



Enslavement Enabling Education Project – Liverpool’s Royal Institution - Press Release

140 years after being granted college status the University of Liverpool’s connections to slavery have been interrogated by a group of community researchers, The Liverpool Black History Research Group.

The project entitled ‘Enslavement Enabling Education’ examines links to the slave economy in the business and family backgrounds of over 200 shareholders in Liverpool’s Royal Institution. The significance of the Institution being that it is widely accepted as the forerunner or ‘enabling institution’ for the University of Liverpool. The University acknowledged this link when it commemorated the bicentenary of the founding of the Royal Institution in November 2017. The Royal Institution was established in 1817 for the promotion of Literature, Science and the Arts. The original building will be familiar to many, located at 24 Colquitt Street, within the World Heritage Site.

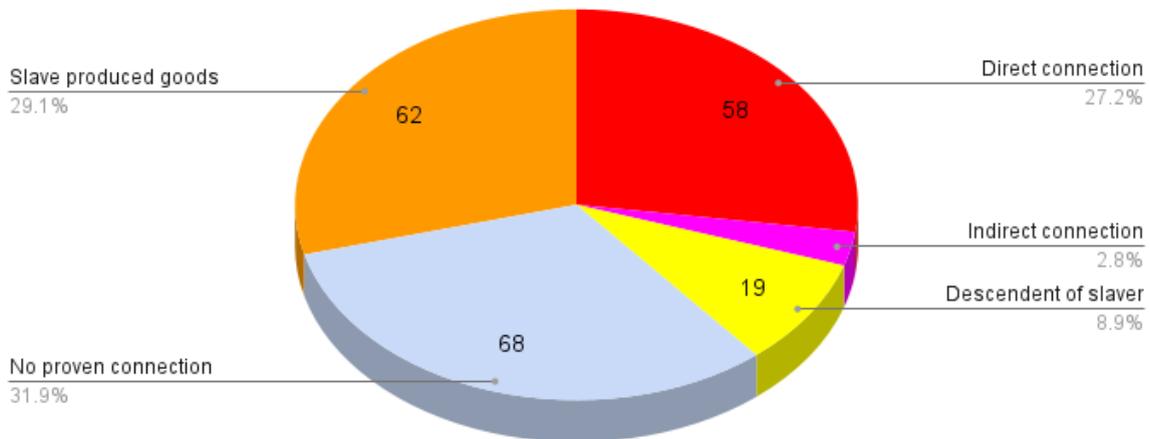
The group emphasises that its research, which has taken some two years to complete, has been rigorous, adopting a high burden of proof and its findings are released now as ‘a least case scenario’. These findings show that some 68% of shareholders (see below) had business interests, or close family connections to the slave economy. In addition to persons having a direct interest such as plantation owners, former slave captains or investors in slave voyages (prior to 1808), it includes those merchants importing slave produced goods principally cotton, sugar and tobacco as well as manufacturers of goods used in the trade.

Key

Direct Connection	Founders who owned / had shares in / captained slave ships or plantations, prior to abolition. People who financed slave voyages via private banking. Slave factors / agents who acted as brokers of enslaved people
Slave Produced Goods	Founders who traded in colonial produce, such as: cotton, tobacco, dye stuffs, rum, ivory, timbers, palm oil, molasses, sugar, tar, gold.
Produced goods/offered services related to slavery / indirect connection	Founders who insured anything to do with the slave economy, certified surgeons employed on vessels involved in the slave economy, manufacturers of cotton balers, sugar boiling pans, steam engines for the plantations.
Descendent of slaver	Family members of merchants who were engaged in the slave economy and would have received legacies / benefits from wealth accrued from the slave economy.
No proven connection	Based on current research, no confirmed connection, but remains under review.

Royal Institution Founders

Silver Ticket Holders



Although the slave trade was abolished in 1807, pre-dating the Royal Institution, many of the merchants who were proprietors became wealthy captaining or investing in slave ships prior to abolition. This legislation merely prevented the trading of slaves in the British Empire, it did not abolish slavery in the colonies, which continued until 1834. Therefore, Liverpool merchants continued to profit from the slave economy after 1807 and specifically at the time the Royal Institution was established.

Perhaps surprisingly, the research reveals several shareholders shown to be importing slave produced goods and in some cases owning slaves, were at the same time advocating the abolition of slavery.

The research will be presented in a searchable database that can be constantly updated when new data becomes available. LBHRG welcomes contributions from other independent researchers, history groups, academics, genealogists and family historians.

It is not known whether the University of Liverpool, which is home to the Centre for the Study of International Slavery, has commissioned its own research. However, earlier research projects producing comparable findings have been undertaken by the Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Centre and the University of Glasgow.

Liverpool Black History Research Group is a collective of community researchers based at the Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre, 4 Princes Rd, Liverpool L8 1TH.

More information about the research project can be found on its web site <https://lbhrg.com/>