

## Slavery monuments in Exeter Cathedral

Exeter Cathedral has several monuments to people who were connected to slavery in the Caribbean. These are mainly slave-owners, whose families had the money and status to be able to erect monuments. Inevitably there are no memorials in the Cathedral to the black Africans who were enslaved. All these slave-owners died before the abolition of slavery in 1833. When compensation was paid to British slave-owners at abolition, their descendants (or those then owning the plantations) would have received the compensation. See [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs) for details.

### Catharine Estridge Buncombe

The memorial reads: *'Near this place are deposited the remains of Catharine Estridge Buncombe, of the island of **St Christopher**. She died in this city, the 15<sup>th</sup> day of November 1772, in the 35<sup>th</sup> year of her age.'*

She came from the island of St Christopher, now called St Kitts. So far it has not been possible to discover where she lived on St Kitts, but her will makes clear that she was a slave-owner. In the will she writes:

*'To my negro women Ffriday and Benneba I give their freedom for ever. Also to poor little George, son of my dear deceased Nelly I give and bequeath his freedom for ever and the sum of 50 pounds.'*

There are still locations in St Kitts that are named Estridge, including two plantations, a mausoleum, a church and a school.

### Ann Griffith

The memorial reads: *'Sacred to the memory of Mrs Ann Griffith, widow of the Revd J. Griffith and mother of JWS Griffith Esq. of St Elizabeth's in the island of **Jamaica** who departed this life the 27<sup>th</sup> day of January 1824'*

As a lawyer, JWS Griffith acted as attorney for many plantation owners. He and his wife Catherine both owned slaves and at Abolition received compensation. Her brother John inherited a large land holding, Hodges, but became an absentee landowner. He first joined the army in India, then became a clergyman in England. His compensation was more than £2,000 for the 125 people he had enslaved in Jamaica.

### Robert Harvey

The wall memorial reads: *'In memory of Robert Harvey Esquire late of the island of **Grenada**, whose remains are interred in a vault near this place. He departed this life the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1791, in the 59<sup>th</sup> year of his age.'*

On his death, his estates in Grenada were divided between two of his nephews, John Rae Harvey and Robert Farquhar. When John Rae died, he bequeathed his share to his half-brother. Robert Farquhar thus received about £18,000 pounds in 1835 (equivalent to perhaps £1½ million in today's money) in respect of 900 enslaved persons on his four estates in Grenada and Antigua. Other relatives also received compensation.

In his will, Robert Harvey also left small annuities for certain negroes and mulattos on his estates, and asked his nephews to arrange the manumission (i.e. freedom) of some enslaved people on his estates.

### William Hewitt

The monument is in Latin, which (translated) reads: *'Here lies William Kellitt Hewitt of Cashoo in the parish of St Elizabeth in the island of **Jamaica**, Knight and also Keeper of the King's Peace at Duryard adjacent to this city. He died mourned by his wife, children, friends, servants, relatives: 11<sup>th</sup> June 1812 AD, aged 55.'*

He owned two plantations (Cashoo and Fellowship) in Jamaica. His descendants were later forced to mortgage these properties, so compensation was paid out to the mortgagees.

### **Saccharissa Hibbert**

This monument reads: *'In memory of Saccharissa, only daughter of Thomas and Dorothy Hibbert. She died the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1828 in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of her age.'*

Her family were major West India merchants in London and slave-owners in Jamaica. They received vast compensation in the 1830s.

### **Margaret Moe**

Her memorial reads in part: *'Near this place are deposited the remains of Margaret, the wife of Irenaeus Moe, Esq. of the island of Barbados.....She died near this city, the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1779, in the 29<sup>th</sup> year of her age.'*

Her father Major Samuel Rous had inherited the Clifton Hall estate from his father. owned at least one plantation, and maybe several, in Barbados. Miles Brathwaite, who was the son-in-law of Irenaeus and Margaret Moe, received compensation of nearly £4,000 (equivalent to perhaps £320,000 today) for the 181 enslaved people on his Palmers Estate. Other relatives were also compensated.

### **William Sloane**

The memorial reads: *'Underneath are deposited the remains of William Sloane Esq. of the island of Tobago who died on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1797 aged 50 years, leaving issue by Ann his wife, 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter and coheir of Henry Fisher Esq. of the island of Barbados by Elizabeth his wife, daughter of the Hon. Benjamin Mellowes of the same island, two sons and two daughters.'*

He had owned the Kilgwyn Estate on Tobago with about 200 enslaved people. William's son, also called William, attended Blundell's School in Tiverton from 1798 to 1806. Another son, Henry Fisher, married Sarah Porter of Rockbeare Manor. That family owned large sugar plantations in Demerara, Guiana. When her father died, she inherited £30,000 (about £ 2½ million in today's money). By the 1830s the company Chauncy Lang owned the estate and they received compensation.

### **Marianne Coventry Trefusis**

The memorial plate reads: *'The Honorable Marianne Coventry Trefusis, the eldest daughter of Robert George William, 17<sup>th</sup> Baron Clinton, died March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1806.'*

She died, aged only 16. She had many wealthy relatives. Her aunt Anne St John Trefusis had married Thomas Maxwell Adams, the owner of Adams Castle plantation in Barbados. He died in 1806, at which time his address was given as Duryard Lodge. That site was later rebuilt as Streatham House, and is today Reed Hall on the University Streatham estate. Anne received compensation for the 216 persons enslaved at Adams Castle.

Marianne's brothers Robert and Charles were in turn 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Baron Clinton, owners of the major Clinton Estates, while her sister Louisa married John Rolle, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Rolle of Stevenstone. He was a major landowner in Devon, but also a major colonial landowner in Florida. Later his family were granted land in the Bahamas as American loyalists, and he subsequently received compensation of over £4,000 for the 377 people enslaved on his plantation there.

### **Mary Willis and Mary Cure**

Their memorial reads: *Near this tablet are deposited the remains, mother and daughter,..... Mrs Willis died 13 Jan 1810, aged 84; Mrs Cure died 31 Oct 1809, aged 54.*

Under her mother's will, the daughter was due to inherit two plantations in **Antigua**, but she predeceased her mother. She died in Exmouth.