentenary she contributed to the new gallery 'London, Sugar and Slavery' at the Museum of London Docklands and also wrote the gallery trail 'Portraits, People and Abolition' for the National Portrait Gallery, London.

**Laurence Brown** is Lecturer in Migration History at the University of Manchester. Having completed his doctorate at the University of York in 1999, he has taught at the University of the West Indies (Barbados), the American University of Paris and the Australian National University. He has written widely on the history of the Eastern Caribbean, particularly on migration and collective memory. He is currently finishing two projects exploring migrations in the Caribbean during slavery and freedom, and post-1940 Caribbean immigration to Manchester.

**Nick Draper** is a member of the team of historians at University College London (UCL) working on the Structure and Significance of British Slave-ownership 1763–1833 project, and was a Research Associate in the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project, also at UCL. His publications include 'The rise of a new planter class? Some countercurrents from British Guiana and Trinidad 1807–33' (*Atlantic Studies* 2012), *The Price of Emancipation* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), "'Possessing slaves": ownership, compensation and metropolitan society in Britain at the time of Emancipation, 1834–1840' (*History Workshop Journal* 2007) and 'The City of London and slavery: evidence from the first docks companies' (*Economic History Review* 2008). He acted as consultant to the Museum of London Docklands' Slavers of Harley Street exhibition in 2008–9. Prior to academia, he worked for 25 years in the City.

**Madge Dresser** is Associate Professor of History at the University of the West of England in Bristol. Her published works include her monograph *Slavery Obscured*, a *Social History of the Slave Trade in Bristol* (Continuum, 2001 reprinted Redcliffe Press, 2007), 'Statues and Slavery in London' in *History Workshop Journal* (2007) and 'Slavery and popular memory in Bristol' in the journal *Slavery and Abolition* (2009). She has also acted as historical consultant and advisor to slavery exhibitions at the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum and the Bristol Museum Service, the Economic and Social Research Council Legacies of British Slave-ownership project at UCL and numerous slavery websites and public history projects. She is currently writing a book on links between slave-owning families in Britain and Colonial America for the History Press.

**Sheryllyne Haggerty** is Associate Professor in Early Modern History in the Department of History, University of Nottingham and received her PhD in 2002 from the University of Liverpool. Her research interests include the business culture and trading communities of the British Atlantic in the 18th century, including the role of women. Her first monograph, *The British-Atlantic Trading Community 1760–1810: Men, Women, and the Distribution of Goods* (Brill Press, 2006) explored the relationship between the trading communities of Liverpool and Philadelphia. Her second, *'Merely for Money'? Business Culture in the British Atlantic 1750–1815* (Liverpool University Press, 2012) is an interdisciplinary study looking at the importance of business culture to Britain's economic success in the Atlantic world. She has been published in *Business History*, *Explorations in Economic History*, *International Journal of Maritime History and Enterprise & Society*. Sheryllyne is also a Council Member of the Association of Business Historians, and of the British Commission for Maritime History, and is on the editorial board of *Essays in Economic and Business History*.

**Andrew Hann** is Properties Historians' Team Leader at English Heritage with particular responsibility for researching and writing about the country houses in their care. Before joining English Heritage in 2007 he worked for a number of years as an academic. His research interests centre on the history of retailing, consumption and material culture.

**Roger H Leech** is a graduate of the Universities of Cambridge and of Bristol. He was the first Director of the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit in the University of Lancaster (1979–84), moving then to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now merged with English Heritage), first as Head of the former Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division and then as Head of Archaeology. He has been President of both the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology and the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, and is now Visiting Professor of Archaeology in the University of Southampton. His work on Bristol includes the first two volumes of an intended series on the topography of the city published by the Bristol Record Society and a study of Bristol town houses to be published by English Heritage in association with the City of Bristol. His work in the Eastern Caribbean has been linked to the University of Southampton's Nevis Heritage Project, funded in part by the British Academy, and also to the St Kitts and Nevis Digital Archaeology Initiative undertaken in collaboration with the Digital Archaeological Archive for Comparative Slavery at Monticello and the University of Virginia funded by JISC and the National Endowment for the Humanities, with publications to date in the monograph series of the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology, *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* and the *Barbados Museum and History Journal*.

**Jane Longmore** is Professor of Urban History and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Southampton Solent University. Her research interests focus mainly on north-west England in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Her recent publications include 'Civic Liverpool: 1680–1800' in J Belchem (ed.) *Liverpool 800* (Liverpool University Press, 2006) and 'Cemented by the blood of a negro?' The impact of the slave trade on eighteenth-century Liverpool' in D Richardson, A Tibbles and S Schwarz (eds) *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery* (Liverpool University Press, 2007). She has a longstanding interest in the teaching of history in universities and currently chairs the national History Forum of the Higher Education Academy.

**Rob Mitchell**, a founding member of Firstborn Creatives in Bristol, is a Creative Media Producer who works across print, audio-visual and digital media in the television, community, arts and public sectors. He has produced

programmes for ITV, BBC and Channel 4, and was Creative Director for the 'me deya' exhibition at the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum in 2007. His body of work shows a particular interest in learning, community creativity and personal development. He was the first Chair of the Bristol Black Archives Partnership (BBAP) and former Chair of Black Pyramid Film & Video project, Rob Mitchell is also a poet and media consultant.

**Cliff Pereira** is a widely published writer, historical geographer, curator and community facilitator. One of two world authorities on the Bombay Africans, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers [IBG]), former chair of the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA) and long time member of the Anglo-Portuguese Society. He has been a consultant to the Mayors Commission on African and Asian Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. His publications include *The View from Shooters Hill – the Hidden Black and Asian History of Bexley* (BACCA, 2008), 'Nineteenth century European references to the African Diaspora in the Arabian Peninsula' in *Uncovering the History of Africans in Asia* (Brill Press, 2008), 'The Bombay Africans and the Freretown Settlement' in *TADIA The African Diaspora in Asia* (2008), 'Les Africains de Bombay et la colonie de Freretown' (*Cahiers des Anneaux de la Memoire*, 2006) and 'Black Liberators: The Role of Africans and Arabs sailors in the Royal Navy within the Indian Ocean 1841–1941' (UNESCO, 2007).

**Victoria Perry** is an architect and historian. She is Senior Historic Building Advisor at the conservation practice Donald Insall Associates, London, and a teaching fellow at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. Her PhD dissertation 'Slavery, sugar and the sublime: the Atlantic World and British architecture, art and landscape 1740–1840' won the Royal Institute of British Architects President's award for outstanding research in 2010. She contributed to the *Oxford Companion to Black British History* (Oxford University Press, 2007) and is a member of the Association for Studies in the Conservation of Historic Buildings (ASCHB) where she was on the organising committee for the 2013 conference Conservation and (Post) Colonialism. In 1995 she wrote *Built for a Better Future* (White Cockade Publishers) a monograph about the Brynmawr Rubber factory (an icon of post-war government

funded regeneration in South Wales – listed Grade II\* but subsequently demolished.) She has also taught at the University of Kingston and co-written and presented television programmes on architecture and history for BBC Wales.

**Susanne Seymour**, whose doctorate is from the University of Nottingham, is a cultural and historical geographer with interests in 18th-century landscapes and landed society in the Atlantic world. Her work involves the study of symbolic and material aspects of landed estates and plantations in England and the Caribbean. Key areas of focus are the study of parkland design and management in relation to colonial expansion and service (*see* Seymour and Calvocoressi, 2007 'Landscape parks and the memorialisation of empire', *Rural History*) and practices of Atlantic landscape 'improvement' and representation (*see* Seymour, Daniels and Watkins, 1998 'Estate and empire: Sir George Cornewall's management of Moccas, Herefordshire and La Taste, Grenada, 1771–1819', *Journal of Historical Geography*). Her current work focuses on networks of slavery in English landed society and the understanding of legacies of slavery and colonialism in rural Britain (funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council's Connected Communities programme). She is Associate Professor in the School of Geography, University of Nottingham, UK.

**Simon D Smith** is Senior Tutor at Brasenose College Oxford. He is also the author of *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: the World of the Lascelles*, 1648–1834 (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

**Shawn Sobers** is a senior lecturer in Photography and Media at the University of the West of England. He is a filmmaker, writer, photographer and facilitator of community media and arts. His PhD explored the motivations, impacts and cultural sustainability of stakeholders' involve-

ment in community media education, using ethnographic methodologies. In 1999 he co-founded Firstborn Creatives media production company with Rob Mitchell, and has directed documentaries for ITV, BBC and Channel 4, including two documentaries on the slave trade ('Under the Bridge', 2000, and 'Unfinished Business', 2007), 'Footsteps of the Emperor' (1999 – exploring Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I's five-year stay in the city of Bath) and 'No Change?', 1998, which explored the problem of youth homelessness. Shawn's academic writing has included the pedagogic qualities of community media, and the use of online social networks in emergency situations.

**Natalie Zacek** received her PhD in 2000 from Johns Hopkins University, and is a lecturer in American Studies at the University of Manchester. Her monograph, *Settler Society in the English Leewards Islands, 1670–1776* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) won the Royal Historical Society's Gladstone Prize, and she has published articles in journals such as *Slavery and Abolition*, the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *Wadabagei* and *History Compass*, as well as in a number of edited collections. She is currently engaged in research on a new monograph on the social and cultural history of horse-racing in 19th-century America.

**Nuala Zahedieh** was educated at the London School of Economics, where she received her PhD in Economic History, and has taught Economic and Social History at the University of Edinburgh since 1989. Her research has focused on the British Atlantic economy in the 17th and 18th centuries with a particular interest in the impact of colonial expansion on British development. Her publications include *The Capital and the Colonies. London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660–1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and numerous articles on Jamaica and the British Atlantic economy. She is currently working on an economic history of early English Jamaica.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### 1 Slave ownership and the British country house

Nicholas Draper

I would like to acknowledge the support provided by the Economic and Social Research Council to the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project, and the support provided by both the Economic and Social Research Council (as lead) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council to the Structure and Significance of British Slave-ownership 1763–1833 project. In addition, I would like to thank Bill Rubinstein for his generosity in sharing his unpublished data drawn from probate records on individual wealth in 19th-century Britain, and all the many people who contributed information to us at University College London in the course of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project.

### 2 Slavery and West Country houses

Madge Dresser

I would like to thank Martin Bodman, Stephanie Barczewski, Nicholas Draper, David Emeney, William Evans, Sue Giles, Francis Greenacre, Rachel Hasted, Andrew Hann, Miranda Kaufmann, Nicholas Kingsley, Anthony Nott, Annette Penwill, Michael Richardson of the University of Bristol Library's Special Collection Service, Sheena Stoddard, James Walvin, John Winstone, the staff at the Bristol, Gloucestershire, Devon and Somerset County Records Offices and the staff of the ESRC-funded Legacies of British Slave-ownership in Britain Database Project for their advice and assistance.

### 3 Rural retreats

Jane Longmore

I am grateful to the staff of the Liverpool Record Office for their exemplary patience in dealing with my requests for obscure documents and for giving me permission to use images from their archival collections. I am also grateful to the National Trust for permission to use the images of Speke Hall. Finally, the audience attending the 2009 conference and our two patient editors deserve thanks for helping to generate this publication.

### 4 Lodges, garden houses and villas

Roger H Leech

Much of the data utilised in this chapter has resulted from the Nevis Heritage Project, for which the author

would again thank for support the British Academy, JISC, the University of Southampton, the Bristol Record Office, the Nevis Courthouse archives, the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society and the St Christopher National Trust. Individuals whom I would particularly like to thank for contributing to this chapter are Vince Hubbard for much support, Vicky O'Flaherty of the St Christopher Archives for much useful advice, Lorraine Lechner the owner of Olivees, James Milnes-Gaskell the owner of Wards, Bill Pinney the owner of Mountravers, Penny Copeland for the line drawings, and Pamela Leech for helping with some of the survey and commenting on the text in draft. Most of the surveys were undertaken as part of the Nevis Heritage Project: the help of Elaine Morris, Rob Philpott and students too numerous to name individually is gratefully acknowledged.

### 5 Slavery's heritage footprint

Simon D Smith

I would like to thank Brasenose College and the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation for providing facilities and resources during the writing of this chapter. I am grateful to Martin Forster (University of York) for agreeing to make available information about agency rates on St Vincent and the Grenadines that forms part of a separate co-authored project. The assistance of the editors and the staff at English Heritage is also warmly acknowledged. Responsibility for any errors in the paper is accepted by the author.

### 6 An open elite?

Nuala Zahedieh

This paper was presented at a conference at the University of Glasgow and a seminar at Columbia University, New York, as well as the *Slavery and the Country House* conference from which this volume arose. I would like to thank the participants in these events for useful comments and suggestions. I would also like to thank the staff in the Lincolnshire Record Office for their help and the provision of a supportive research environment. Finally, I am grateful to English Heritage for help with the pictures and the editors of the volume for their valuable input.

### 7 Property, power and authority

Sheryllyne Haggerty and Susanne Seymour

We would like to acknowledge English Heritage for commissioning and funding the majority of the archival work on which this chapter draws and the School of Geography, University of Nottingham for support for archival and field research undertaken in Grenada. We would also like to thank staff at the following collections for their assistance in accessing archive material: the British Library; Grenada Land Registry, St George's, Grenada; Herefordshire County Record Office; Liverpool Record Office; the London Family History Centre; Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham; the Merseyside Maritime Museum; Island Record Office, Kingston, Jamaica; the National Maritime Museum; Nottinghamshire Archives; the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich; The National Archives; and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds. Our thanks are also due to Nick Draper for responding quickly and in full to queries relating to slave compensation claims from the University College London Encyclopaedia of British Slave-Owners database, to Caroline Carr-Whitworth for access to materials at Brodsworth Hall, to Andrew Hann for the supply of documents and to him and other English Heritage staff for helpful feedback on the commissioned reports. Finally, we are grateful to the editors for their constructive comments on the chapter.

### 8 Atlantic slavery and classical culture at Marble Hill and Northington Grange

Laurence Brown

I would like to thank Andrew Hann and his colleagues at English Heritage for their support and advice in conducting the research at Northington Grange and Marble Hill House. I am extremely grateful to John Langdon for his assistance and insight in conducting research in London. Natalie Zacek, Patience Schell and Daniel Szechi have helped me understand the dynamics of the 18th-century Atlantic.

### 9 Slavery and the sublime

Victoria Perry

The ideas in this chapter were distilled during the completion of a PhD at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London and I would like to thank, in

particular, Professor Adrian Forty, Professor Miles Ogborn and Dr Barbara Penner for their support and advice. A grant from the Royal Institute of British Architects helped to fund travels to visit buildings, landscapes and archives in Britain, while awards from the Bartlett and University College London enabled me to visit the West Indies and speak at a conference run by the University of Portsmouth and the Institute of Post-Mediaeval Archaeology. The University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA and the University of Plymouth also funded conference presentations, while members of the Friends of the Society of Georgian Jamaica provided useful Caribbean contacts. In the UK, staff at the British Library were particularly helpful and enthusiastic – as too were the staff at the Museum of London Docklands, Lancaster Maritime Museum and Chepstow Museum. Finally, I would like to thank Madge Dresser, Melinda Elder, Paul Farrelly, Mark Fisher, Jonathan Gray, Douglas Hamilton, David Mackay, Andrew Mackillop, Eamonn O Ciardha and Paul Strathern for their help and advice.

### 10 West Indian echoes

Natalie Zacek

I would like to thank Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann for all of their work on this project.

### 11 Contesting the political legacy of slavery in England's country houses

Caroline Bressey

I would like to thank Rachel Hasted for her efforts in developing English Heritage's engagement with diverse histories and for facilitating dialogue between heritage practitioners, academics and our audiences. My thanks to Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann for their comments and suggestions for this chapter and to Michael Hunter, English Heritage curator at Osborne House for his guidance on the collections there. My visits to Osborne House were made possible by a Philip Leverhulme Prize awarded by The Leverhulme Trust.

### 12 Representing the East and West India links to the British country house

Cliff Pereira

I would like to acknowledge Simon McKeon and Oliver Wooller of Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre and

## INTRODUCTION

---

Annie Gill of Bexley Heritage Trust for providing many detailed facts and figures. Additionally, I would like to thank the Bexley African Caribbean Community Association (BACCA) for their input that helped provide a more complete account of the reclamation of community heritage in the London Borough of Bexley.

### 13 Re: Interpretation

Rob Mitchell and Shawn Sobers

Firstborn would like to thank Pauline Swaby-Wallace and all staff and members of Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association, Anna Farthing, Hamish Beeston, David John, Esme Taylor, Makeeba Brown, Rachel Hill,

Stella Quinlivan; Nwanyi Aduke and all staff and young people at St Paul's Supplementary School; Dion Bunting, Liz Johnson-Idan and all at Somerset Racial Inclusion Project; Bristol Record Office. Production: Dr Katherine Hann, Barney Menage, Chris Barnett, Louise Lynas, Geoff Taylor, Megan Lynas, Leah Thompson Arnold, Rebecca Kellawan, Madge Dresser, Lawrence Hoo, Amanda Felici, Simon Johnson, Remi Tawose, Candice Pepperall, Kate Tiernan, Andy McGowan and especially Georgiana Hockin, Heather Smith, Eilidh Auckland, David Fogden, Katie Laidlaw, the Elton family, and all the staff and volunteers at The National Trust, Tyntesfield, Clevedon Court and Dyrham Park.

The British country house, that symbol of refinement, connoisseurship and civility, has long been regarded not only as the jewel in the nation's heritage crown, but as an iconic signifier of national identity.

It seems, then, at first sight tendentious to link such houses and the rural idyll they represent with the subject of slavery. Until recently, most studies of such properties took a 'connoisseurship' approach, focusing on their architectural features, the glories of their collections and the genealogies of the families who owned them. And while an increasing number of historians were interested in the wider significance of country houses, either with reference to the continuing influence of the landed elite in mainland Britain or its internal social history, it is only in the last 20 years that the relationship between landed wealth, British properties and enslaved African labour began to emerge.

Alaistair Hennesey's short piece on Penrhyn Castle, and James Walvin and Simon Smith's more substantive research project on Harewood House paved the way for further academic work in this field. Academic research takes time to feed through into the public domain, where such links had so often been either studiously ignored or actively repressed. When they were acknowledged at all in the heritage sector, it was usually done in a sanitised manner that rendered the connection a historical curiosity of little significance.

We could characterise these various responses as symptomatic of what might be termed the 'Mansfield Park complex'.<sup>1</sup> But such one which became increasingly untenable as the political and social landscape changed. Heritage policy from the 1980s was becoming more cognisant of the need to involve the British tax-paying public in the way heritage was defined and funded. That public was itself becoming more socially and ethnically diverse and began to include the descendants of those who had been colonised and enslaved. As the internet revolutionised historical research, old boundaries between the local and the global and the academic and the popular become increasingly blurred and pressures mounted in some quarters to reinterrogate old narratives. The bicentenary of the formal ending of the British slave trade in 2007 excited public debate on the legacy of Atlantic slavery and encouraged heritage bodies, especially those in receipt of public funding, to look anew at the history of the properties in their care.

This book grew out of a conference on 'Slavery and the British Country House: mapping the current research' which was held in November 2009 and organised by English Heritage in partnership with the University of the West of England and the National Trust (with assistance from the Economic History Society). The conference proved popular, immediately attracting a large and diverse audience of academics, heritage professionals, country house owners, community activists and independent researchers. It built on the efforts English Heritage had been making since 2007 to reconsider the ways in which its properties might be researched and represented.

This book, comprised of updated versions of the conference proceedings, asks two main questions. The first is: what links might be established between the wealth derived from slavery and the British country house? The second is: what implications should such links have for the way such properties are represented to the public today?

The contributions include two studies specially commissioned by English Heritage and one sponsored by the National Trust. The rest are by independent researchers including academic historians and geographers.

Four themes emerge from the papers contributed. The first is that wealth deriving from the trade in and labour of enslaved Africans did affect the erection, renovation and occupation of a significant number of Britain's stately homes between the 1660s and the 1820s, but that there is also a web of wider, more indirect slavery associations with such properties that also merit consideration.

The second theme is that both the merchants and the members of Britain's landed elite who were involved in the proliferation of country houses from the late 17th century (the latter to consolidate their status and the former to gain entry into that elite) increasingly utilised notions of gentility, sensibility and cultural refinement in part to distance themselves from their actual connections to the Atlantic slave economy.

A third theme is that the very aesthetics of the country house in the period covered here, as manifested in the classical motifs of their lavish interiors, the romantic styles of their landscaping and their amassing of erudite collections of art and furniture, though so often represented as being a world away from slavery interests, were in fact related and need to be understood as such.

## NOTES ON MEASUREMENTS

---

Imperial measurements are used throughout the text; please *see* the conversion table below for details of metric equivalents.

1ft = 304.8mm  
1 yard = 0.914m  
1 mile = 1.6km  
1 acre = 0.4 hectares

The final theme explored has to do with how these links are variously presented to and interpreted by the different constituencies that make up the British public today. When considering the stories of those people associated with a particular property, curators make a judgement about whose stories are sufficiently significant to merit recounting and how they might best be told. It is one thing to make a reference to the fact that money financing a property was made from, say, a slave plantation, but a more individualised treatment of the evidence might convey a very different message. The identification of particular individuals of colour associated with that property might well have a particular resonance for those members of the public for whom a visit to an historic property might afford not merely a day out but an encounter with heartfelt questions of family history, identity and belonging. And that personalised connection has an impact beyond those who count themselves among the descendants of the enslaved and the colonised to reach into our very notions of who 'belongs' to Britain.

The methods and approaches of the contributors to this volume vary in scope as well as content. Nick Draper's chapter on 'Slave ownership and the British country house: the records of the Slave Compensation Commission as evidence' discusses a new database whose preliminary findings afford us a national overview of the proportion of slave owners who owned country houses on the British mainland in 1834. It thereby sets the scene for the subsequent chapters, which go on to address issues outside the database's chronological and thematic reach.

For example, the two regional studies of slavery-related country houses that follow deal with properties which, for reasons of chronology, might not necessarily be traceable through the above-mentioned database. Jane Longmore's 'Rural retreats: Liverpool slave traders and their country houses' identifies over 20 such houses in the Liverpool area that had been built by slave traders, plantation managers or merchants involved in slave-produced goods. The fact that most of these houses have since been demolished reminds us how easy it is to forget the impact that slavery originally had on a region's architectural heritage.

Madge Dresser's study of slavery and country houses in the West Country builds on her earlier study of Bristol to consider slavery-related properties in parts of Gloucestershire and Somerset. It argues that an eclectic

study, based on place as well as family or individual buildings can help to establish the multi-layered connections between local merchant and gentry families and the profits and administration of the colonial slave economy.

Roger Leech's chapter 'Lodges, garden houses and villas: the urban periphery in the early modern Atlantic world' compares the second residences and villas of merchant and gentry owners in Bristol on the British mainland with some merchant and planter houses in the British Caribbean, most notably on Nevis and St Kitts. Utilising archaeological evidence on both sides of the Atlantic he considers the links 'between the housing cultures of British merchants and their Caribbean planter counterparts', their relationship to the profits derived from slavery and the 'Georgianisation' of selected planter houses.

It is no accident that the opening up of Britain's involvement in the Caribbean coincides with a particularly intensive phase of country house building. Nuala Zahedieh's chapter 'An open elite? Colonial commerce, the country house and the case of Sir Gilbert Heathcote and Normanton Hall' documents the history of that Rutland country house, arguing that a significant sample of those who made their fortunes out of the slave-based plantation system in the late 17th and early 18th centuries 'were active and enthusiastic purchasers, and even builders of country houses'.

Simon Smith's chapter adopts a Caribbean starting point to establish that over one-third of slave plantations on the island of St Vincent were at one point connected to 26 country houses on the British mainland. He goes on to query the significance of this relationship in his chapter 'Slavery's heritage footprint: links between British country houses and St Vincent plantations, 1814–34'.

The two specially commissioned studies funded by English Heritage for this volume focus on specific case studies of selected properties on the British mainland. 'Property, power and authority: the implicit and explicit slavery connections of Bolsover Castle and Brodsworth Hall in the 18th century' by Sheryllynne Haggerty and Susanne Seymour investigates the different ways in which the two properties named in the title relate to slavery. South Yorkshire's Brodsworth Hall exemplifies a straightforward instance of slavery's explicit connections with a British prestige property, although not a slave trader himself, Peter Thellusson invested in wide varieties of slavery-related commodities and land. By contrast, Bolsover Castle in

Derbyshire, owned by the third Duke of Portland between 1762 and 1819, seems at first glance unrelated to slavery until one considers the longstanding and various roles the Duke played as Prime Minister, Secretary of Home Affairs, and more generally as a member of the landed elite in the protection and maintenance of Caribbean slave regimes.

Slavery and country house aesthetics may seem poles apart, but two of our contributors make the case that the two are intimately intertwined. Laurence Brown points out that the classical slavery-related motifs employed in the lavish interiors of Marble Hill in Twickenham and Northington Grange in Hampshire were not unrelated to the fact that both properties had financial ties to Atlantic slavery. Using the example of Piercefield estate on the banks of the River Wye near Chepstow, Victoria Perry's chapter considers how slavery wealth underpinned the aesthetics of romantic landscaping and 'scenic tourism' in late 18th-century Britain.

The final section of the book explores the links between history and heritage. Dodington house in Gloucestershire (now famously owned by James Dyson) was for centuries the home of the Codrington family, whose Caribbean sugar interests helped to consolidate their fortunes. After considering the career of Christopher Codrington (1668–1710) Natalie Zacek offers a critical look at the way in which Dodington House has 'in recent decades, emerged as an important site of popular memory for issues of slavery and its abolition within the British empire.'

Caroline Bressey's chapter contests the political legacy of slavery in England's country houses through a close examination of the way Kenwood in north London and Osborne House on the Isle of Wight have informed their visitors about their respective links to slavery and empire. Cliff Pereira's piece considers the impact community activism has made on the way the London Borough of Bexley has presented the historic properties within its borders and the extent to which it has acknowledged its West Indian and East Indian links.

The volatile link between history and memory is considered by Shawn Sobers and Rob Mitchell in their record of a multimedia consultation exercise they undertook at the behest of the National Trust. It breaks new ground in its examination of how various marginalised community groups, including those of African-Caribbean origin, perceived Dyrham Park (Gloucestershire), Clevedon Court and Tyntesfield (both North Somerset). It considers, too, the ways in which those responsible for these properties have approached and might in future address the subject of slavery.

This volume, like the conference, is a work in progress. Its intention is to map current research, provoke debate and stimulate new approaches to the understanding and representation of our built heritage.

Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann  
June 2013



