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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teaching about transatlantic slavery

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Abstract

'Teaching about Transatlantic Slavery' was a three-year professional development project for teachers centring on the Historic Collections of Balliol College, University of Oxford, and the Museum of the American Revolution (MOAR) in Philadelphia. The project grew out of Balliol's 2021 exhibition, 'Slavery in the Age of Revolution', which was inspired by the work of Fellows Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Black Spartacus: the epic life of Toussaint Louverture* (2020) and Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: enslaved women, violence and the archive* (2016). This paper discusses how we approached the aims of the project, telling a fuller history by foregrounding the role of Black people in the struggle for abolition and increasing awareness of the lasting impact of transatlantic slavery on the way we live and think today. We will address how some of the challenges of working with the material in Balliol's collections became project strengths when we learnt to navigate bias and acknowledge and elaborate on the gaps and erasures in the historical record. We also acknowledge the diverse range of people who contributed and their importance to the consequent depth and effectiveness of the project. 'Teaching about Transatlantic Slavery' reached forty teachers and educators from the USA and the UK and has had lasting impact. The programme allowed teachers to practise teaching with objects, artwork, and primary source documents, deepen their subject knowledge, and develop skills for engaging in sensitive and difficult conversations around complex topics.

Résumé

« Enseigner l'esclavage transatlantique » était un projet de perfectionnement professionnel de trois ans destiné aux enseignants et axé sur les collections historiques de Balliol College (Université d'Oxford) et du Museum of the American Revolution (MOAR) de Philadelphie. Ce projet s'est développé à la suite de l'exposition « L'esclavage à l'ère de la révolution » organisée à Balliol en 2021, inspirée par les travaux de Sudhir Hazareesingh (Black Spartacus : la vie épique de Toussaint Louverture , 2020) et de Marisa J. Fuentes (Vies dépossédées : femmes esclaves, violence et archives, 2016). Cet article traite de l'approche des objectifs du projet : enrichir le récit historique en mettant en lumière le rôle des personnes noires dans la lutte pour l'abolition et sensibiliser à l'impact durable de l'esclavage transatlantique sur notre mode de vie et de pensée aujourd'hui. Les auteurs expliquent comment certaines difficultés à exploiter les collections de Balliol se sont transformées en atouts pour le projet en parvenant à composer avec les biais et en identifiant

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les lacunes et les omissions des archives historiques, et en les comblant. Ils rendent également hommage à la diversité des personnes ayant contribué au projet et au rôle important qu'elles ont joué pour assurer sa profondeur et son efficacité. Le projet « Enseigner l'esclavage transatlantique » a touché quarante enseignants et formateurs des États-Unis et du Royaume-Uni et a eu un impact durable. Il leur a permis de pratiquer l'enseignement à l'aide d'objets, d'œuvres d'art et de documents primaires, d'approfondir leurs connaissances du sujet et de développer des compétences pour mener des conversations sensibles et difficiles autour de thèmes complexes.

Introduction

How can an exhibition do justice to the experience of 12.5 million African people taken from their families, their homes and their communities, and sold into brutal slavery? How, especially, when those people and their experiences have been written out of the historical record by those who sought to make them an expendable resource? These were two of the foundational questions that came up as we curated Balliol Library's autumn 2021 exhibition, 'Slavery in the Age of Revolution'.

Balliol Library and Archives aims to mount two public exhibitions a year – sometimes drawing on known collections and at other times investigating the collections through a thematic lens. 'Slavery in the Age of Revolution' was prompted by Balliol alumnus, Oliver St Clair Franklin, who visited the library in 2019 and enthused about the research of Balliol Fellow, Sudhir Hazareesingh, on Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution, and his own Black History collecting interests. Having seen a few relevant items from Balliol's historic collections, he challenged the team to put on an exhibition about transatlantic slavery. The subject became urgent for the wider College as it commissioned research into the proceeds of slavery in the College endowment, published in 2021.

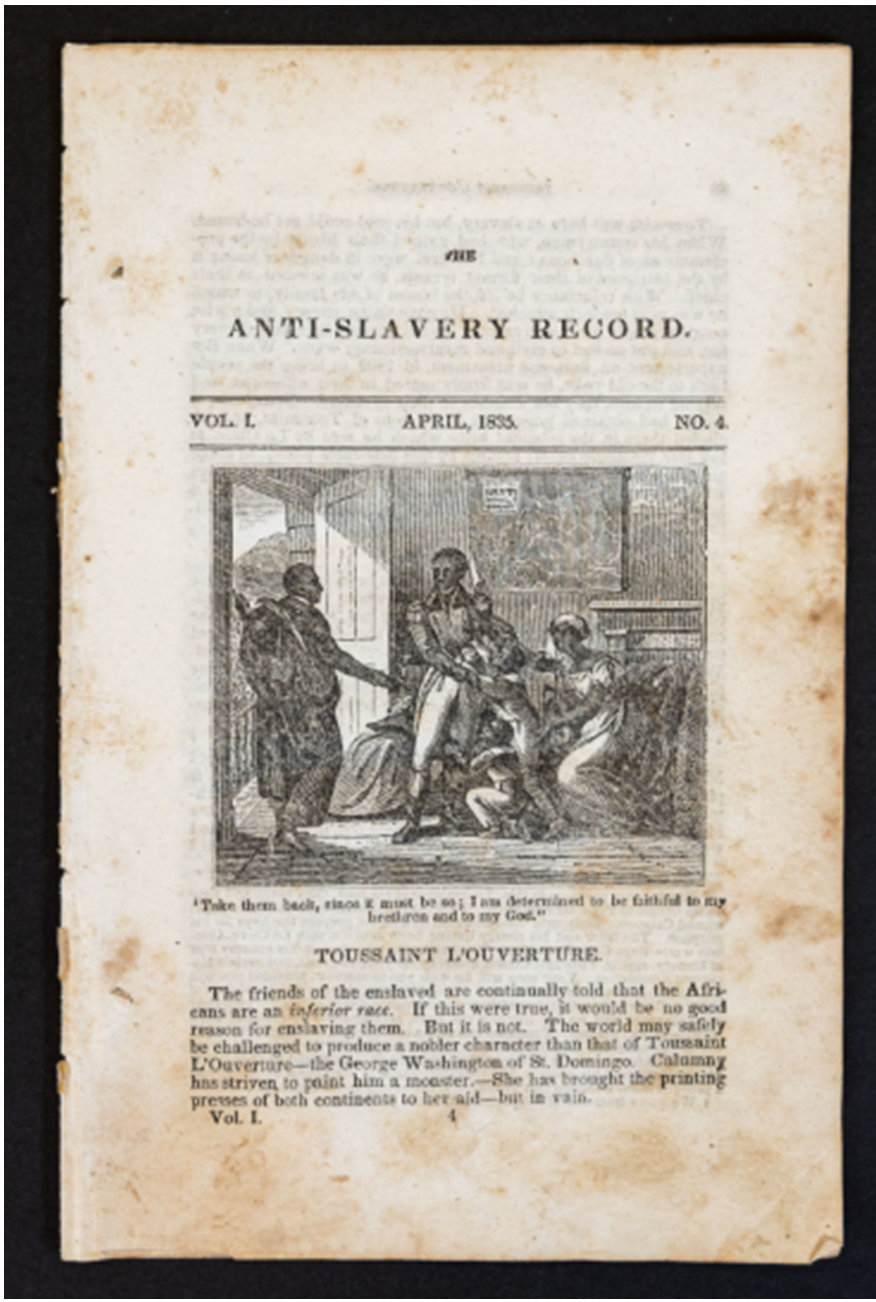
St Clair Franklin loaned, and subsequently permanently donated an 1835 pamphlet (Figure 1), *The Anti-Slavery Record,* depicting and discussing Louverture and his family. This, alongside Hazareesingh's 2020 book, *Black Spartacus*, guided us to centre our research for the exhibition on the Age of Revolutions, especially the Haitian revolution, giving us a temporal and geographical focus in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Caribbean. To capture the relevance to Balliol in particular, we also looked for evidence of attitudes to and involvement in slavery in the College's community during the period. The exhibition then formed the basis of 'Teaching about Transatlantic Slavery', a three-year-long professional development programme for educators put together with partners at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia.

Exhibition: Slavery in the Age of Revolution

Collaboration

We begin this article with a discussion of collaboration as it was central to every part of this project, with layers of contributions from a range of people ensuring the strength and authenticity of the final outcomes. Contributors included students, academics, alumni, library, archives and museum professionals, filmmakers, artists and designers. Enrichment through collaboration was seen both in terms of specific work, for example academic colleagues contributing in-depth essays to the exhibition

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THE

ANTI-SLAVERY RECORD.

VOL. I. APRIL, 1835. NO. 4.

"Take them back, since it must be so; I am determined to be faithful to my brethren and to my God."

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

The friends of the enslaved are continually told that the Africans are an *inferior race*. If this were true, it would be no good reason for enslaving them. But it is not. The world may safely be challenged to produce a nobler character than that of Toussaint L'Ouverture—the George Washington of St. Domingo. Calumny has striven to paint him a monster.—She has brought the printing presses of both continents to her aid—but in vain.

Vol. I. 4

Figure 1. First page of *The Anti-Slavery Record* Vol. I (4), 1835.

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catalogue, and in the nuance and depth added by each new person's perspective and ideas, for example a discussion with Marisa Fuentes alerted the staff curators to the need to foreground the bias and absences in the material we were exhibiting.

A key site of collaboration was the documentary film commissioned from the production company, Bear House Media (formerly per stellas), to support access to the exhibition content. The film was designed to allow a broader geographical audience for the exhibition, including the teachers participating in 'Teaching about Transatlantic Slavery' – many of whom were in the USA, at a time when movement was restricted by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was also hoped that, alongside the catalogue, it would allow the insights of the exhibition to be available after it closed. The filming process was unexpectedly pivotal to the development of the exhibition. Firstly, it led to the creation of original paper art by Nicola Dobrowolski (Dobrowolski Designs), expressive dioramas originally only intended to evoke locations and scenes for the film. These artworks, with their form inspired by an open book, serendipitously fitted perfectly into bookcases within the exhibition space and became a key part of the physical exhibition and catalogue.

The film also provided opportunities for inter-generational collaboration and incorporated the perspectives of younger people. We were fortunate to have several Balliol students contribute their voices – both by sharing their opinions and appearing in the film: in the choir, in an interview, and as the narrator. In addition we were able to hire five young professionals to work on the film, thanks to a donation from an alumnus. The perspectives and insights of the young professionals and students enriched the work we produced, from their research skills to their artistic contributions, and especially in sharing what this history and project meant to them – this was partly captured in a word art piece by one of the young professionals, which became the lining papers of the *Legacy Book*, another piece of original artwork (Figures 2a-c).

Project aims and curatorial choices

The aims of the project developed and evolved during the planning and research phase of the exhibition. Once we had identified some key themes and materials in our collections, we started to think about the narrative of the exhibition. This was supported by discussion with our collaborators, particularly Marisa Fuentes whose work seeks to 'elaborate on the negative space' of historical records. Speaking in the exhibition film, Fuentes explains her methodology:

> The whole story we have come to know has been drawn from European records. If that narrative is drawn from European records only, then the perspective of what happened during the slave trade, the scale of the slave trade are all drawn from those records, they're what all historians use, and historians tend to think that that's the truth, rather than consider that those records come with an incredible amount of bias. All of that erases Africans' experience, and the violence and horror and terror that they experienced. What I try to do is shift the gaze from those records to the actual people: how might we think about their experience onboard the ship? How might we think about their experience when they land in a place? What might they see, or

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Figures 2a-c. Top left: researcher-artist collaboration between Tamyah Jones (young professional on the film project) and Nicola Dobrowolski; top right: Sudhir Hazareesingh contributes interviews to the film; below: word art © 2021 Imani Grant (young professional on the film project) on the lining papers of Legacy Book. (All photographs: © 2021 Balliol College, Oxford.)

> hear, or smell? So, you take that record, and you turn it around. I like to think about it as elaborating on the negative space of the record. If someone is describing a scene of a person being whipped, for example, that person being whipped is also looking out at the scene. So, you can sort of write from their perspective with the same documents, what they would have witnessed, what they would have felt, what they would have seen. (Balliol College 2021: [online video] 17:15-18:50)

Fuentes's work in turn draws on Saidiya Hartman's method of critical fabulation which similarly seeks 'to displace the received or authorized account, and to imagine what might have happened or might have been said or might have been done' (Hartman 2008: 11).

Drawing strongly on the influence of the methodologies of Hartman and Fuentes and our other collaborators, we aimed to curate an exhibition that foregrounded the experiences of the enslaved, focusing on their resistance and abolitionist action, and including their voices and experiences to challenge the bias and power of the archive. We also wanted to ensure awareness of the lasting impact of transatlantic slavery on the way we live and think today.

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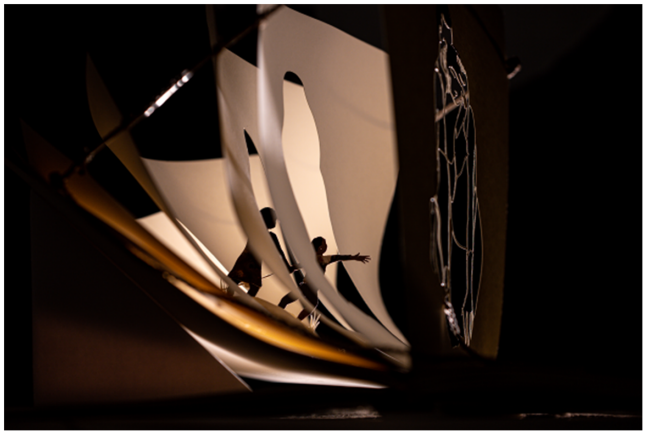


Figure 3. *The Separation*. Interpretive paper art, © 2021 Dobrowolski Designs for per stellas Ltd. Photograph © 2021 Balliol College, Oxford.

As previously discussed, one of the ways we attempted to elaborate on the negative space was to incorporate newly commissioned artwork. The art pieces were created to repopulate the empty spaces in contemporary records or to depict scenes inspired by first-person narratives of enslaved people. *The Separation* (Figure 3) depicts two children in full form and colour, reaching back towards their parents who are illustrated through cuts in paper, formed by negative space, evoking both personal loss and archival absence. This piece draws from Olaudah Equiano's narrative of the abduction of himself and his sister:

> One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both; and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, tied our hands, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. (Equiano 2003: 47)

First-hand accounts by enslaved or formerly enslaved people were also incorporated directly, as we started each section of the exhibition and catalogue with quotes, as demonstrated in Figure 4. This included more well-known accounts, such as those of Equiano (2003) and Mary Prince (2012), as well as of lesser-known figures, particularly women, to address absences of these perspectives in the material on display. We also ended captions with questions to encourage visitors to critically engage with the artefacts, rather than just accept them as unbiased and complete.

In the section, 'Plantation', we included a case study of the Beckford family, several of whom attended Balliol, and who owned plantations in Jamaica. Here, we had to avoid the easy route of re-stating information about these well-remembered figures and consequently overlooking the individuals who have been erased from history. We had to maintain a balance of addressing the Beckfords' gross power and the impact it had on people, without perpetuating that power by centring them in the narrative. So, we turned the focus on those they exploited, by attempting to trace the lives of the people whose labour built that power. But records are scant, so we depended on things like plantation holdings that recognized birth and death as changes in stock

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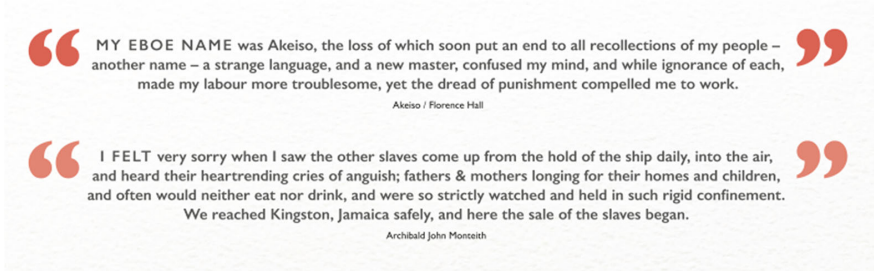


Figure 4. Section headers featuring the first-person narratives of Akeiso/Florence Hall (Browne and Sweet 2016) and Archibald John Monteith (Nelson and Kummer 1996), both enslaved in Jamaica.

levels. This gives rise to the question: 'How does one revisit the scene of subjection without replicating the grammar of violence?' (Hartman 2008: 4)

We drew out the names of two men from registers at Clarendon Parish, Buggaboo and Jammy, who had both died by 1829, Buggaboo at 100 and Jammy only 21 years old (The National Archives 1820, T 71/57; 1829, T 71/61). Slave registers, which were only required to be compiled between 1812 and 1834, often at three-year intervals, are brief but valuable starting points, typically including name – sometimes just a forename, possibly obscured by variant spellings across records; age and gender; 'colour', referring to racial category; "African or Creole", denoting whether they were born in Africa or the Caribbean; remarks, sometimes relating to familial relations or previous ownership; then finally increase and decrease, and cause thereof for each – in this column, birth, death, sale, and manumission were recorded. By reaching into the absences of such records, we can reconstruct a world between these two men. Both 'Creole', so both born into slavery in the Caribbean, one barely an adult and the other a century old at his death. What conditions allowed Buggaboo to live so long, and what conditions cut Jammy's life so short? How often did they interact, if at all? What role might an elder like Buggaboo have played in the community?

William Thomas Beckford was an absentee planter, whose estates and records were managed by his attorney, William Jackson. The 1820 register for his Clarendon estate records the death of a fifty-two-year-old African man registered as William Jackson, his identity wholly erased and subsumed by Beckford's attorney. We highlighted this entry alongside three people on one page of an 1817 record of Westmoreland Parish named only as 'Beckford', including a one-year-old African child, with no note of his parentage (The National Archives 1820, T 71/58; 1817 T 71/178). Such records were chosen to call attention to the archival negative space, laying out the absences in the historical record to emphasize for our audience how much information we are missing, how much we can never know about the experiences of enslaved people, because they were deliberately and consistently reduced and erased.

Case study: Encounters

To have been entirely led by the content and tone of our collections would have resulted in a skewed reflection of history, so while other exhibitions may present a chance to explore and highlight the collections for their own sake, it was important to

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Figure 5. *Itinerariu[m] Portugalle[n]siu[m] e Lusitania in India[m] [&] inde in occidentem [&] demum ad aquilonem*. Milan: 1508 [Balliol College, 580 c 11].

keep in mind that the goal of this exhibition was to use the collections simply as a starting point from which to examine this history.

With that in mind, we recognized the importance of beginning the exhibition narrative in Africa, but the collections hold limited material on or from Africa in this period, so we addressed this negative space in a variety of ways.

In our first case, 'Encounters', we featured an early sixteenth-century book of accounts of Portuguese and Italian voyages to Africa and the Americas, showing the earliest known separate map of Africa (Figure 5), which is skewed and centres Iberian trade in the places it names. In the caption we included the question 'Why do you think the west coast of Africa is disproportionately large on this map?' A map like this allows us to ask the viewers about perspective, to encourage them to question the accuracy and intention of historical record, but it does not ground us in the tangible history of Africa as we wanted.

One way we addressed this was to create relationships between materials, in this case a manuscript decorated with gold (Figure 6) and a set of gold weights and scales (Figure 7). The manuscript comes from Balliol's own collections, while the weights and scales were loaned from a private collection for the exhibition. Although we cannot say for certain where the manuscript's gold originates, framing this object within the exhibition's wider context, alongside the tools of African gold trade, allowed us to build a cohesive narrative which acknowledged from the start the use of African resources for European production.

We also used original artwork here, depicting the Benin kingdom as one example of a contemporary West African society (Figure 8), and created a trail with the Pitt

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Figure 6. Fifteenth-century Flemish manuscript book of hours [Balliol College, MS 384].



Figure 7. Gold weights and scales used in the Trans-Saharan trade [from the collection of Hugh and Colette Hawes]. Photograph reproduced with permission.

Rivers Museum (Figure 9), highlighting objects from western Africa from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, demonstrating traditions, crafts and ideas that help to acknowledge the people, places and practices affected by colonialism and transatlantic slavery.

Exhibition design

One question raised at the conference asked us how we approached writing an exhibition on such a sensitive topic in a way that wouldn't cause distress to our visitors. While we made no attempt to shroud the reality of this history for the sake of visitors' sensibilities, we were nevertheless conscious that the content would be upsetting. The structure of the exhibition itself was one way in which we addressed this, as it followed a clear, linear chronological order, physically and narratively, from early encounters between Europe, Africa and the Americas to the present day, with

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Figure 8. *The Benin Kingdom*. Interpretive paper art, © 2021 Dobrowolski Designs for per stellas Ltd. Photograph © 2021 Balliol College, Oxford.

Before Europeans began trading in West Africa, the Trans-Saharan trade was prominent, travelling across Africa and into Asia. Goods like salt from North Africa were traded for West African goods, including raw materials like ivory, and expertly made crafts.

By the early 15th century, some of these products were making their way to Europe, and people developed an appetite for West African crafts and resources.

4 Case 111 (Lower shelf)



Place: Sierra Leone

This 16th century ivory salt cellar (a container for salt) was likely commissioned by a Portuguese patron.

Place: Congo Coast

This 19th century ivory carving commissioned by English traveler Mary Kingsley shows how West African ivory craft, and European interest in it, persisted through the centuries.



5 Case 150

Both objects feature a variety of animals and symbols which hint at this meeting of cultures, what do you notice ?

Figure 9. From a trail at the Pitt Rivers Museum that Oxford made to accompany the exhibition, featuring Pitt Rivers accession numbers 1884.68.73 (salt cellar) and 1900.39.51 (Congolese carving). Images © University of Oxford, Pitt Rivers Museum.

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examples from our own student body of a more hopeful future. This structure lent a natural resolution and hopefulness as the exhibition came to an end. We also recognized that the exhibition would be a starting point for many to engage with this history more deeply, so provided postcards with suggestions of resources and further reading to help offer direction for any lines of enquiry or unanswered questions that the exhibition prompted for visitors.

We also considered how the space could offer comfort, which was happily an extension of accessible design considerations. This included providing seating at regular intervals, with the addition of soft fabrics and cushions, as well as a designated break area away from the main exhibition, with seats, lower lighting, boxes of tissues, and signage inviting visitors to take a pause if they needed it. We found that these additions were broadly helpful to visitors who needed rest breaks for various reasons, and we also saw the value of encouraging visitors to recognize and address the potential discomfort and distress caused by the content of the exhibition. Moreover, while the exhibition made clear the horrors and sorrows of transatlantic slavery, it also very deliberately invited visitors to bear witness to the resilience, strength and power of the enslaved and recognize the victories of their revolutionary action, from individual resistance to securing national independence.

Manoel Akure, one of the young professionals working on the documentary, created a short film about the exhibition, featuring interviews with his fellow young professionals. When asked what particularly struck him about the exhibition, Yonatan Tiruneh said, 'the paper art ... the way of depicting this horrific thing which is transatlantic slavery in this way without traumatizing you like most media does. I think that really stuck out to me. There is a threshold we must tread without retraumatizing people, and I think this exhibition succeeded in that'.

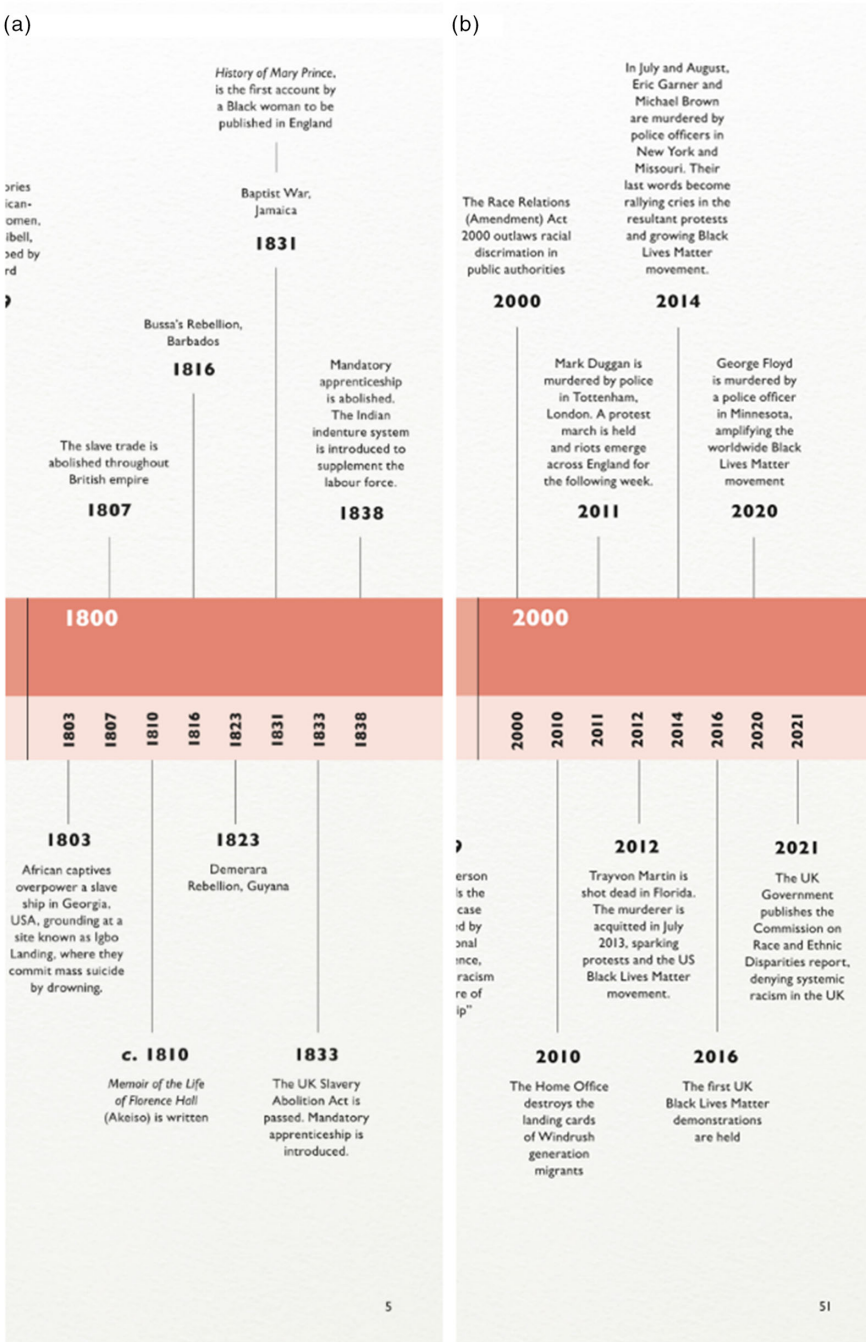
Timelines

We incorporated timelines, in the catalogue and at the end of the exhibition, which spanned from 1415, with the establishment of Portuguese trading posts in Africa, to 2021. The primary intention of the timelines was to fill some of the gaps in the exhibition's narrative, particularly addressing the colonial exploitation and expansion that continued after abolition, acknowledging that abolition was not the end of the violence of transatlantic slavery, and recognizing the modern reverberations of this history up to the present day.

Figures 10a-b show two sections of the timelines: 1807–1838 shows what happened after the slave trade was abolished in the British Empire – more rebellions until the abolition of slavery, then mandatory apprenticeship, then the Indian indenture system – further emphasizing the role of enslaved people in their own emancipation, as well as the systems of exploitation and extraction that persisted after the implementation of the Abolition of Slavery Act. Then we have the twenty-first century, where amongst accomplishments and breakthroughs, we highlighted the Windrush scandal, extrajudicial murders and the ensuing Black Lives Matter movement, and the government's publication of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (2021), in which they denied systemic racism in the UK.

While only a small part of the exhibition, this section's impact was clear, with several visitors commenting that they were unaware of even some of the most recent

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Figures 10a-b. Timelines featured in the exhibition. © 2021 Balliol College, Oxford.

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events, so it helped us present a fuller history than we could with the collections alone.

Teaching about transatlantic slavery

'This young future teacher's approach has been changed forever, and I feel grateful that I can start my career having had this experience rather than adjusting after working for however long without it' (feedback from one of the educators who attended the initial Teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade seminar series in 2021).

During the initial research phase of the exhibition, it became clear that educators needed more support to teach the complex and nuanced history of transatlantic slavery, a history that is crucial to understanding the modern Atlantic world. With this in mind, we decided to broaden the impact of 'Slavery in the Age of Revolution' by designing an associated professional development opportunity for educators. The initial aims of the 'Teaching about Transatlantic Slavery' project were to:

- increase awareness of the importance of transatlantic slavery to the industrialization of 'the West' and its lasting impact on the way we live and think today
- tell a fuller story by foregrounding the role of Black people in the struggle for abolition; looking at the strategies of resistance used by the enslaved; and exploring the cultural influences and the manifestations of culture that influenced and supported resistance
- increase the confidence of teachers to teach about transatlantic slavery by facilitating reciprocal learning between teachers in the UK and USA through sharing pedagogy, practice and resources
- increase the number of schools choosing to teach transatlantic slavery at all key stages.

In addition, pre-course participant surveys identified the following additional needs:

- deeper understanding of the subject matter
- broader knowledge of West African histories and cultures
- guidance on how to share this information with students and faculty, emphasizing the importance of the subject matter while using appropriate, sensitive language
- ideas for inclusive, accessible, and stimulating lessons and resources for students.

We collaborated with the Museum of the American Revolution (MOAR) in Philadelphia to run a three-part professional development programme for educators – mostly secondary school teachers – from the UK and USA. The programme began online in 2021 with a cohort of nineteen educators attending four online seminars. In summer 2022, the group attended a fully funded five-day conference in Philadelphia, followed by another at Balliol in summer 2023, with thirty-eight participants. This was supported by funding from Balliol College, American Airlines (who provided the transatlantic flights),

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Oliver St Clair Franklin, who put us in touch with our American partners at the Museum, and other private donors.

The first phase of the programme took place between September 2021 and February 2022 in the form of an online seminar series which used the 'Slavery in the Age of Revolution' exhibition and film as a jumping off point for four afternoons of online talks and workshops around how to teach transatlantic slavery in secondary schools.

A deeper understanding of the subject matter was developed by talks from Professor Marisa J. Fuentes, Professor Toby Green, Dr Sudhir Hazareesingh, Dr José Lingna Nafafé, and Dr Philip Mead. Guidance on how to share this information with students and faculty, emphasizing the importance of the subject matter while using appropriate, sensitive language was covered in a workshop by The Black Curriculum. Ideas for inclusive, accessible, and stimulating lessons and resources for students were discussed in workshops with the Oxford History Faculty, the per stellas production company, and Adrienne Whaley from MOAR who got us all thinking using objects from the Museum's collections. We were privileged to round off with a discussion and kora performance from griot, Kadialy Kouyate, which helped us to begin to think more deeply about West African histories and cultures.

Post-seminar feedback showed over half of the respondents having already implemented changes following the seminar series and 83 per cent of respondents feeling more confident advocating for more accurate and sensitive teaching of transatlantic slavery. One teacher wrote, 'Thank you for running the seminars. They were really eye-opening and have had a big impact on me, my students and my department.'

In summer 2022, the group travelled to Philadelphia for five days of learning at MOAR (Figures 11a-d). Whilst still addressing all the programme aims, this conference focused on American history with a particular emphasis on the various meanings of freedom and liberty in an age of political, social, and scientific revolutions. With privileged access to the Museum galleries and collections, participants practised teaching with objects, artwork, and primary source documents as a method of engaging different types of learners across age, interest, and content knowledge levels. They deepened their subject knowledge with talks from subject specialists, thought about the interconnectedness of history and place with a Revolutionary Philadelphia walking tour and a day trip to Mount Vernon, and engaged with learning through art during a living history performance of a young James Forten[1] and in a session with Sangue, Drum Master, musician, teacher, and dancer.

In the feedback from the MOAR conference, all respondents said that it had significantly enhanced their content knowledge and helped them place ideas, events, or people within a fuller historic context. Participants also felt they had enhanced their professional growth and deepened their reflection and self-assessment of best practices and expanded their knowledge of resources available beyond the classroom

[1] James Forten (1766–1842) was a sail maker in Philadelphia who became a successful businessman, an abolitionist and a philanthropist. The Young James Forten performance is available online as one of the digital resources created for the 2023 exhibition 'Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia' (Museum of the American Revolution, 2023).

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Figures 11a-d. Philadelphia 2022: From the top: object session at MOAR; tour of Mount Vernon; eating together at a West African restaurant in Philadelphia; participants with Drum Master Sangue. Photographs reproduced with permission.

walls to enhance student learning and to further their own professional knowledge and skill. Some of the new ideas that educators said they were playing with after the conference were: 'contradictions, duality, and complexity in historical figures and how we remember them', 'how to address economic elements and the active role of financial institutions', 'witness objects and physical history', 'multiple perspectives and layered history', 'pulling on the tangential and embracing interconnectedness even if unexpected', and 'challenging archival narratives'.

The feedback reflected the benefits of being able to go deeply into the subject, for example:

> Thank you so much for a terrific week of learning.... The scholars and speakers this week all brought a unique perspective to the time period and it was beneficial to help me think about the topic from various viewpoints.

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Summer 2023 saw Balliol host an expanded cohort of thirty-eight educators for a five-day conference. We decided to invite more educators to attend as we wanted to extend the geographical reach of the UK contingent which was originally focused on Balliol's outreach link area in Hertfordshire. We also hoped that the original group would share their learning and enthusiasm with the new educators on the programme.

To bring the new group together and keep conversations going before meeting in person, we organized two interim online meetings featuring talks from Hannah Cusworth, historian, curator and history education consultant, and Angeline Morrison, singer, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter.

The Balliol Conference programme included workshops at the Pitt Rivers Museum, the History of Science Museum and Balliol's Historic Collection Centre. Speakers included Dr Peggy Brunache and Dr Christine Whyte from the Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies, Justice2History, and Oxford's Department of Education, and an extract from the play, *SOLD* (Daley 2023) about the life of Mary Prince by Kuumba Nia Arts and Unlock the Chains Collective. There was also a day trip to Bristol to take a walking tour of the city, visit Georgian House and participate in a knowledge sharing session with members of projects at University of Bristol, led by Dr Joanna Burch-Brown and Dr Marie-Annick Gournet at St Paul's Community Centre (Figures 12a-d).

Participants' comments after the conference spoke to fulfilment of the aims and needs that we had identified at the beginning of the programme, for example:

- deeper subject knowledge: 'This week has been fulfilling personally but also revelatory. Despite studying TAST [Transatlantic Slave Trade] in "some" depth I have learnt so much more. Back to the classroom! Lots of work to do!'
- tell a fuller story by foregrounding the role of Black people in the struggle for abolition: 'I will teach resistance in a more positive way. Capture their love and take pride in their resistance.'
- guidance on how to share this information with students and faculty: 'I will continue to have these conversations with other colleagues with more conviction and confidence.'

One of the most important outcomes to participants was the support network they formed during the programme in the safe space created to share and ask questions. They were able to exchange different pedagogical approaches and new tools and tips to take into the classroom. They also talked about the benefit of hearing alternative perspectives, in terms of ethnicity, nationality, setting, or curricular differences:

> This week has built my confidence to go back and have conversations, create resources and make changes. Connections, conversations and resources have been invaluable and I have learnt so much.

> Another amazing opportunity to make connections, change perspectives and expand knowledge. I have been challenged by colleagues old and new to think deeply about my practice and understanding of the topic. It will have a transformational impact on my school curriculum and personal practice for years to come.

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Figures 12a-d. Oxford 2023: From the top: Participants collaborating in a pedagogy reflection session led by Oxford's Department of Education; with colleagues from projects at Bristol University after a knowledge-sharing session at St Paul's Community Centre and a meal at Glen's Kitchen; in an object handling session at the Pitt Rivers Museum; in a lesson planning session using the paper art. Photographs reproduced with permission.

Teaching about West Africa

One of the key knowledge areas that participants expressed they would like to develop was West African histories and cultures. We integrated this into the programme through conversations and performances with musicians like Sangue and Kadialy Kouyate, sessions with academics studying West African history such as Toby Green and José Lingna Nafafé, and object-handling sessions with curators at the Pitt Rivers Museum. Speaker Penny Brunache uses her 'archaeological research of Caribbean foodways of enslaved people as the basis of my interactive culinary events for public outreach' (Brunache 2019: 149). During the conferences participants shared food together at a West African restaurant in Philadelphia and Glen's Kitchen at St Paul's Community Centre in Bristol serving Caribbean food.

These different sources of knowledge suggested a variety of ways to teach and many participants expressed the desire to know more about West African and Caribbean perspectives as exemplified by this feedback:

> I would still like to learn more about the impact of slavery in the locations where it happened, West Africa or the Caribbean would be the two places left

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> to explore in greater detail. We never got the history from a West African or Caribbean perspective and that feels like it is missing.

Another participant said they would like to find out more about 'teaching of African Kingdoms before teaching TAST [Transatlantic Slave Trade] and how and when that is happening in schools.'

A desirable extension to this project would be to involve educators and academic institutions in West Africa and the Caribbean. Time, funding and knowledge constraints meant that this was not part of the original programme and so there is huge untapped potential for knowledge sharing and collaboration in this direction.

Legacies and looking forward

One of the words that came up a lot throughout the project was 'legacy'. Most obviously, this is in terms of the legacies of slavery – both in the broader historic sense, and in the localized understanding explored in the proceeds of slavery report. But we also talked a lot about the legacies of the project itself, what impact it could have and how to ensure something lasting and positive came of it.

The teacher's programme is itself a legacy and when selecting educator participants, we sought those who were part of networks, committees, project groups, or in leadership roles, who could go on to share their learning with wider audiences and propagate its impact. So not only did we see teachers implement encouraging changes to their own schemes of work following the programme, but members of the group have since presented at the US Embassy in London, TeachMeet, and the Historical Association Conference. In May 2025, one of the teachers published a school textbook, *Transatlantic Slavery: impact and legacy – a case study of Liverpool* (McCormick and Amery 2025), featuring a guest chapter by another teacher he met on the course and inspired by the pioneering work of Justice2History and Richard Kennett and colleagues who produced the *Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery: origins, impact and legacy* textbook (Kennett 2021).

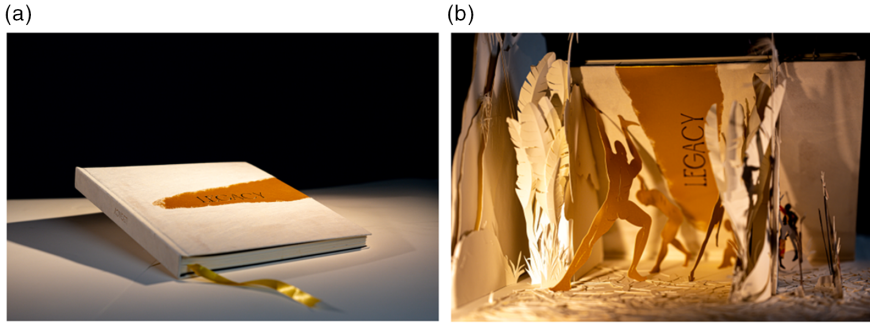
In July 2024, another participant invited paper artist, Nicola Dobrowolski, to lead a session at her school. Dobrowolski worked with the students to create an immersive exhibition using her original art, with the students designing the lighting and soundscapes to bring the pieces to life. One student said of the session:

> Simultaneously beautiful, informative and thought provoking. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to explore this journey through such an immersive format and highlighting the untold stories that must be central to our understanding of our history. As a history and art student that wants to study History of Art, potentially at Oxford, this really inspired me and let me explore and develop that interest.

Their feedback summarizes something we hoped for in terms of legacy: it created an opportunity for a young person to connect to history in a new way, while inspiring them to pursue their interests and education.

This re-use and sharing of exhibition material is another of the legacies. The high-resolution images produced for the film and catalogue have enabled the teachers to

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Figures 13a-b. *Legacy Book*, bespoke book, © 2021 Dobrowolski Designs for per stellas Ltd and the book as part of centre piece. *The Revolution*. Interpretive paper art, © 2021 Dobrowolski Designs for per stellas Ltd. Photographs © 2021 Balliol College, Oxford.

share and discuss artefacts with their students that they otherwise could not, while Oliver's loan of *The Anti-Slavery Record* (American Anti-Slavery Society 1835) was pivotal to the exhibition. Loaning or otherwise sharing material and resources beyond an institution's own projects is central to this work in helping us best tell these stories, while also allowing special collections to reach a wider audience.

With legacy in mind, Dobrowolski made the 'Legacy Book' (Figures 13a-b), a blank book intended to serve as an interactive art piece, inviting contributions from visitors to the exhibition to capture new stories and legacies of this history. We'll conclude with one of the contributions included here:

> As someone who is from the Caribbean, my own history is thoroughly entangled with this exhibition. Taking it all in I am reminded that this [is] not only history but also my present. But more importantly that the trauma of slavery is not my only legacy, generational trauma is not the end, between those traumas is a reminder of our power to revolt, our resilience and that the other side of that legacy is generational joy.

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