



Engaging with Bath's Uncomfortable Past

VIP EVENT 1

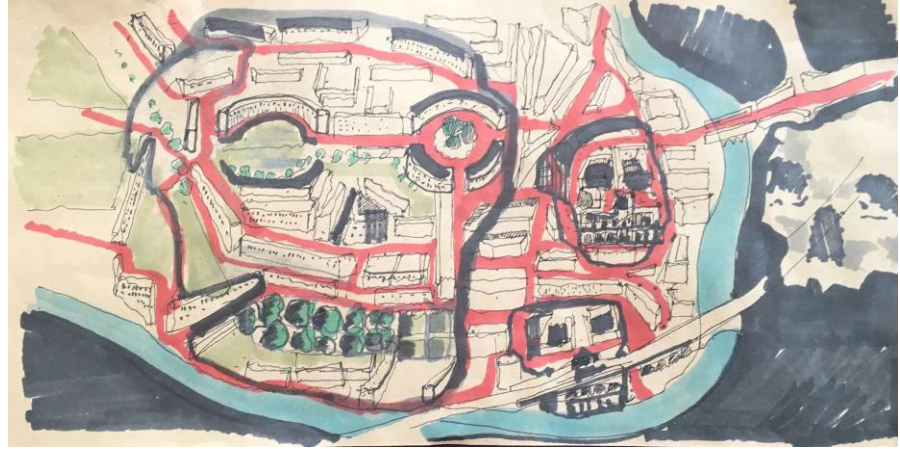


Event outline

- Welcome
- Presentation
- Discussion panel
- Creative sharing activity

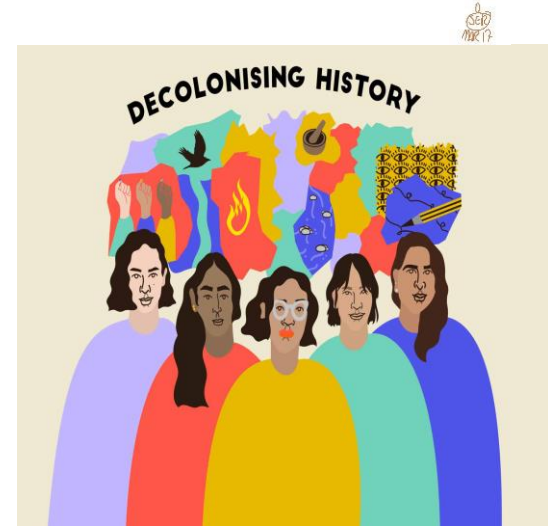
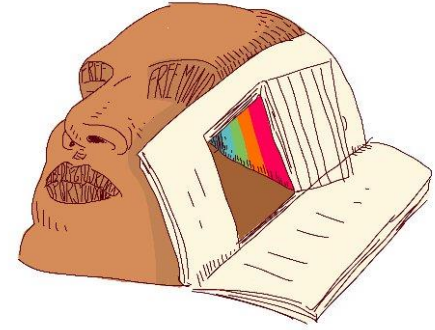
Creative Activity

- Create a memorial
- How?
- When?
- How can I share?
- Email it to: Walkbathuncomfortablepast@gmail.com



Defining Decolonisation

- Decolonisation traditionally refers to the 'undoing of colonial rule'
- Recently understood more widely as a cultural/ideological phenomenon
- 'Freeing our minds from colonial ideology'
- Challenging existing power structures
- Based on a concern about how forces of colonialism have shaped our past and present



Why should we talk about this now?

- Britain was largely built on colonial slavery
- No one is separate from this history
- Cannot ignore parts of history that don't serve you
- History as a political tool for patriotism
- Need to tell more BAME stories
- History does not belong to white people

"For our society to cohere, to find a successful identity in the 21st Century with a vision to carry us all forward, we need to shake off some of the shibboleths of the past. Otherwise our vision will be unbalanced by a false sense of what Britain has been, by omission of the contributions of far too many of our citizens." - Navasha Wray



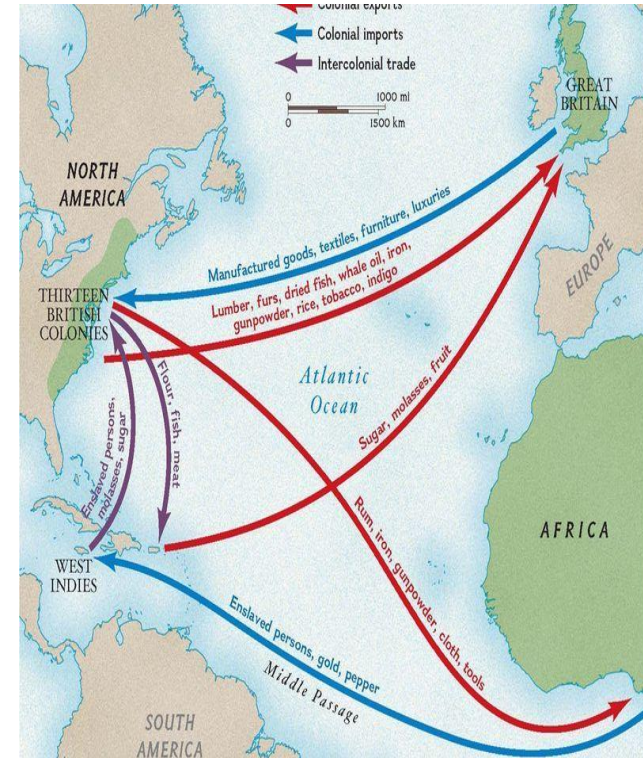
Summer 2020 Events

- Toppling of the Edward Colston Statue in Bristol
- Contentious event - some argued this was 'erasing history'
- Statues function as a cultural value system
- Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests brought this debate to the public
- Petitions initiated to teach Britain's colonial history in schools
- Many BAME writers, artists and academics have been calling for this for decades
- Our question is now: what is the best way to decolonise this history?



Britain's links to colonial slavery: Brief History

- British Slave Trade became dominant -1640
- Three dominant slave trading ports were London, Bristol and Liverpool
- Estimated that Britain transported 3.1 million Africans
- The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 formally freed approx. 800,000 Africans
- In 1833, there were approx. 46,000 British slave owners
- The British government distributed £20 million to compensate for 'the loss' of slave-owners
- Former enslaved individuals received no compensation
- Resistance movements amongst the enslaved individuals in





BATH - *The Georgian City*

INFORMATION FROM SPA DIRECTOR, THE PUMP ROOM, BATH

TRAVEL BY TRAIN





1 Bath Abbey



11 No 17 The Circus, Bath BA1 2ET



12 9 Park Street, Lansdown, Bath BA1 2TB



13 1 Lansdown Crescent, Bath BA1 8LN

14 18, 19 and 20 Lansdown Crescent, BA1 8EX



3 Pulney Bridge

4 76 Great Pulney Street, Bath BA2 4DL

5 88 Great Pulney Street, Bath BA2 4BR



15 Lansdown Tower known as Beckford's Tower, Lansdown Rd, Bath BA1 9BH



6 Holburne Museum, Great Pulney St, Bathwick, Bath BA2 4JB

7 Institution for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb, at 8-9 Walcot Parade Bath BA1 8NF

8 St Swithin Church, The Paragon, Bath BA1 8EY



16 Lockhearn Cemetery, 5 Godevic Road, Bath BA1 3PD



9 Lady Thring's Chapel, The Paragon, The Vineyards, Bath BA1 8NA



17 13 Queen's Square



10 Assembly Rooms, Bennett St, Bath BA1 2QH



18 27 Green Park Buildings, Bath BA1 8EG



Discussion panel



Dr Shawn Naphtali Sobers, a photographer, filmmaker and academic at UWE Bristol, Director of the Critical race and Culture Research Network and trustee of Fairfield House whose work explores personal narratives, hidden histories and Rastafari culture;

Professor Alan Rice, Director of the Research Centre in Migration, Diaspora, and Exile at the University of Lancashire, Co-Director of the Institute for Black Atlantic Research, and activist involved in building a memorial in Lancaster to remember the victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade;

Jill Sutherland, an emerging Bristol-based academic and Curatorial Fellow whose work at the Holburne Museum, Bath, has focused on interpretation and a new permanent display of a Plantation Book from Barbados, 1722;

Dr Richard White, a Bath-based artist-researcher who uses walking as a tool to engage different audiences with reluctant heritage in Bath and elsewhere;

Ralph Maingrette, an artist based in Montreal who runs the Centre of Arts at Maison Haiti and uses art as a pedagogical tool to engage young audiences in creative workshops.

Discussion panel

1. How does this silence impact our city? What makes it challenging to break the silence? What strategies can be used?
2. What is the purpose of memorials in our society? Who should be involved in making/unmaking memorials?
3. How should the legacies of slavery and slave ownership be made visible in the public space? How can art help us move towards reflection and regeneration rather than shame?
4. Can museums, cultural institutions and memorial practices be decolonised and made more inclusive and attractive for minority audiences?

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Final thoughts



- To see the artwork:
- Padlet Password: BUP <https://padlet.com/bvp20/f21vx301l0ofkgr0>
- Email: Walkbathuncomfortablepast@gmail.com
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/walkbathsuncomfortablepast>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/walkbathuncomfortablepast/>
- Online survey: <https://bathreg.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/walk-baths-uncomfortable-past>
- Map <https://www.co-creation-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Collage-Pack-Uncomfortable-Past.pdf>

References:

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3. <https://theconversation.com/statues-are-just-the-start-the-uk-is-peppered-with-slavery-heritage-140308>
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53305729>
5. [How Britain is facing up to its hidden slavery history - BBC Culture](#)
6. [BBC - History - British History in depth: Your Local Slave Trade History](#)
7. [LBS Centre Overview | Legacies of British Slave-ownership \(ucl.ac.uk\)](#)
8. [Britain can no longer ignore its darkest chapters - we must teach black history | Books | The Guardian](#)
9. [The history of British slave ownership has been buried: now its scale can be revealed | Slavery | The Guardian](#)
10. [David Olusoga in Conversation: Black History Matters - YouTube](#)
11. [Statues, Slavery and The Struggle for Equality - YouTube](#)
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17. [Civilisations Stories 10of11 The Remains of Slavery - video Dailymotion](#)
18. [The danger of a single story | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie - YouTube](#)
19. [Academics: it's time to get behind decolonising the curriculum | Universities | The Guardian](#)
20. <https://this.deakin.edu.au/study/four-reasons-why-you-should-study-history>
21. [Decolonizing the Curriculum: Why Black History matters | Green World](#)
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23. [What Can We Learn from the Germans About Confronting Our History? | The New Yorker](#)
24. [Slavery in Bath | thebathscrinium \(wordpress.com\)](#)
25. [The slave trade: local truths - The Bath Magazine](#)
26. ['Students want to confront it': academics on how to decolonise the university | Universities | The Guardian](#)
27. [britain-and-the-trade.pdf \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](#)

Some submitted artwork





To the 3.1 Millions kidnapped and enslaved Africans whose unvoluntary and unpaid labour contributed to build the UNESCO World heritage city of Bath. This monument was erected in 2021 to express the city's apologies and commitment to reparations.



Sankofa is an Akan symbol which represents the importance of learning from the past. Bath Abbey, a site that has more memorials to slaveowners than any other site in Britain, bears witness with this plaque to the 3.1 million Africans who were enslaved by Britain between 1562 and 1833.



To violin virtuoso George Bridgetower (1778-1860) who performed in the Assembly Rooms in Bath before the king and 550 guests on 5 December 1789.



A statue of William Pitt the Younger, a famous statesman and prime minister, stands in the grounds of Bath Abbey. The statue is made of Portland stone and is the work of the sculptor John Jackson. It was unveiled in 1825.



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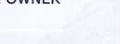




A collage titled "I LOOKED AND LIFTED THE LAYERS" in a white box at the top center. The collage includes a large yellow hand on the left holding a small, transparent, multi-layered house. In the background, there is a bridge over a pink river under a textured orange sky. On the right, there is a close-up of a face with vertical lines through it. At the bottom, there is a yellow hat and architectural line drawings of buildings.

BURIED IN BATH ABBEY

LAVE OWNER



IT MADE SENSE OF

PHOTOGRAPHS

LOOK

IT MEANS IT'S EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO GO FURTHER.

