

Jesus College Legacy of Slavery Working Party (LSWP)

November 2020: Update on implementation of LSWP actions

LSWP members:

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1. How we have proceeded

The LSWP was established by Council on 20 May 2019; we first convened on 8 July 2019. We used the first four months to map and timetable our work, in the light of the terms of reference formulated by Council (appendix 1). Given the keen interest in this Inquiry within the College more widely, and to give ourselves the opportunity to benefit from the Fellowship's views and advice, we decided to present an Interim Report (covering July-October 2019)¹ already to the first Society meeting of the academic year, on 18 November 2019, when the Fellowship debated alternative propositions for College actions in response to the results of the first phase of our Inquiry. Council at its meeting of 25 November 2019 approved this first Interim Report, and passed the ensuing LSWP recommendations (1) to return the Benin Bronze to its historic owners and (2) to acknowledge and contextualise Tobias Rustat's role in our history.² Council charged the LSWP with the task of proposing practical recommendations to implement these aims.

Since January 2020, the LSWP have been working on the practical implementation of these decisions, while also continuing to pursue broader aims of institutional change outlined in its first interim report. Figures such as Rustat or objects such as the Benin Bronze offer important symbolic points for critical and collective self-reflection. However, our terms of reference require us to also go beyond these symbols, so as to address wider dynamics of institutional racism. In this light, the LSWP has identified a number of action points which address both these two symbols, and start to address wider structural dynamics. We have concentrated on these points in the period November 2019-October 2020 (they are not intended to be exhaustive – we hope to add others in the next year of our Inquiry).

In the time period covered by this report, we have held eight 2 -2.5 hour plenary meetings (10 February, 5 March, 12 March, 5 May, 19 May, 15 June, 24 June, 20 October; the last five by zoom). Much of the work was carried out outside of the plenary meetings, involving a rather large number of additional meetings between the LSWP Chair and subgroups of the LSWP, and with relevant stakeholders both within and outside of College. The two appointed undergraduate and graduate student reps on the LSWP, managed to participate in all of our meetings despite their extended absences from the College; in addition, our meetings in Lent and Easter term were, exceptionally, also attended by JCSU President Aurelio Petrucci, in the role of observer.

The present document provides an update on the implementation of LSWP actions in the past year, placed on a timeline.

2. LSWP action points 2020

Action point 1: 'to prepare the return of the Benin Bronze'

The College is committed to returning the Benin Bronze (Council, 25 Nov 2019), but as a registered charity there are various procedures that it must follow, including requesting permission from the Charity Commission. It has been working on the required administrative steps since the College announcement in November 2019; the outbreak of COVID-19 slowed the process down, but encouraging progress on

¹ For further details, see the report which can be downloaded at the bottom of this page: <https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/college/about-us/legacy-slavery-inquiry>

² <https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/legacy-slavery-working-party-recommendations>

this point can be reported: the College recently (October 2020) received a positive response from the Charity Commission: the Commission has agreed, in principle, that the College can transfer the Benin Bronze to the Royal Court of Benin. The Master and LSWP Chair have been in correspondence with the Royal Court since the College decision last November; the College will publicly announce further details as soon as this becomes possible.

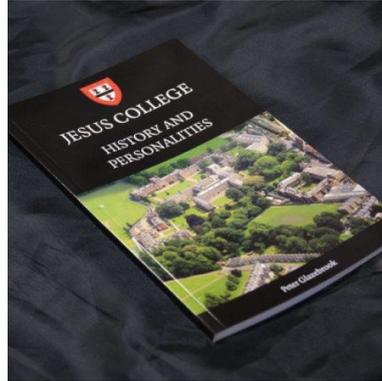
Action point 2: to address the wider dynamics of institutional racism

Noting that increasing the diversity of the Fellowship and Staff is one concern of the recently created Equality and Diversity Committee, and that Admission Tutors and the Senior Tutor are actively engaged in successful initiatives to address underrepresentation of BAME students, the LSWP decided to focus on other ways of making the College a more inclusive institution: changing both our historical self-narrative, and today's visual landscape of the College. We felt that the College also needs to think about the effects of this process of institutional change on BAME (especially black) members of the College: it is important to be aware that a well-intended memorialisation of the College's engagement with black people as a story of exploitation and victimhood runs the risk, as the BAME Reps on the LSWP importantly pointed out, of producing an ultimately dispiriting environment for new or prospective BAME Jesuans. Therefore, the memorialisation of slavery, colonial violence or racial science needs to proceed alongside recovering the history of BAME members of the College (students, Fellows and staff) and their many positive contributions.

In this light, the LSWP worked on four further action points in 2020:

- March 2020: the LSWP set up a program of remunerated student internships, funded by College following support from Council (9 March 2020), to help the LSWP with the next phase of our historical research. Included in this is a project of recovery of the history of BAME Jesuans. We had planned to run the LSWP internship program in summer 2020, but had to postpone the planned dates due to the COVID-19 related closure of the College archives and Old Library. At the start of Michaelmas term, we selected 8 two-week interns (4 undergraduate & 4 graduate students) from 6 subjects amongst the 15 applicants: Natsci/HPS, Gender Studies, HSPS, Architecture, MML, and History. Their research will be supervised by five academics of the LSWP and the College archivist (CJ, ER, ME, RA, NG, VM) and will hopefully take place in the Easter break 2021.
- July 2020: the LSWP have started to prepare producing a book which will present some of the results of the LSWP research, written by Fellows and students, to coincide with the publication of our final Report. The College has produced several excellent books on its own history in recent years, which are prominently displayed, and for sale, in the Porters' Lodge. These do not, however, mention any LSWP-related aspects of our history other than in passing. Our small book (modelled on Peter Glazebrook's 'History and Personalities' and intended for members and general visitors to the College) on this aspect of Jesus's history, including the history of BAME Jesuans, will be an important mode of acknowledgement of this aspect of our past.
- July 2020: Council approved the LSWP's recommendation that to celebrate the contributions of BAME Jesuans to the College, and to make the visual landscape of our College less monochrome, the production of a series of photo portraits (perhaps combined with short elements of life stories) of BAME Jesuans should be encouraged. The portraits could find a permanent place within the College buildings (in collaboration with the Works of Arts Committee).

- July 2020: Council approved the LSWP's recommendation that an open-air sculpture from a diaspora artist should be commissioned, so as to make the artwork which so characterizes Jesus's visual landscape somewhat more inclusive. This item would rely upon donor support, and would be commissioned by the Works of Arts Committee (in dialogue with the LSWP).



Action point 3: 'to engage members of the College and the wider community with LSWP-related topics'

- The LSWP internships are amongst other aims designed to engage student members with our Inquiry.
- Beyond the College and within the wider University, members of the LSWP have had several meetings and other exchanges with members of other Colleges on LSWP topics (Fellows as well as students) The Chair also had a separate meeting with the Chair of the University Inquiry, Prof. Martin Millett, to brief him on our work (13 January 2020).
- Spring 2020: the LSWP prepared a one-day conference program on Reparative Justice which they hope to hold at the Intellectual Forum in spring 2021. We secured funding for the conference from the IF conference competition. The MCR has generously provided additional funding (500 £) for this event, which will help with travel costs for community representatives from outside of Cambridge (in the scenario of travel being safe by the time the conference is held).

Public engagement and transparency:

- July 2019: The College publicly announced the creation of the LSWP on 1 July, after its membership was confirmed by Council.
- November 2019: The Council decisions of 25 November 2019 were made public via our College website
- November 2019: The Master wrote to all current students and alumni to inform them of these decisions
- February-June 2020: in collaboration with our Communications Office, the LSWP created a separate webpage for the LSWP on the College website, under the heading 'about us', where we will post updates and keep the wider public informed about the progress of our Inquiry:
<https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/college/about-us/legacy-slavery-inquiry>

Action point 4: ‘to acknowledge and contextualize Rustat’s role in our history’:

- January 2020: The **Rustat Feast** in Easter term was renamed the Summer Feast (Council Meeting 27 Jan).
- January 2020: The **Rustat Conferences** were renamed the Jesus College Conferences, in consultation with the Intellectual Forum Director (Council Meeting 27 Jan).
- March 2020: **Rustat’s portrait** was removed from the SCR by the Works of Arts Committee, to a temporary location.

The LSWP’s following recommendations regarding the portrait were subsequently adopted by Council (13 July 2020):

- the portrait should be kept in the works of art storage in the College (as is the case for many other art items in our possession).
 - it should not be displayed within any part of the College, public or private, unless in the context of an educational exhibition, accompanied by critical contextualisation.
 - Council might consider offering it on temporary loan to the Fitzwilliam Museum for the future exhibition on slavery which they are currently preparing (an outcome of the University Legacies of Slavery Inquiry).
- March 2020: the LSWP, in consultation with the Senior Tutor and the Master, modified the script for the **Benefactors’ ceremony** in Chapel so as to acknowledge Rustat’s ties to slavery (the ceremony on 13 March was cancelled due to COVID, so the new text will be used for the first time hopefully next year).
 - March 2020: we revisited the possibility of renaming the **Rustat scholars’, widows’ and clergy children’s funds** (which we had raised in Nov 2019), but these cannot easily be renamed (or re-allocated to a different purpose) due to stringent charity law conditions.

➤ ***Critical memorialisation of Rustat: a contextualising plaque***

Rustat is prominently present in the physical fabric of the College, through his funeral memorial on the wall of the Chapel (less so through his undecorated grave in the floor), his name on the donors’ plaque in the Cloisters, and a windowpane in Hall. The following LSWP recommendations were adopted by Council at its meeting of 13 July 2020:

- to ask the Works of Arts Committee to commission a contextualising plaque which critically acknowledges Rustat’s (and hence our) links to the slave trade
- location of the plaque: after consultation with the chair and curator of the Works of Arts Committee, and the Chapel Dean, we recommended that it be placed at the entrance to the College, on the wall opposite the Porters’ Lodge where most outside visitors and Jesus members enter the College.

➤ ***Donors’ Plaque on the Cloister wall***

The donors’ plaque on the Cloister wall lists several historic and recent donors to the College, including Rustat. The Latin text that heads the plaque reads: *muneribus amplissimis hoc collegium auxerunt* (translation: ‘through their very large donations they have endowed this College’).

The LSWP's view is that this is a sober, descriptive text. The fact that we received a large donation from Rustat is not in dispute, and there is no reason to hide or erase that information. The LSWP therefore recommended to keep Rustat's name on the donors' plaque.

July 2020: The LSWP's recommendation that Rustat's name remains on the donors' plaque was adopted by Council.

➤ **Windowpane in Hall with Rustat's coat of arms**

In Hall, next to High Table, there is a 19th-century window subdivided into smaller windowpanes that have many coats of arms and names on them, including that of Rustat. This is one of the ways in which Rustat is anchored in the material fabric of our College (like the small stone that marks his grave in the floor of the Chapel). The LSWP judged that this is very different from the 1989 Fisher memorial window at Caius (which that College removed this summer), or from the Rustat memorial in Chapel, since these are objects that explicitly celebrate the persons.

July 2020: The LSWP's recommendation to leave the windowpane with Rustat's coat of arms as it is was adopted by Council.

➤ **Rustat memorial in the Chapel**



RUSTAT's MEMORIAL (photo: Chris Loades)



JESUS CHAPEL, 1887 – 1927

In contrast to Rustat's appearance on the donors' wall, his memorial in Chapel represents a celebration of Rustat (its text was written by himself). At the Society Meeting in November 2019 several options were debated, including that of its removal for which, at that stage, no support was expressed. However, views about statues and memorials have been evolving fast all spring and summer, and many Jesus members are increasingly vocal in seeing the current location of Rustat's memorial as incompatible with the experience of Chapel as an inclusive community and a place of collective wellbeing. The placement of the memorial forces visitors to the chapel literally to look up to Rustat, and its proportions make it hard to ignore. Furthermore, we note that the memorial has been moved between different locations within the chapel at least twice in past centuries. between 1887 and 1927, a huge organ stood in front of the wall where the memorial currently hangs (and where it was placed after Rustat's death) (see photo above) We also noted that the Church of England recently called for a critical dialogue with society over this type of memorials:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/update-church-and-cathedral-monuments>

In light of this, the LSWP made the recommendation to Council to relocate the memorial to an educational, permanent exhibition space within the College, where objects from all aspects of the College's history (its foundation as a nunnery, its ecclesiastical history, the history of student clubs and societies, of the College's art, music, and Choirs, the history of women at Jesus or of illustrious alumni like Laurence Sterne or Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example) would be displayed alongside the Rustat portrait and other materials relating to the College's involvement with slavery and the slave trade. This option would allow us both to acknowledge our past and offer proper contextualisation, while also signalling our commitment to an anti-racist future for Jesus College. At its meeting of 2 November 2020, Council agreed to transmit its proposal for removal to the Church.

June 2020: the Chapel, after several months of COVID-closure, was preparing to reopen soon. In the light of the recent intensification of public debates over statues and memorials, it was felt at that moment that the Rustat memorial could, in the meantime (which could be lengthy), not be left without immediate contextualisation. The LSWP produced a leaflet which provides contextualising information on Rustat, which is available for any visitor to the Chapel. We also prepared a plasticised sign for a metal stand in front of the memorial, which directs visitors' attention to the leaflet.

The LSWP: RA, RC, ME, SF, CFG, JG, NG, CJ, VM, BM, ER

Appendix 1: terms of reference of the Jesus College LSWP³

TR1: to explore how the College may have benefitted historically from slavery and coerced labour through financial and other donations and bequests

TR2: to investigate ways in which members of Jesus College may have contributed to scholarship that underpinned slavery

TR3: to consider ways in which the College should acknowledge past links to slavery

TR4: to consider the College's engagement in reparative justice, memorialisation and use of the names of donors known to have been involved in the slave trade

TR5: to propose ways to engage members of the College and the wider community with issues surrounding slavery

TR6: to address the impact of the conclusions of the University Legacy of Slavery Inquiry on Jesus College

³ These were the original terms of reference provided by Council. For our interpretation and partial reformulation of the terms of reference, see the 1st LSWP Interim Report, November 2019 <https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/college/about-us/legacy-slavery-inquiry>
<https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/articles/legacy-slavery-working-party-recommendations>

Appendix 2: LSWP student internship program

Jesus College LSWP Research Internships – March-April 2021

In May 2019, the College founded a working party which undertook to research and critically consider Jesus's historic links to slavery, colonial violence and racial science and the legacies of these entanglements (see: <https://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/college/about-us/legacy-slavery-inquiry>). One year on, the Legacies of Slavery Working Party (LSWP) is preparing to launch a second phase of research on these topics. As part of this second phase of the LSWP Inquiry, the College is funding 8 two-week paid research internships for undergraduate and graduate Jesus students in the term break between Lent and Easter (March-April 2021). Candidates should note that the final dates of this internship program may need re-adjustment depending on Covid-conditions. Depending on numbers of applicants, in some cases the internships may be cumulated to a 4-week period. The student interns will undertake research in the College Archives and Old Library, combined with online work with databases and digital collections on each of LSWP's four research strands: People, Money, Objects, and Ideas.

The LSWP will organise the internships around a number of research projects, which will contribute to its wider research objectives. Where appropriate LSWP will encourage applicants to suggest their own research projects, which will be incorporated if feasible. Interns will be expected to produce a research report at the end of their internship, and the research may be used in LSWP publications or on the LSWP website with proper acknowledgement of the researcher.

The internships are open to all students, from all subject backgrounds. While all will involve some historical research, the LSWP is keen to include a range of disciplinary perspectives. We encourage applications from anyone who is interested, no previous experience of historical or archival research is necessary. Each intern will be supported and supervised by academics from the LSWP, who will advise on research methods and writing-up. LSWP supervisors offer a range of disciplinary, research, and period expertise [Robert Athol, Michael Edwards, Nick Guyatt, Chris Jeppesen, Véronique Mottier, Elly Robson].

Appendix 3

Plasticised sign in Chapel in front of Rustat Memorial and Visitors' leaflet:

TOBIAS RUSTAT

Tobias Rustat (1608-1694) was one of Jesus College's most significant benefactors. His marble memorial is above this sign. Rustat's connections to slavery, through investment and other participation in the Royal African Company, are unambiguous. The College as a community is committed to a process of critical self-reflection that will acknowledge and contextualise these connections, now and in the future. Leaflets that set Rustat's life and his involvement in slavery in critical context are available next to the entrance to Chapel.

Rustat's benefactions

Rustat's gift to Jesus, made in 1671, was part of a philanthropic project that began in the mid-1660s. His charitable giving had a political and religious agenda. An ardent royalist during the Civil Wars, he gave to support the established Church and the universities (which, like most of his contemporaries, he understood as politicised, religious institutions), and to relieve clergy and their families who had suffered as a result of the religious and political upheavals of the 1650s. In 1671, Rustat gave Jesus £2,030 2s 8d worth of land – his single largest gift – to establish scholarships for the orphan sons of Anglican

clergymen. He made a further donation to found a charity to support the widows of clergymen. One account estimates the total value of Rustat's gifts to the College at £3,230 (the equivalent of £500,000 today).

Rustat's legacy in Jesus College today is more than financial. His donation transformed the College's finances, but also significantly shaped its identity as an academic institution over centuries. Rustat's connections to slavery are unambiguous. The College as a community is committed to a process of critical self-reflection that will acknowledge and contextualise these connections, now and in the future.



Jesus College

Tobias Rustat



Introduction

Tobias Rustat (1608-1694) was one of Jesus College's most significant benefactors. His marble memorial, attributed to Grinling Gibbons and carved during Rustat's lifetime, is fixed to the west wall of the nave of Chapel.

Rustat had financial and other involvement in the Royal African Company (RAC), a slave trading company, over a substantial period of time, including when he donated to the College. The RAC transported nearly 150,000 enslaved people to the Caribbean. This was a brutal and sustained trade in human life that exploited thousands of people: Rustat and the other investors in the RAC were fully aware of its activities and intended to profit from its exploitation. Jesus College now acknowledges that profiting from enslavement, trafficking, and exploitation is unambiguously wrong.

Legacies of Slavery in Jesus College

In 2019, Jesus College established a Legacy of Slavery Working Party (LSWP) to

address the ongoing legacies of slavery in the College. The LSWP includes students and academics from across the College community, together with external academic members. Following the LSWP's recommendations, the College has decided to address critically Rustat's role in our history. This leaflet, which explains and contextualises Rustat's involvement with slavery, is part of that process.

Rustat's life and career

Tobias Rustat was the son of Robert Rustat (d.1637), who had been a student at Jesus in the 1580s. Rustat spent 1634-39 in Venice, and went on to serve in the royal household from the 1640s onwards. During the Civil Wars, he carried secret correspondence between the King in England and the Queen in Paris. He later joined Charles II in exile and accompanied him in his travels across France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands. Rustat remained in royal service after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, and much of his personal wealth came from his career as a courtier. At this time, the line between public service and private enterprise was blurry, and courtiers holding offices in the royal household profited substantially from them.

Slavery and the Royal African Company

Rustat's wealth increased when he became an investor in a series of trading companies: the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa, commonly called the Royal African Company, which was chartered in 1663 and then reincorporated in 1672 as The Royal African Company (RAC). His name is on the charter of both companies; he also seems to have been involved in another slave trading company, the Gambian Adventurers, into the early 1680s.

Rustat's investment in the RAC was £400 (the equivalent of £60,000 today). The RAC was not consistently profitable, but Rustat received



significant dividends on his investment. He also took a role in running the RAC, being elected for a yearly term as an Assistant (the rough equivalent of a Director) in 1676, 1679, and 1680, although he had limited involvement in the day-to-day management of the Company. Rustat thus had financial and other involvement in a slave trading company over a substantial period of time, alongside his involvement with the College.