

THE SLAVE-OWNERS OF BLOOMSBURY



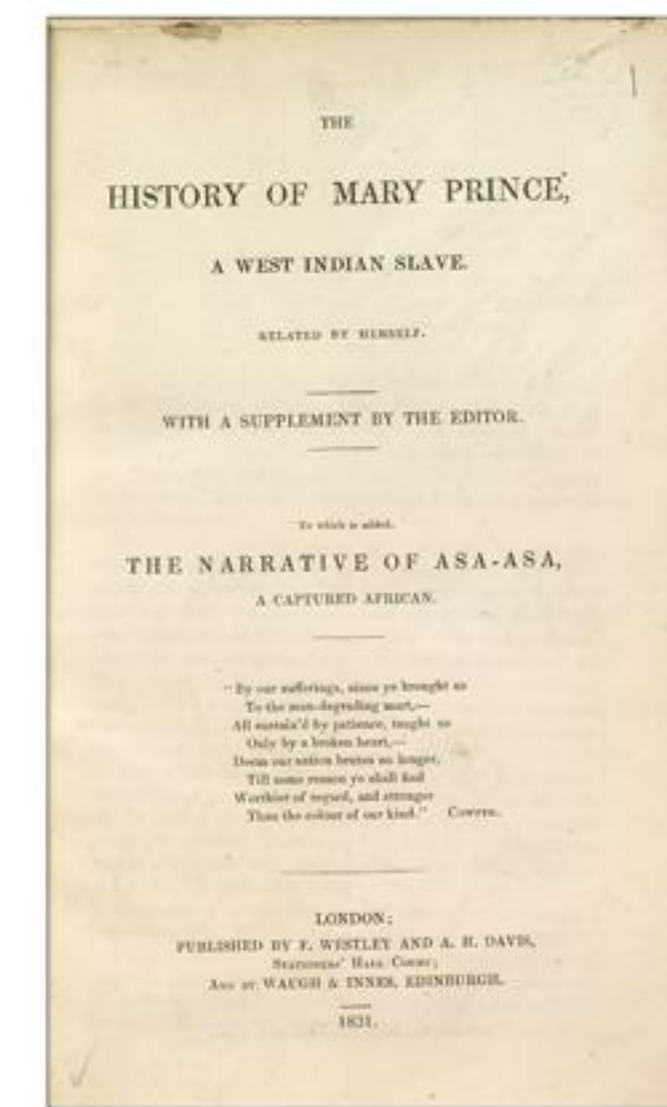
Bloomsbury [2]



John Adams Wood,
Leigh Street & 17 Woburn Place

John Adams Wood (c. 1783-1836) was the Antiguan slave-owner at the heart of the struggle of Mary Prince for freedom. Mary left the Wood family's house in Leigh Street (near Tavistock Place) in 1828 but could not return to Antigua without being re-enslaved. She lived at 4 Keppel Street, the home of Miss Robson, (now the site of the Senate House, where a plaque for her was installed in 2007) in 1829. Wood, who travelled between Antigua and Britain, was living at 17 Woburn Place in 1835. He received compensation under 25 separate awards in Antigua, suggesting that he was speculating in compensation claims.

CASE STUDY

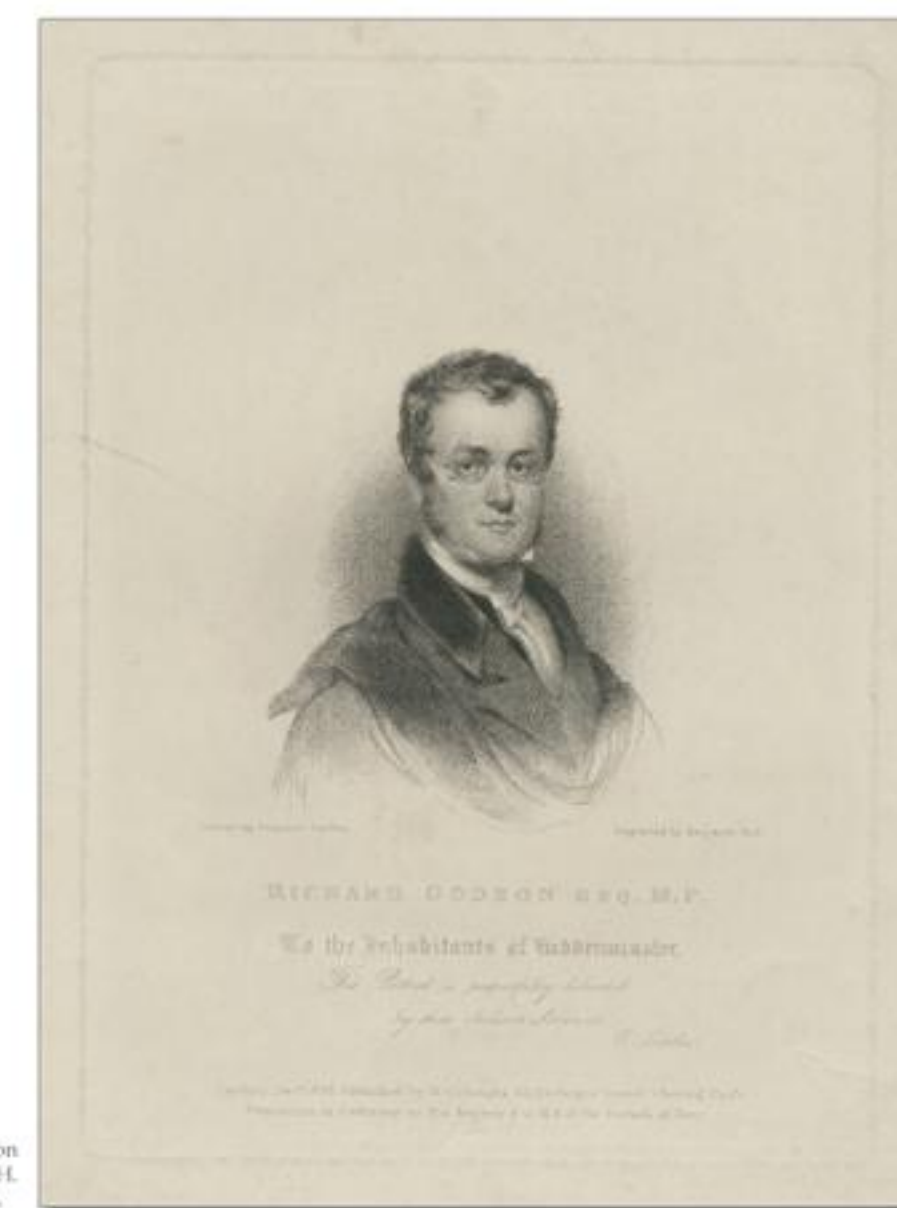


Mary Prince's powerful story, published in 1831, is one of the few narratives we have recording the lives of enslaved people. Cover of Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian slave, related by herself* (London: F. Winstley & A.H. Davis, 1831). Courtesy of Senate House Library.

Richard Godson,
22 Woburn Place

Richard Godson (1797-1849) was MP for St Albans (1831-32) and for Kidderminster (1832-35 and 1837-1849). He told his constituents in 1831 that he had been 'forced to take possession of' a £50,000 mortgage over a West Indian estate, Pusey Hall in Vere, Jamaica (and the enslaved people on it) on his marriage. He lived at 22 Woburn Place c. 1827-1834.

CASE STUDY



Godson was one of over a hundred MPs who appear as claimants in the slave compensation process. Richard Godson by Benjamin Holt, published by Martin Colnaghi, after Federico H. Latilla. Stipple engraving, published December 1852. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Philip Courtenay,
23 Montague Street

The barrister Philip Courtenay (d. 1841) was William Wordsworth's financial adviser and a speculator in annuities, which entitled the holder to a stream of annual payments for the life of a specific person. Courtenay held an annuity for £440 per annum secured on the enslaved people and estates of the Tharp family in Jamaica, a claim that was caught up in a family lawsuit in Chancery. He lived at 23 Montague Street from at least 1824 until his death in 1841.

CASE STUDY

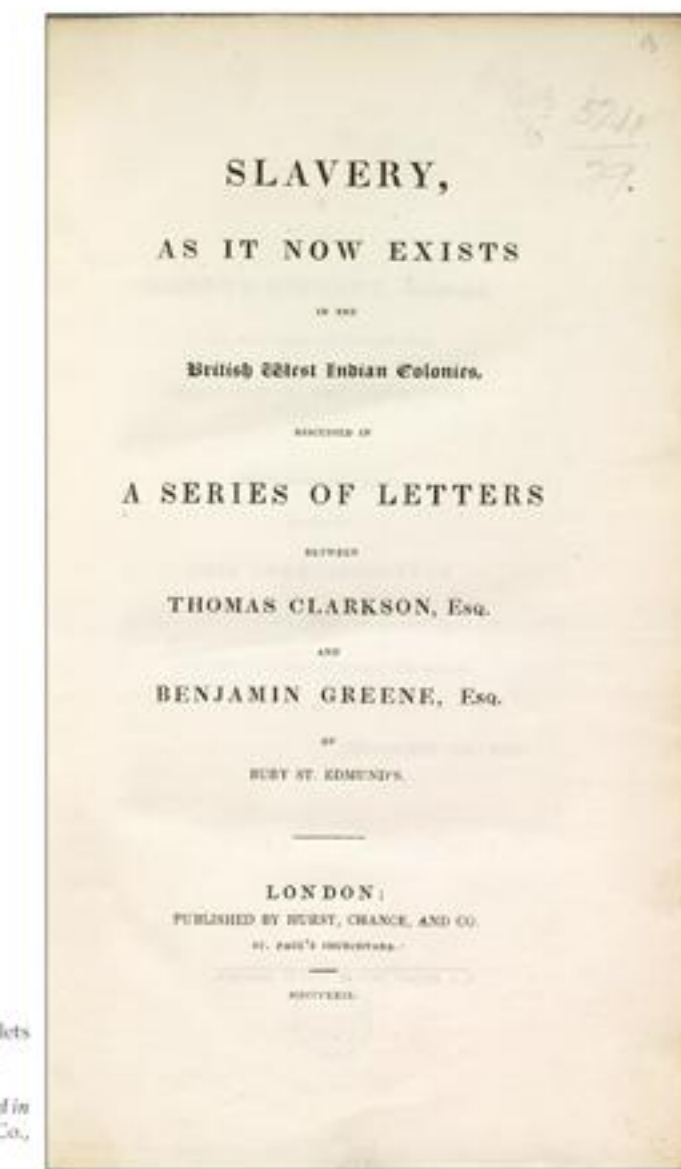


Chippenham Park, the Cambridge estate of the Tharp family, on whose Chippenham Park Pen in Jamaica Philip Courtenay held an annuity. Photograph © Zara Napier.

Benjamin Greene,
45 Russell Square

Benjamin Greene (1780-1860), the founder of the Greene King brewing and pub company and a slave-owner in St Kitts, moved to London in 1836 after a bitter local controversy over abolition in Bury St Edmunds. He lived at 45 Russell Square until his death in 1860. Greene's son Benjamin Buck Greene, who had managed the family estates on St Kitts in the last years of slavery, later became governor of the Bank of England, while the novelist Graham Greene was Benjamin Greene's great-grandson.

CASE STUDY



Benjamin Greene was a pro-slavery advocate, debating with the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, publishing pamphlets and using the *Bury and Suffolk Herald*, which he bought in 1826, as a platform for his campaign against abolition.

Cover of Thomas Clarkson and Benjamin Greene, *Slavery as it now exists in the British West Indian colonies, discussed in a series of letters between Thomas Clarkson and Benjamin Greene of Bury St. Edmund's* (London: Hurst, Chance & Co., 1829). Image courtesy of Senate House Library.