



Centre for the Study of the

Legacies of British Slave-ownership

www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs

Newsletter June 2020

Black Lives Matter

An [ever-increasing number](#) of British companies and institutions have recently expressed regret for their involvement in what [Catherine Hall has termed](#) 'the slavery business'. Some have agreed to make payments to BAME groups as part of their ongoing commitment to diversity. This is long overdue. Protests and debates about the positioning of statues and the naming of buildings are part of a moment of reckoning about the racism which still forms part of British life and a re-telling of the stories that make up our national narrative. We hope this leads to sustained change.

LBS has released [a statement](#) about doing reparative history and our new Director, Matthew Smith, has written an [associated statement](#) on the challenges and prospects for our work.

Upcoming events

Matthew Smith and Keith McClelland, both from LBS, will be giving a talk on 'England and Slavery' at an Afternoon at the Digital Museum event at 2pm on Friday 26 June. You can [register here](#) to attend online.

The first episode of '[Britain's Forgotten Slave-owners](#)', a documentary based on LBS's work originally broadcast in 2015, will be screened again on BBC4 at 9pm on Thursday 2 July. Both episodes have been [reissued](#) on BBC iplayer and are also available [here](#) for viewers outside the UK.

Also on BBC iplayer is the excellent and damning documentary by David Olusoga, '[The Unwanted: The Secret Windrush Files](#)', detailing the 'hostile environment' created by successive British governments towards people of Caribbean descent.

The [Friends of the Georgian Society of Jamaica](#) are holding a [webinar interview](#) with Richard Atkinson about his new book *Mr Atkinson's Rum Contract* on Wednesday 1 July at 6.30pm. The author's personal journey of discovery began when he found in a box of old family papers a list of the names and monetary values of nearly 200 enslaved people. Central to the story is Richard's five-times great-uncle [Richard Atkinson](#) (1738-1785), Alderman of London, MP, Director of the East India Company, merchant, slave trader and slave-owner.



Richard Atkinson (1738-1785)



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New publications

Transcriptions of important documents for the study of Barbadian history have been made available online on the website [Bajan Things](#). The Hughes-Quere indexes, held at the Barbadian National Archives, contain information on [Barbadian sugar plantations 1640-1846](#) compiled by Ronnie Hughes and added to by Mary Gleadall using deeds, wills, maps, censuses, newspapers, surveyors' plans and correspondence.

Bajan Things has also published data from the [Handbooks of Barbados 1912-1914](#) and have a very useful compilation of the [printed maps of Barbados 1500-1900](#). They plan to publish soon the sugar works data from the Barbados Almanacs 1848-1871.

Christine Walker's book, [Jamaica Ladies: Female Slaveholders and the Creation of Britain's Atlantic Empire](#) will be published in hard copy on 30 June (digital copies are already available). As described by Catherine Hall, "... free and freed women – always reliant on enslaved labour for their commercial and agricultural pursuits and household services – enjoyed personal benefits while both entrenching slavery and challenging the binary distinction between black and white. *Jamaica Ladies* makes an impressive and innovative contribution to our understanding of the gendering of colonial society."

Many writers of colour were honoured in this year's [Pulitzer Prize](#) ceremony, held online on 4 May. Nikole Hannah-Jones won the Commentary prize for *Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true*, a [personal essay](#) for the [1619 project](#).

Among this year's Pulitzer winners, Colson Whitehead's novel [The Nickel Boys](#), Jericho Brown's poetry collection [The Tradition](#), Michael R. Jackson's musical play [A Strange Loop](#), W. Caleb McDaniel's historical account [The Sweet Taste of Liberty](#) and composer Anthony Davis's opera [The Central Park Five](#) are all works by African Americans reflecting on the multifarious experiences of people of colour. Also included was a "special citation" for civil rights activist and journalist [Isa B. Wells](#) (1862-1931) for her "outstanding and courageous reporting on the horrific and vicious violence against African Americans during the era of lynching."

