A Voyage Around the Slave Ports of Britain

By Nigel Pocock
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Introduction

What follows is a journey around the slaving ports of Britain, starting in London. While the focus is primarily on the ports from which slave ships made at least one voyage, it is not limited to this focus. We will also be looking at other significant stories, for example at individuals in various coastal towns that benefited from the compensation awarded to slave owners in 1834.

The graphs below show all the British ports listed in the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database. While this is the most thorough collation of the slaving voyages to date, it is not exhaustive.

The picture (above) shows the proposed vessel, at the time of writing (Dec. 2015), moored in Denmark. Norway-Denmark itself had a slaving fleet, and one of these is the best-known wrecked slave ship of all, the Fredensborg.

A popular ‘algorithm’ is that of the ‘triangular trade’. It is now being increasingly recognized that this model is a crude approximation, and that the reality was far more complex. The John, for example, made a voyage in 1713 ostensibly for Barbados and Virginia, out of Lyme. The reality was more complex, for she made for first Cork, then Barbados, followed by New England (Boston), after that Barbados (again), then to Guinea, back to Barbados, only then returning to
Lyme. The trade for gold, ivory, redwood (and other items) were absolutely intertwined in amongst the other objective of trading in slaves.¹

There was also an African coastal trade, where slaves were picked up, and then traded for (e.g.) ivory, elsewhere on the coast.² In 1712 the Anglesea cleared Gravesend for the Guinea coast. She then cruised between the rivers Punge and Nunez (modern Sierra Leone) purchasing both ivory and slaves. The slaves were then exchanged for more ivory, at which point the Anglesea headed for home. In need of further repairs in Sierra Leone, a consequence of which led to further trading for slaves and ivory, the Anglesea then sailed back to England, arriving in Dartmouth in 1713.

Before 1698 (the 10% Act ending the Royal African Company monopoly) voyages are often difficult to trace, due to false destinations, for example, the Speedwell of Dartmouth (see below).

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¹ Nigel Tattersfield (1998). *The Forgotten Trade*, London, Pimlico, 259-60. In this monograph I am indebted to this pioneering text, as will be seen from the footnotes.
² Tattersfield, 424-5 (note 100).
1. London

Deptford

Deptford was significant to the slave trade in a different kind of way. It was a pioneer trading port. Indeed, it may have been through London that the first Africans came to Britain - a Roman spoon, with an African carving, has been found near Southwark Bridge.3

Associated with Deptford were:

Sir John Hawkins (1532-1595) - Treasurer to the Navy. He lived in the Treasurer’s House, Deptford Dockyard. ‘Father of the English Slave Trade’, his first slaving trip was from Plymouth in 1562.4 William Hawkins (d.1589) - elder brother of Sir John. There is a memorial plaque in St. Nicholas’ Church, Deptford. Other memorials - in the burial register in St. Nicholas’ Church, are those of a number of black people, simply referred to as ‘Affee, a black’ (1676); ‘Jane Williams, a black’ (1690); ‘Richard Murray, a black’ (1696). On 24th December, 1771, ‘Nash Roberts, a black from Butcher-Row’ (near modern Limehouse BR Station) was buried here.

Among notable Deptford happenings was an incident in December 1772, when a sea captain beat a Negro boy to death.5 On 23rd February, 1787, 350 black emigrants were ‘repatriated’ under a disastrous resettlement scheme.

The West India Dock

The West India Dock (Isle of Dogs) was opened in 1802, in order to handle the increased volume of sugar from the West Indies.

Black Communities

Black communities, including runaways and freed slaves, lived in Mile End, Stepney, Paddington and St. Giles.6 All along the poorer reaches of the Thames there would have been pockets of black populations. Slave capture gangs would have been operating, often at dead of night. The London Chronicle (XXXIII, 1773) reports how a Negro shot himself in the head after being taken on board a vessel in the Thames. This was just before his marriage to a white woman. Needless to say, nothing was done to being the perpetrators to justice.

It is not generally known that London was by far the largest slaving port in Britain in the early 1700s. Here are some salutary facts to be pondered . . . The graphs at the end of this section illustrate this well.

4 Walvin, op cit, 303.  
5 Joan Anim-Addo, op cit, 46.  
6 Ibid, 37.
Slaves embarked: 750,000, 33% (of known sources) from Gold Coast
Mortality rate: 15%
Main disembarkations: Jamaica, 36%

- Superiority over handling imported crops from the West Indies (over other British ports). For example:

  From Jamaica, 1763 - 530,625 cwt muscavado to London
  - 148,994 cwt to all other British ports

  From Jamaica, 1774 - 618,473 cwt (to London)
  - 281,255 cwt (other British ports)

- London therefore had a larger share of the overall benefit to the British economy, while Liverpool had the largest volume of the carrying trade.

**Parliament**

- Around 50 - 60 MPs had holdings in the West Indies, or commercial interests there in the 1820s. The West India lobby was the most powerful single interest group in the commons. Sir Thomas Johnson, MP, mayor of Liverpool, was partly responsible for one of the first slave ships, the ironically named *Blessing*, to leave his city.

- In 1788, there were more than 60 West India merchants in the Commons, mostly merchants in London.

- Britain was unique among the slaving nations, in that policy was the direct result of Parliament, and especially the Board of Trade.

- Parliament authorised the West India Dock Company. The chairman was George Hibbert, a slave merchant, who was also the driving force behind the West India Docks.

- *Free Trade Act 1750*, was based on papers gathered by the Board of Trade - this was a bill favouring free trade to Africa, including slavery.

- *Free Port Act 1766*, enabled foreign vessels to carry from ports in the West Indies, Africans who had been captured and imported in British vessels.

- In the 1790s the British Government was the largest purchaser of captured Africans. Between 1795 - 1808 (the very eve of abolition) they paid for 13,400 Africans for West India regiments, at the then enormous cost of £925,000. These deals were concealed in an unaudited account called ‘Army Extraordinaries’. In 1806 the Government negotiated (with Dawson of Liverpool) for between 2,000 - 4,000 captured Africans ‘... of the tribes of the Gold Coast ... before the act [sic] takes effect.’ In the 12 months before the Abolition Act took effect (ending 1st March, 1808), the British Government purchased 1,000 Africans for the military.

- Headquarters for the Royal African Company was in London.
The Zong

- The Guildhall was where the famous Zong case (*Gregson v. Gilbert*) was tried, on the 6th March, 1783. The owners of the slave-ship Zong were William, John and James Gregson of Liverpool, with Edward Wilson and James Aspinall. Mansfield found for the owners against the underwriters, who had refused to pay. Thus murder of slaves who were ill was justified, and the spirit of the law to prevent fraud, ignored. Africans were not taken seriously as people with rights.
Number of slaves delivered, showing the dominance of Liverpool
(after Richardson, 2003)
Relative percentages of slaves delivered, showing first the dominance of London, then Liverpool (Based on Richardson, 2003)
2. Gravesend

In 1712 the Anglesea cleared Gravesend for the Guinea coast. She then cruised between the rivers Punge and Nunez (modern Sierra Leone) purchasing both ivory and slaves. The slaves were then exchanged for more ivory, at which point the Anglesea headed for home. In need of further repairs in Sierra Leone, a consequence of which led to further trading for slaves and ivory, the Anglesea then sailed back to England, arriving in Dartmouth in 1713.

2. Rochester

Hundreds of West Country sailors joined Queen Elizabeth’s fleet of four vessels here, which were designed to join Sir John Hawkins’ nine vessels that later cleared from Plymouth in 1567.7

3. Ramsgate

There is at least one record of re-exported slaves from Ramsgate. In December 1718, Captain George Long slipped anchor in the Ramsgate ship, Elizabeth, 100 tons, possibly for Jamaica, but certainly for Charleston, South Carolina. His final cargo consisted of 48 Africans.8 Robert Burridge (on behalf of John Burridge & Co) used the Endeavour of Ramsgate for a voyage to the plantations in Virginia out of Lyme.9 Whether this was directly involved in trading slaves is not known; but any trading in plantation goods almost certainly involved support of slavery in some way, however small.

4. Deal (‘The Downs’)  

![](image)

Deal had the advantage of a deep-water channel, sheltered by the Goodwin Sands. Generally known as ‘The Downs’. Agents of the Royal African Company, and the South Sea Company, were both at Deal, which attests to its importance.10 The Bowles and Crispe families were in Deal, and

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7 Tattersfield, 195.  
8 Tattersfield, 381.  
9 Tattersfield, 233.  
10 Tattersfield, 204.
founded the Company of Merchants Trading into Africa (1631). They also financed the Guinea Company—the forerunner of the Royal African Company (RAC). The alcoholic Valentine Bowles was court-martialled out of the navy, only to become the RAC factor (business rep) in Deal. Thomas and William Bowles both held senior positions in the South Sea Company (SSC) during the years in which it held the asiento. Both also held £1,100 of stock (about £83,000 today). William became a director of the SSC, and MP for Bridport (1727) and Bewdley (1741). Tobias Bowles was Mayor or Deal (1700, 1712-14). While Deal probably had little in terms of local products that were directly relevant to the slave trade, nonetheless such things as herrings were sent out as food for the slaves, for example, by Daniel Mann, placed aboard the Whydah. It is likely that Deal men served on slave ships, for example, William Boys, in 1726. He stepped on board the Luxborough Galley of London, anchored in the Downs, as first mate. This was a substantial vessel of 340 tons and 26 guns. Six-hundred slaves were intended, and, in the event, about 33% of the slaves died in the middle passage, more than twice the average rate. Later in life, Boys (d. 1774) became manager for the SSC in the West Indies.

There are at least two recorded voyages out of Deal. The first, a local Snauw, financed by Tobias Bowles, was wrecked off Gambia, and nothing is known of the cargo, whether it consisted of slaves or not.

The second voyage is that of Captain Joshua Anley, financed by Henry Alexander Primrose (in turn supplied by Samuel Betteress and Christopher Astley of London), in the sloop, Samuel. Huge numbers of beads were in the cargo, presumably to function as currency, as well as cowrie shells (originally from the Maldives). Between 95-98 slaves were delivered to William Allen of Barbados in June, 1720. Primrose was Tobias Bowles’ son-in-law.

5. Dover

On 26th December, 1712, Captain Henry Pascall in the Friend’s Adventure, cleared Dover. His acknowledged destination was said to be Nevis, and he arrived in Barbados in June 1714. The final cargo was that of plantation goods, and 9 people of African origin.

6. Portsmouth

As will be seen from the graphs above, there were six recorded slaving voyages out of Portsmouth. This is almost certainly, as with others records, an under-estimate.

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11 Tattersfield, 204-5.
12 Tattersfield, 206.
13 Spanish, ‘contract’. This was a contract to provide a specified number of slaves for the Spanish empire.
14 Tattersfield, 207.
15 Tattersfield, 209.
16 Tattersfield, 209-11.
17 Tattersfield, 362.
18 Aggrey Bead: The Arabs had blue beads that were used as currency. These ousted cowrie shells, but retained the name ‘aggrey’, used for the shells (M. D. R. Jefferies, African Studies, Vol. 20, Issue 21, 1961).
19 Tattersfield, 362.
20 Tattersfield, 380.
As can be seen from the graph, these were mostly in the early 1700s, with one late voyage. Captain Digby Keeble appears to have been the first to venture on such a journey, in 1710, when he cleared from the customs house on board the *Three Crownes* on 7th January of that year. On 8th November he arrived in Nevis, and disembarked about 200 slaves.

All in all, at least 1,300 slaves were traded by vessels operating out of Portsmouth. The bulk of these came from Senegambia and the Gold Coast, with disembarkation being in Nevis (nearly half), with the remainder in Martinique, and lesser numbers in Barbados and Maryland.

Ships of the line out of Portsmouth were used to convoy slave ships, for example Valentine Bowles (d. 1711), in 1697. Other vessels, such as the *Ekins Frigate*, touched at Portsmouth *en route* for Guinea, then Jamaica (where 359 Africans were disembarked).

Portsmouth also provided a boat-building and servicing facility for slave ships. These were mainly sloops (illustration below), carrying slaves along the coast to Royal African Company barracoons (slave pens). Sloops were much more maneuverable that ocean-going square riggers, and ideal for river estuaries. Between 1758-1774, there were around two slaving voyages a year out of Portsmouth.

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21 Tattersfield, 206.
22 Tattersfield, 212.
23 Tattersfield, 223.
7. Cowes

Cowes will probably seem an unexpected slaving port to most people, yet it was witness to at least four slaving voyages.

As will be seen from the graph, four of these voyages were fairly substantial for the period. A mean average of 272 slaves were embarked, making a total of over 1,000 slaves. Of these slaves, the majority came from West-Central Africa, meaning the region around Angola, and also the Gold Coast. They were then shipped out to Jamaica and the Carolinas, with 24% going to Antigua, and a small number to Barbados.

In this case, the pioneering voyage appears to have been that of Captain Cleland on the *Annapolis*, on 26th January, 1748. Little is known of this voyage, and the *Annapolis* returned to London on 10th July, 1749.
8. Southampton

Slave trader John Barbot (SEE OTHER SOURCES) was local to the Southampton area, but made his voyages from London. The Mary Anne (1700) of Warsash (SE of Southampton, near Hamble le Rice) is such an example. Captain Israel Browne cleared Portsmouth for Guinea, intending to disembark his cargo in Jamaica. The owners were William Pafford and Peter Hawkesworth & Co.
Slaves were disembarked in Nevis, but the numbers are unknown. Several atrocities were committed by Captain Browne. After his trial, Captain Browne went back to sea, and Guinea, in the Wright Galley (327 slaves to Barbados, 1719).

One guineaman that did clear Southampton was the Dutch *Dunkervell* in 1699.

### 9. Poole

Again, this might seem a surprising port for slave-trading, and is very likely an underestimate. The graph shows six of eight known voyages. The picture that emerges seems to suggest a relationship between these voyages, as nearly all of them embark slaves in the Gambia, are registered in Poole itself (only one in London), and the only known owners are William Joliffe and John Guerard (three out of eight).

Nearly 1,500 slaves were known to have been embarked, 80% of them from the Senegambia region, the remaining 20% from Sierra Leone. Just over 80% of these Africans were then taken to the Carolinas, with 19% to Antigua. The mean size of the vessels was 114 tons.

The first of these voyages was that of James Hunt, in the *Elizabeth*, who departed on 26th February, 1755. After purchasing 135 slaves in the Gambia, these were taken to Charleston, South Carolina, disembarking 112 slaves on 21st August, 1755.

The largest voyage out of Poole was that of Captain Richard Watts, on the snauw, *Molly*, 150 tons. Departing on 6th December, 1758, she embarked 230 slaves, of which 200 were disembarked in Charleston, on 30th June, 1759. William Joliffe and John Guerard were the owners and investors.

William Barfoot of Poole re-exported slaves from Barbados to the American plantations in 1722. Both William Barfoot and William Joliffe (of Poole) traded with global businessmen Richard Oswald. Between 1751-60 Joliffe sent out nine slaving ventures to Richard Oswald at Sierra Leone/Bance Island, disembarking their slaves at Charleston.

Both Poole and Weymouth had a high level of plantation orientated trading activity. However, both harbours were of shallow draft and therefore limited and difficult to use by ocean-going vessels.

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24 Tattersfield, 223-4, 359.
25 Tattersfield, 214, 217.
26 Tattersfield, 224.
27 Tattersfield, 225.
28 Tattersfield, 224.
10. Weymouth

This town had a high level (like Poole) of plantation-related trading interests, but shared the same difficulties, due to a harbour that was too shallow for larger vessels to use.29

The Randall family of Weymouth smuggled rum. They were probably related to Richard Randall of Topsham (see below), who was in the re-export slave trade from Barbados to Charleston. Thomas Randall of Weymouth entered the Guinea trade in 1717. The official destination was Madeira, but a huge cargo of beans rather indicates otherwise—this was a slaver, and the beans were food for slaves. The Randalls’ ship was the *Flying Brigantine*.30

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29 Tattersfield, 224.
30 Tattersfield, 225.
11. Guernsey

The figures for Guernsey are unexpected and surprising. They are also shrouded in some secrecy. At least three of the vessels were registered in Lancaster. Not a single owner is recorded. The outcomes of the voyages are frequently unclear. The period of activity appears to be mainly in the 1750s. About 1,300 slaves are thought to have embarked, with disembarkations in Martinique, Barbados, and the Virgin Islands.

12. Bridport

The Way family. Benjamin Way was the major stockholder in the slaver Cecilia from London to Guinea (see TA-DB for stats?). Benjamin Way worked with James Gould of Dorchester. Where Benjamin Way led, John Burridge (junior), followed. Benjamin Way purchased half of the Bybrook Plantation in Jamaica, formerly owned by the Helyar brothers, William and John, of East Coker, Somerset. Joseph Way had as an associate Abraham Elton, presumably connected to the Eltons of Clevedon Court, near Bristol. Nathaniel Gundry of Bridport imported 50 tons of tobacco with his partners John Burridge (senior) and Robert Burridge (junior).

PIC OF CLEVEDON COURT.
13. Lyme Regis

Lyme Regis from the west showing (B) Portland, and (C) the Cobb (1723)

Lyme Regis had the attraction that it was cheaper than London, with lower port fees, refitting costs, victualling charges and wages. However, there was the difficulty of being further from the financial and mercantile hub of the trade.

There is only one known voyage. This was by Captain Arthur Raymond in the Friendship, owned by Robert Burridge. The Friendship slipped anchor on 22nd December, 1725, heading for an unknown part of Africa, thereupon she made for Barbados. About 130 slaves had been embarked, and 124 arrived, an impressively low mortality rate of 5% (less than half of the usual average of 12-14%).

While Robert Burridge seems to have financed only one slaving voyage, John Burridge put out five, four out of London, and one out of Bristol. These were between 1706-12.

Robert Burridge (d. 1675) moved from Taunton in around 1650 to Lyme Regis, in order to supervise the family’s shipments of cloth. Cotton was the first truly globalised industry, and it involved slaves. Robert became mayor, and leadingmerchant in the town. Lyme was originally built on a wool export trade, and then the import of Virginia tobacco, which was then taken to Bristol for re-processing, a small part of a vast interconnection of capitalist enterprises.

The Burridges took over the import business of the Tucker family, who traded in slave-produced plant products such as sugar, tobacco, cotton, and indigo. When Walter Tucker died in 1681, Robert Burridge junior took over the company. There are many references to slaves in the

35 Tattersfield, 259.
37 Tattersfield, 230.
account books of brothers John (b. 1651) and Robert Burridge (junior, b. 1653). The four Tucker brothers were Walter & John (in Lyme), Samuel (in Rotterdam), and William (in Barbados). Between 1650-70, Walter & John dominated the merchant trade from Lyme to Virginia and Barbados. Lyme was unique in that it owed its continued existence to one family, the Burridges. This family, based in London and Lyme, used ports all over the West Country, which shows how accountability and responsibility cannot be simply apportioned to any one person or locality.

In 1703, nearly half of all the Cobb (see illustration) dues. In the Christmas quarter they imported 137,300 lbs of tobacco, presumably all slave-grown and harvested.

Francis Read was a slaving captain for the Burridges. As was John Butcher, captain of the Friendship (1705). On this voyage were two Negroes, presumably being sold after having outlived their novelty and usefulness as servants (or mistresses?), in Jamaica. In 1706 the London Galley traded for slaves, sugar, logwood, indigo, cocoa and other products on behalf of Benjamin Way and John Burridge (jun).

The Halletts of Stedcombe House, Lyme, were planters in Barbados, and brought over a retinue of black servants. The Alfords of Winsham (near Lyme) part-freighted ten slaving voyages. Major William Cogan, who was born and bred in Lyme, joined the Royal African Company. He bartered rum from Barbados for slaves, for example, the Guinea Hen, in 1702 (TA-DB?)

DEVON

Devon was the county in which it all started. Sir John Hawkins made three pioneering voyages in 1562, 1564, and 1567. There were literally 100s of West Country sailors in Hawkins’ 1567 fleet which sailed from Plymouth. However, it was another 100 years before slave trading began in earnest. With time, specialised merchants with political clout appeared in the late 17th century. Dissenters turned to business, as other avenues to power and influence were closed to them, or made difficult to obtain entry into. In this respect, the Protestant ethic’ was clearly dysfunctional as regards the ethics of ‘inner intention’ and service as taught by Jesus. It was through the vision of Quakers, such as John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, that change was in the wind. The first ‘Devon ten per center’ was the Betty Galley of Exeter, clearing from Bristol.

38 For these and other details, see Louisa Adjoa Parker (2007) Poole, DEED, 32-33.
39 Tattersfield, 233.
40 Tattersfield, 244.
41 Tattersfield, 247.
42 Tattersfield, 250.
43 Tattersfield, 250.
44 Tattersfield, 246-7.
45 Tattersfield, 247.
46 Tattersfield, 248.
47 Tattersfield, 195.
49 Tattersfield, 282.
14. Topsham

Richard Randall of Topsham (see Weymouth), was in the re-export slave trade from Barbados to Charleston.

The *Dragon* cleared Topsham for Africa 15\(^{th}\) February, 1699, under captain Christopher Butcher. She was freighted by Joseph Anthony, William Pounick (or Penneck), Arthur Jeffry, Martha Broderick (or Brodridge) and Christopher butcher, all of Exeter, and Robert Corker of Falmouth. At the Gambia she was loaded with 57 slaves and 10 cwt of ivory. There was then a slave uprising, in which two crewmen and seven slaves died. Five of the slaves drowned when they jumped overboard, still heavily shackled together.\(^{50}\)

African prince, James, hanged himself near to Exmouth, and was buried on shore—apparently in an extremely traumatized state. The vessel involved was the *Northampton* (cleared from Topsham), which was trading Africans to Brazil-bound Portuguese slavers.\(^ {51}\)

15. Exeter

Exeter received its charter to trade with Africa in 1588. The main aim was gold, but slaves were always not far away in terms of mind.\(^ {52}\)

There are a minimum of three slaving voyages out of Exeter (see graph below). The first of these was by Charles Ellard, on the *Betty of Exon*.\(^ {53}\) The 82 ton *Betty* slipped anchor on 10\(^{th}\) February, 1698, bound for Barbados, with her crew of 14 men, and carrying four guns. The voyage was apparently successful, for she returned to Plymouth in 1699. The owner of the venture was John Ellard, presumably the father or brother of the captain. We know of no other records of these men. Woolen cloth (‘serge’) was not needed in Africa, except as perpetuannas (i.e., ‘perpetual’, long-lasting).

The following year, Christopher Butcher, financed by Arthur Jeffry, departed from Exeter on board the *Dragon*, 60 tons, *en route* for the Gambia. There forty slaves were embarked, to be disembarked in Barbados. There is a record of a Mr. Jeffrys as owner of another voyage out of London, in 1725, but we cannot be certain that this is the same person, as, apart from the disembarkation port, there is little in common with the Exeter voyage, save perhaps a date that is within 25 years of each other. A more probable connection is via the captain, for there is a Robert Butcher who sailed the Royal African Company’s *Convert* out of London in about 1680, trading with the Gambia, and disembarking the vessel’s slaves in Barbados.

The last of the three known slaving voyages, is that of William Wise, in the, by then, very small plantation-built snauw, *Princess of Brunswick* (60 tons). She was nonetheless well armed, with 10 guns, and twenty crew. Slipping anchor on 3\(^{rd}\) August, 1758, she made to trade in slaves in Senegal. The slaves were disembarked in Barbados, in 1759. The owners are at present unknown.

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\(^{50}\) The story of the *Dragon* and her disastrous voyage is recounted in detail in Tattersfield, 282-5.

\(^{51}\) Tattersfield, 296-7.

\(^{52}\) Tattersfield, 195.

\(^{53}\) Also referred to as the *Betty Galley*, see page 282 of Tattersfield.
Exeter had wide-ranging influence in terms of trading with Africa, not just in slaves, but in the whole mercantile structure that supported it, including such people as tobacco trader Daniel Ivy, Deputy Lieutenant of Devon (1701).

MAP of Exeter, showing links, following Nancy Boyd-Franklin’s genograph(?)

16. Dartmouth

Before 1698 (the Act ending the Royal African Company monopoly on Africa trading in return for a 10% tax) voyages are often difficult to trace, due to false destinations, for example, the Speedwell of Dartmouth. She was freighted by Exeter merchant William Ivy (Exeter was the second-largest provincial city in the 1700)─cleared customs for Cape Verde and Barbados—but she was really making for Madagasgar and—slaves. This was in return for produce from Barnstaple, Exeter, Norwich. The Speedwell eventually arrived in Barbados with 170 slaves and 4 cwt of ivory.54

Dartmouth was the starting point for the voyage of the slaver Sylvia Galley (40 tons, 4 guns), financed by George Barons, 1714-15. Captained by John Vennard (junior) of Topsham. John Vennard (senior) also acted on George Barons’ behalf, with Barons originally trading to Africa out of Plymouth.55

54 Tattersfield, 280.
55 Tattersfield, 292.
17. Plymouth

The slaver *Barbados Merchantman* was hired out to the Royal African Company by Joseph Bingham of Plymouth. She cleared Portsmouth in December 1706, and finally set sail from Plymouth on 16th January, 1707. Much earlier of course, and much more famous, were the Hawkins family of Plymouth, who made a fortune from African trading. Sir John Hawkins made three pioneering voyages in 1562, 1564, and 1567 (see introduction to Devon section). Drake was with Hawkins in 1567, which was Hawkins’ last slaving voyage. For 100 years after this there was not slave trading of note. The key date then becomes 1660, when the Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa was founded. However, before 1698 (when the Act that required a 10% tax was passed) voyages are difficult to trace, as many were clandestine, like that of the *Speedwell*, out of Dartmouth (above). The Drakes and Hawkins’s were Plymouth families. Drake became treasurer of the navy and Hawkins the comptroller.

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57 Tattersfield, 298.
The slaver *Michael Galley* of London cleared Plymouth, captain John Prior, who was acting for Mordecai Living. Mordecai was a London-based slave captain, having been previously engaged in slaving between Barbados and Guinea.\(^5\) The slaver *William*, also of London, cleared Plymouth under her captain John Collingwood. She was freighted by Joseph Martin, a director of the South Sea Company (and later MP for Hastings).\(^6\) The *Pindar* sailed out of Plymouth for Cape Coast Castle, bound for Jamaica, where 285 slaves were disembarked. Another vessel was the *Joseph Galley*, of Bristol, captained by Robert Mullington, and owned by Jacob Elton\(^6\) and Joseph Gotley.\(^6\) This was possibly the first slaving vessel with local produce, *e.g.*, English fustians—often classified as ‘cotton’, but actually—like ‘Manchester cottons’ of the same period—derived from wool. The *Joseph* delivered 280 slaves to Jamaica (loading 100 tons of fustick,\(^6\) and six bags of cotton, for the return voyage of 1710).\(^6\)
Thomas Corker of Falmouth (d. 1700, aged 31 years) was the Royal African Company agent at York Island, Sherbro River, by the age of 16. He then consolidated himself, and his African wife Señora Doll, at the Gambia. Señora’s Ya Kumba family ruled the coast of Yawry Bay between the Sierra Leone peninsula and the Sherbro estuary. Corker then claimed that prime goods were damaged, and exchanged them for slaves, who were then freighted to the West Indies. Robert Corker, in Falmouth, then traded (illegally) with his brother in Africa (1694-98), Robert supplying the barter goods for Thomas to trade in slaves direct to the West Indies. These ventures culminated in the ill-fated voyage of the Dragon out of Topsham in 1699. Throughout this time, the Royal African Company had declared all private trading to be illegal. In 1696 the RAC ship Edward and William arrived with extremely ill slaves in Jamaica—all supplied by Thomas Corker. Thomas Corker was then sacked by the RAC in 1700, after the 1698 Act increased competition by allowing the payment of a 10% tax on African traded goods, and the end to the monopoly. Thomas Corker’s mixed-race descendants inherited the African kingdom, and had fluent English. They traded slaves, later becoming the ‘Caulkers’, as well as having slave plantations. There is a commemorative plaque to Thomas Corker in Falmouth parish church.

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64 Tattersfield, 310.
65 Tattersfield, 311.
66 Tattersfield, 312.
67 Tattersfield, 315.
68 Translation from the Latin, in Tattersfield, 315-16.
Rebecca to bring these goods to Falmouth). It is likely that both gold and slaves (being tax-free) were traded, and a substantial profit made. Robert Corker even landed slaves in Falmouth, presenting his mother with Chegoe, a girl of 16 years, who was then baptized in Falmouth parish church, and re-named ‘Elizabeth’. Robert Corker became mayor of Falmouth, and for thirty years he ran the local council. He was also an investor in slave trader Humphrey Morices’ African Company. In 1722 Robert Corker became an MP for Tintagel. Although he died aged 63, hugely in debt, he was by far biggest player in merchant trading.

19. Scilly

NORTH DEVON

20. Bideford

The Castor cleared Bristol, but was Bideford registered, and involved in the slave trade. Captain Robert Mullington (possibly the same man as captained the Joseph Galley of Bristol, that cleared Plymouth)—cleared Antigua for Africa, presumably on a ‘double voyage’ in order to return to Antigua to disembark slaves and further load up with sugar and rum. Bideford tobacco merchant John Parminter was part of a family network involved in the ‘Africa trade’. In 1700 he subcontracted William Lisle, a Bristol agent, to freight the slaver Elizabeth Galley to the Guinea coast. The Elizabeth was wrecked at Old Calabar (modern Nigeria) when fully laden with slaves. After this, John and Richard Parminter did not enter the slave trade again, but continued to trade in slave-produced goods, such as sugar and tobacco.

SOMERSET

21. Minehead

22. Bridgwater

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69 Tattersfield, 316.
70 Tattersfield, 305.
71 The unusual name ‘Parminter’ is also known from the Wiltshire Moravian records of the mid-1700s, there being a Revd. Parminter in East Tytherton. There is one Cornish marriage record for a John Parminter (to Pascha Littleton, 24th February, 1690, at St. Mellion), who might be this individual (Vital Records Index).
72 Tattersfield, 306-7.
23. BRISTOL

Slaves embarked from Bristol vessels (c. 600,000)

24. Chester
25. LIVERPOOL

Slaves embarked by Liverpool vessels (> 1.4 million slaves)

26. Manchester

27. Preston

28. Lancaster

29. Kendal

Almost nothing is known of this voyage. Captain Stawk of the *Hawke* sailed from Kendal in 1762, embarking slaves in the Iles de Loss (Sierra Leone). The *Hawke* was then captured by the French, and thereafter there is no further record.
30. Whitehaven

East prospect and town of Whitehaven, 1738

31. Glasgow

32. Greenock

On the East Coast of Scotland

For the purposes of this monograph, we have not looked in detail at the east coast, as most activity towards the Caribbean is, unsurprisingly, directed from the western side of Britain. However, there was definitely activity worth noting, as, for example,

1. Montrose

On the 8th July 1735, Captain James Renny slipped his moorings in his ship, the Success. This New England built 75 ton square rigger was bound for the West Indies, with her crew of ten. However, the records are confused, others claiming that this was a Dutch-built vessel, of 137 tons, while some records say that this was English-registered, others say Scottish. Unusually, the Success appears to have carried no guns.
2. Leith

Captain George Smith departed from Leith on 22nd May, 1764, in his London-registered, plantation-built vessel, *Glasgow*, 70 tons, with a crew of 11. He made for Gambia. He then embarked an unknown number of slaves. Arriving in Barbados, he disembarked 93 slaves, on 26th August, 1765.

The plants at the heart of a global capitalist slave-powered network

Tobacco
Sugar
Cotton
Tea
Poppies
Cinchona
Rubber
Indigo
Rice