



Centre for the Study of the

Legacies of British Slave-ownership

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Newsletter December 2016

NACBS plenary in Washington

On Saturday November 12th, Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland and Nick Draper gave the plenary lecture at the [North American Conference on British Studies](#) in Washington DC, the city stunned by the result of the American Presidential election earlier that week. The NACBS is an annual gathering of several hundred American scholars working on all aspects of 'British civilization', and we were privileged to speak about the LBS project to this audience in the new [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) on the Mall.

It is one of our priorities to connect more fully with scholars in North America, whether working on US slavery, on the Caribbean or on Britain, and we are grateful to Susan Pennybacker and the other organisers of the NACBS for the invitation to speak, to Paul Gardullo the curator of the NMAAHC for allowing us to use the Museum, and to Chris Brown of Columbia for his gracious and engaged response to LBS' work as the commentator in the plenary session.

The museum itself is extraordinary, has a collection of over 36,000 artefacts and is devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history and culture.



NMAAHC building in Washington, DC.
Photo credit: Alan Karchmer/NMAAHC

The Royal African

A [new display](#) at the Museum of London Docklands tells the story of William Ansah Sessarakoo, the son of the head of a leading African family at Annamaboe in present day Ghana. Sessarakoo was sent to be educated in London in 1744 but was tricked and sold by an independent trader into slavery in Barbados. The exhibition reveals the role of the Royal African Company (which was responsible for transporting about 150,000 enslaved people across the Atlantic) in securing his release. The Museum's website contains an [interview with Alex Werner and Will Pettigrew](#) that gives more details of Sessarakoo's life and the Royal African Company's political motives.



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Database updates

This month we have implemented two new ways of searching the LBS database. On the [main search form](#) in the section 'Individual's Details' you can now search the section 'Will Details' (below the current 'Occupation' search box). There are details from 445 wills available through this search – almost all are précis rather than full transcriptions. There are details of several hundred wills available through the usual 'Notes Search' section as well, which we will move to the 'Will Details' section in due course.

Using an additional box below the current 'Education' search box, you can now search the 'Sources' section of each biographical page. Incidentally, if you have sent us biographical information on specific individuals then you should find a link to the relevant pages when you enter your own name in the 'Sources' search box. Please [let us know](#) if your name should appear but doesn't. We now have 1,000 biographical entries containing information sent to us by email and really appreciate the contributions people have made.

Britain's History and Memory of Transatlantic Slavery

This [co-edited book](#) originated in a series of papers given at the [Little Britain's Memory of Slavery](#) conference held at UCL in 2013. The essays, ranging in focus from eighteenth-century Liverpool to twenty-first century rural Cambridgeshire, from racist ideologues to Methodist preachers, examine how transatlantic slavery impacted on, and continues to impact, people and places across Britain.

Wraparound

Bruce Castle Museum in Haringey is currently hosting an exhibition entitled '[Wraparound: African and Caribbean head-wraps and symbolism](#)'. The display focuses on the traditions, development and use of the head wrap, from its early beginnings and its practical use through slavery, as a status symbol, its spiritual use, through to its function in modern-day fashion and design.

