



## St Nicholas Church, Sutton

*Monuments with links to slavery and colonialism.*

St Nicholas Church, Sutton: Monuments with links to slavery and colonialism.

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*By Jeff Richards*

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# FRIENDS OF ST NICHOLAS CHURCHYARD

*This booklet is dedicated to Peter Likeman whose enthusiasm for the history of St Nicholas, Sutton, inspired a sense of curiosity and wonder in the stories that stones can tell.*



## Foreword

It is often cited that the history of the church in the Croydon area is recorded in the Domesday Book, which surveyed and recorded people, settlements and buildings in England and parts of Wales in and before 1086. Since then, the church has been involved and integrated into every part of Croydon society, spiritual, pastoral, social and economic. Even today, although the number of those attending services may have dropped significantly, the church is still involved in many aspects of the Croydon community – through worship and pastoral care, and in helping shape community engagement around economic and social care and social need. Churches and their members, live out the message of love and care, and their buildings are very often used to work for the common good and to be a community hub for all people, regardless of age, gender, colour, creed or class.

This positive story of spiritual witness and community building masks the history of the more deleterious actions of the church and some of its leading clergy and members in past times. As we will learn through this booklet, during the 17th and 18th centuries, some church members, clergy and church families gained their income and wealth from the transatlantic slave trade. This trade kidnapped and enslaved Africans and transported them far from the shores of their continent to the Americas and the Caribbean to rend their labour as chattel slaves on colonial plantations. Enslavement affected every part of the Atlantic world and the countries which perpetrated the trade, in connected, complex and contested histories.

It is necessary to acknowledge that some form of slavery existed in almost all recorded ancient societies and sadly endures up to today. Indeed, the treatment of slaves is discussed and described in the Old and New Testaments of the bible. Many societies enslaved people (quite often those taken as captives in wars), rendering them powerless, available to be bought, sold or traded as chattels. However, it was only in the era of transatlantic enslavement that black Africans were legally racialised and designated as sub-human by the Church, mercantilists, commerce and government, thus denying the basic human rights of black Africans and legalising permitting those owning enslaved Africans or investing in the transatlantic slave trade to continue to amass their wealth without conscience as to the dignity and humanity of those enslaved. Cod theology was used to support these claims and church members were amongst the wealthiest slave-owning or slave-trading families. This wealth was used, whether through philanthropic donations or commercial investments, for the development of city and countryside, commerce and church throughout England, in Bath, Bristol, London, Croydon and here in Sutton, capitalized in buildings, paintings, statuary and monuments.

I am thankful to the Sutton group for the work that they are doing to bring these stories of slavery, empire, colonialism and church to light. The people, buildings and monuments of this town are connected to a national and global history and is a story that needs to be told. Through this booklet, we can deepen our understanding of our past, as we acknowledge the part the church has played in past racial injustices and the way these injustices may continue to be lived out in the present in attitudes towards those from diverse countries in our community. May the knowledge gained from this booklet help us to be more alert to be a loving and inclusive society, and our churches continue to work tirelessly for the well-being of all in our society.



The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett  
Bishop of Croydon  
Visiting Fellow, Jesus College, Cambridge

## Introduction

This booklet discusses historic racism and slavery that were as wrong and unjust then as they are now. By calling this out, we can be part of the process to make the world a fairer place for all.

This booklet is a product of the events that followed the murder of George Floyd, a black American man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. Floyd's murder sparked outrage about the continued existence of racial injustice.

On June 7, 2020, the statue of Edward Colston, a Bristol-born merchant and slave trader, was toppled, defaced, and thrown into Bristol Harbour during the George Floyd protests.

On June 15, 2020, the Archdeacons of Southwark Diocese wrote to all churches in the diocese, asking them to survey and identify statues and other memorials to people who were involved in slavery or the slave trade. The Rector and Churchwardens of St Nicholas Church passed this request to the Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard, who immediately responded with information they had already gathered.

The research was shared with the Parish Church, the Diocese, and local groups that participated in the Racial Justice and Equality Group of Sutton's Fairness Commission.

Several of the memorials within St Nicholas Church commemorate philanthropy and charitable donations to Sutton's poor, but they are nevertheless linked to the deadly trade in human beings.

Sutton and the church need to acknowledge our painful history of slavery, the slave trade, and concerns about systemic racism and injustice. We must then take positive action to redress these imbalances. Continued tolerance of inequality based on race devalues us all.

We hope this booklet will help better contextualise the memorials within St Nicholas Sutton and encourage further research and reflection on this important topic.

# Terminology

## Abolitionist

An abolitionist is someone who actively works against slavery. Abolitionists were often politically active and worked to end slavery's legal basis and the trade in human beings. Abolitionism in the United Kingdom arose in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as indigenous Africans living in the UK joined forces with white British social leaders and politicians to denounce slavery in the United Kingdom, the British Empire, and the wider world and to abolish the trade.

## Enslaver versus Master, Owner, or Slaveholder

An enslaver held absolute power over those they enslaved. They referred to themselves as "masters" or "owners" – hierarchical terms that reinforced social status and a sense of inherent authority in a "natural" social structure which placed enslaved people below the lowest rung. These terms also reinforce the harmful social construct that certain individuals, groups of people or nations are naturally destined to hold power (e.g., slave owners, slave masters, colonialists, imperialists), while others are not (enslaved individuals or groups or even nations). The terms "slave master" and "slave owner" implied that enslaved people were less capable or deserving than those who enslaved them.

If we remove "slave" from the nomenclature of "master" or "owner" we limit our understanding of enslaved people, reducing them to mere property, while simultaneously distancing ourselves from the reality that all engaged in any kind of slavery, and in this case, Transatlantic Chattel Slavery, enslavers actively and consciously enslaved other human beings who possessed the same fundamental rights as themselves.

## Chattel Slavery

Chattel slavery treated enslaved people as mere possessions, akin to livestock, furniture, or other movable property. Enslaved individuals could be bought, sold, or inherited without their consent.

## Enslaved Person vs Slave

The term "slave" refers to someone forced to labour or provide services under threat of physical harm or death. It can also imply forced and enforced separation from loved ones. Slave is a common term for an enslaved person, rooting the defining aspect of their identity to chattel or property rather than their humanity. Additionally, it omits the presence or actions of an enslaving individual or group whose ability to enforce slavery through violence underpinned the system.

The term "enslaved person" emphasizes the personhood of those individuals within a slaveholding society who were forced into involuntary servitude. While slavery was a defining aspect of this person's life experience, the term "enslaved" acknowledges that they were forced into slavery by another person or group and does not deny or vitiate their humanity.

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This document will only use the word slave when necessary, in a historical context or as part of a quote, preferring enslaved person as a more descriptive term.

## About St Nicholas Church

The current Church of St Nicholas was rebuilt in 1862-4, replacing an earlier medieval building. It is a flint and stone church in the Gothic style, designed by Edwin Nash. It is listed at Grade II\*, making it a building of special architectural or historic interest. The church is one of Nash's most impressive and complete works.

The church contains many monuments, dating from the early 17th century onwards. Many of these were transferred from the earlier parish church on the site. Some of the monuments are of particular interest, such as the Brownlow Monument, which is a major work by the sculptor William Stanton.

The church is also part of a group of listed buildings and monuments, including the Gibson Mausoleum and several churchyard monuments.

The Church of St Nicholas is used for regular worship services. It is a beautiful and historic building that is an important part of the Sutton community.

## About the Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard

The Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard seeks to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation and appreciation of the Churchyard, church and environs of St Nicholas Church, Sutton as a place of remembrance, historic importance and natural beauty.

## The Manor of Sutton during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.



Image: Ordnance Survey First Series, Sheet 8 (1816)

The manor was formerly owned by St Peter's Abbey at Chertsey. After the monasteries were suppressed, it was granted to Sir Nicholas Carew. When he was attainted, the manor reverted to the crown. Attainder is the forfeiture of land and civil rights suffered as a consequence of a sentence of death for treason or another crime. Carew's only son, Sir Francis Carew, later managed to obtain a reversal of his father's attainder, but did not receive his estates, and had to purchase them. Sutton later came into the Darcy family, probably through a bequest from Sir Francis Carew to the issue of his brother-in-law, Sir Arthur Darcy. The Darcys passed the manor to Sir Richard Mason.

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Richard Mason had two daughters, Anne, who married Henry Brett, and Dorothy, who married Sir William Brownlow, Bart. In 1716, after Dorothy died, Anne Brett (the younger sister) and Sir John Brownlow, Bart., son of Sir William, sold the manor to Henry Cliffe, an East India captain. He entailed the manor on his two sons successively. The elder Richard died unmarried. Henry the Younger died in 1761, leaving one daughter, who inherited the manor and estate. She married Thomas Hatch, Esq. of New Windsor in 1785, and he became the Lord of the Manor.

## St Nicholas Church, Sutton and the East India Company, the Royal African Company, and the South Sea Company

The monuments of St Nicholas Church reflect the prosperity that Sutton gained from the trading activities of three companies: the East India Company, the Royal African Company, and the South Sea Company. These companies, however, were all linked to the slave trade in various ways.

The Royal African Company, established in 1660, held a monopoly on the British slave trade until 1698. During this period, as the sole supplier of enslaved persons to British colonies, it transported over 100,000 Africans across the Atlantic.

While the East India Company was not directly involved in the slave trade, it indirectly profited from it. The company's ships often transported enslaved persons from Africa to the Americas, and the company also benefited from the demand for enslaved persons in the Indian Ocean region.

The South Sea Company, granted a monopoly on the Spanish slave trade in 1713, was permitted to transport up to 4,800 slaves per year to Spanish colonies in the Americas. During its time as the sole supplier of slaves to Spanish colonies, the company transported over 35,000 slaves.

According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>), an estimated 12.5 million Africans were enslaved and traded between 1672 and 1807. This period marks the peak of the transatlantic slave trade, a cruel system that forcibly transported millions of Africans to the Americas and elsewhere for labour.

European slave traders transported the vast majority of these enslaved Africans, with the British playing a particularly significant role. British ships are estimated to have transported around 3.4 million Africans across the Atlantic, while Portuguese ships transported around 4.6 million.



## St Nicholas Church, Sutton: Monuments with links to slavery and colonialism.

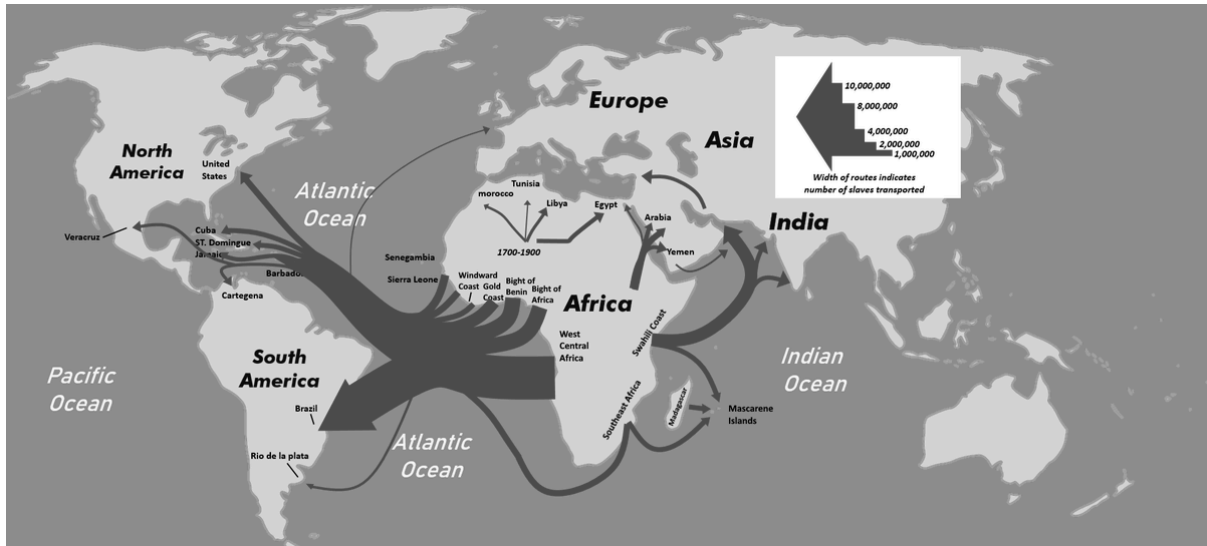


Image: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African\\_Slave\\_Trade.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African_Slave_Trade.png) (Adapted)

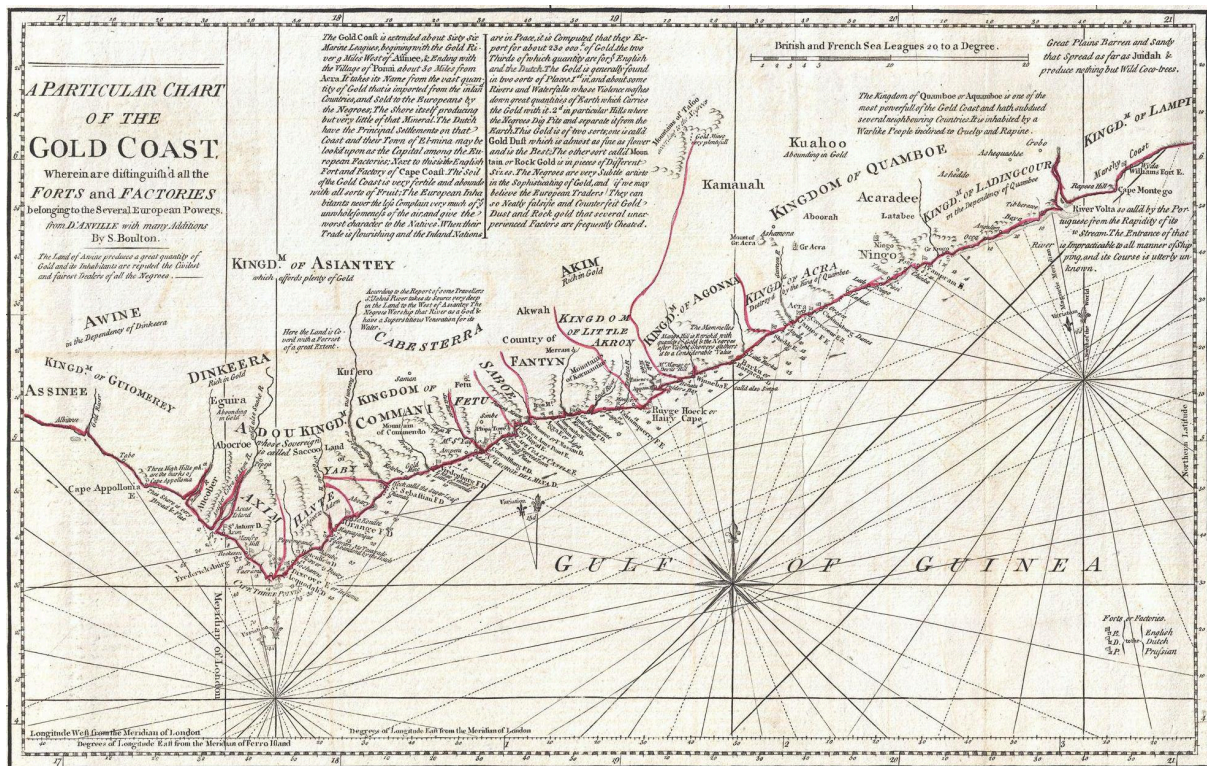


Image: The Gold Coast, region on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, Solomon Boulton, 1794, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Gold\\_Coast\\_region\\_on\\_the\\_Gulf\\_of\\_Guinea\\_in\\_West\\_Africa\\_from\\_1794\\_Boulton\\_and\\_Anville\\_Wall\\_Map\\_of\\_Africa\\_\(most\\_important\\_18th\\_century\\_map\\_of\\_Africa\)\\_-\\_Geographicus\\_-\\_Africa2-boulton-1794\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Gold_Coast_region_on_the_Gulf_of_Guinea_in_West_Africa_from_1794_Boulton_and_Anville_Wall_Map_of_Africa_(most_important_18th_century_map_of_Africa)_-_Geographicus_-_Africa2-boulton-1794_(cropped).jpg)

## St Nicholas, Sutton and the East India Company

The East India Company was an English joint-stock company founded in 1600. It was granted a monopoly on trade with the East Indies (modern-day Southeast Asia and India). The company eventually became involved in politics and acted as an agent of British imperialism in India from the early 18th century to the mid-19th century.

The East India Company was a powerful force in the global economy for centuries. It controlled much of the trade in spices, tea, and other goods from the East Indies. It also had a large army and navy, which it used to conquer and rule large parts of India. It is to be noted that for over 50 years officers for this army were trained at the East India Company Military Seminary, a British military academy at Addiscombe, Surrey, in what is now the London Borough of Croydon.

The East India Company relied on slave labour in the 17th and 18th centuries. It trafficked enslaved persons from West and East Africa, especially Mozambique and Madagascar, transporting them to its holdings in India and Indonesia as well as to the island of St Helena in the Atlantic Ocean.

The wealth that maritime trade brought into England had a significant impact on villages like Sutton, which were near London. The wealth generated by merchants led to increased trade and commerce, improved infrastructure, and the construction of new buildings and amenities. The activities of the East India Company also had a significant impact on the environment. Farmland was cleared to make way for new estates and grand houses. In Sutton, during the 18th century, the establishment of Turnpike Trust led to the building and improvement of roads and bridges, which made it easier for businesses to operate and for people to travel around. This changed the way of life of local people.

The wealth generated by the trade, including the slave trade, also led to philanthropic donations and investment in the construction of new churches and schools. However, the wealth generated was not evenly distributed. Some people became very wealthy, while others remained poor. This led to increased social inequality in villages in Surrey. The need for charity and funds to help the poor is shown by the Charity Boards in St Nicholas Church.

The East India Company was eventually dissolved in 1874 due to corruption and mismanagement.



## Slavery, Philanthropy, and the Church's Charity Boards

Charity boards in historic parish churches are wooden plaques or boards that display information about charitable donations made to the church. They serve both historical and practical purposes.

Historically, the boards list the names of benefactors, the amounts of their donations, and the specific purposes for which the funds were intended. This information can help to preserve the history of the church and its charitable work.

Practically, the boards can help to maintain transparency within the parish community by showcasing how donations have been allocated to charitable causes. This can help to build trust and confidence in the church's financial management.

The donations supported a wide range of charitable activities, such as providing aid to the poor, funding educational programmes, maintaining the church building, or supporting other community projects.

The Charity Boards in St Nicholas date from the 18th century. They were moved from the old building to the new one when the church was rebuilt in 1864.



Image: Charity Boards: Credit J Richards

## The Charity Boards and South Sea Stock

Some bequests recorded on the charity boards mention South Sea stock. This stock was issued by the South Sea Company, which was a government-backed company that had the exclusive right to trade enslaved persons to the Spanish colonies in America. The company was founded in 1711, and its stock quickly became a popular investment. However, in 1720, the company's stock price crashed, leading to a financial crisis known as the South Sea Bubble.

The bequests mentioning South Sea stock date from the 1770s onwards, which is 60 years after the company was founded and 50 years after the financial crisis. This suggests that some people were still investing in South Sea stocks even after the bubble had burst. It is also possible that these bequests were made with money that had been earned from the slave trade.

The company used the money invested in it to finance its slave trade operations. A Southampton University paper found that the South Sea Company was successful in the slave trade.

([https://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/imported/transforms/content-block/UsefulDownloads\\_Download/326F907A8F434B05B2199578407AA4B6/0924.pdf](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/imported/transforms/content-block/UsefulDownloads_Download/326F907A8F434B05B2199578407AA4B6/0924.pdf)) During 96 voyages in 25 years, the South Sea Company purchased 34,000 enslaved persons, of whom 30,000 survived the voyage across the Atlantic.

The company's trade in human slavery peaked during the 1725 trading year, five years after the bubble burst.

The South Sea Company's involvement in the slave trade is a reminder of the dark history of slavery. The company's profits were built on the backs of enslaved people, and its collapse had a devastating impact on many people. The bequests mentioning South Sea stock on the charity boards are a reminder of this history, and they highlight the importance of remembering and learning from the past.

There are bequests recorded on the Charity Boards of South Sea stock. These include

**William Beek** (1719-1791) Left £200 in South Sea Stock. He has a monument that is a flat gravestone on the north side of the church. Married **Mary Heath** in 1782.

**Robert Holmes** (d. 1782) & **Eliza Holmes** Left £200 in South Sea Stock. There is a memorial stone on the floor of the south aisle in the nave.

The historical value of money can be difficult to equate to current values. One understanding can be gained by comparison to annual income. When Rev Giles Hatch was Rector we know the annual income of 4 of his curates.

- Thomas Hambley was appointed curate on 21st May 1769 with a stipend £40. p.a.
- George Stone was appointed curate on 13th March 1776 with a stipend of £35 p.a.
- John Portis was appointed curate on 21st December 1793 with a stipend of £40 p.a.
- Peter Auburtin was appointed curate on 3rd June 1798 with a stipend of £40 p.a.

Source: <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/>

## Royal African Company: Slavery, church and pastoral offices - The case of John Sango

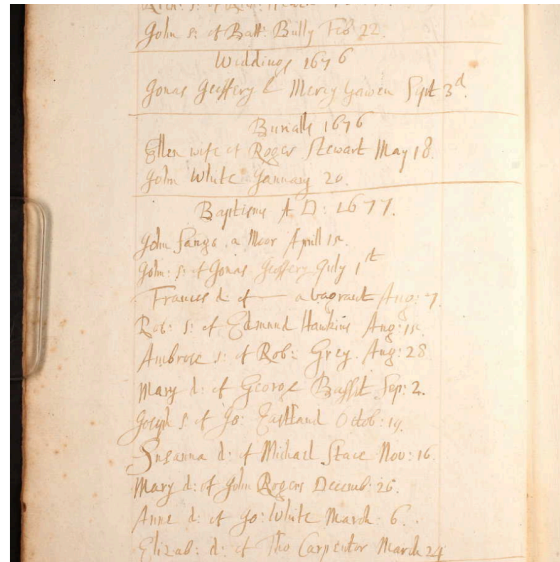


Image: St Nicholas's Register, courtesy of London Borough of Sutton, Local Studies and Archives (local.studies@sutton.gov.uk)

As can be seen from the image of the church register of the period, John Sango, a Moor, was baptized at St Nicholas Church on 15th April 1677. The word "moor" was often used to refer to Black Africans in the 17th century. Sango's baptism record is the only record of him that has survived. The name Sango means "coral" in the Lingala language, which is spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It could also be the name of a god in the religion of the Kongo people, who are the largest ethnic group in the DRC. The god Sango is the god of thunder and lightning.

Sango was probably enslaved and brought to England by the Royal African Company. Sango is a Bantu name mostly found in the DRC. The Bantu people are a large ethnolinguistic group that is found in much of sub-Saharan Africa. They were enslaved by both European and Arab slave traders. An estimated 40% of Africans enslaved and transported Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries were Bantu people.

The Royal African Company (RAC) was a British company that had a monopoly on the slave trade in West Africa from 1660 to 1698. The company operated several forts along the coast of West Africa, including Cape Coast Castle in Ghana and Elmina Castle in Ghana. Both castles/forts were used to hold enslaved Africans before transportation to the Americas and the Caribbean.

The RAC traded with the Akan people of the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), the Yoruba people of the Slave Coast (present-day Benin and Nigeria), the Igbo people of the Bight of Biafra (present-day Nigeria and Cameroon), and the Kongo people of the Congo River basin. The RAC traded with local chiefs for slaves, who were then transported to the Americas and forced to work on plantations. The RAC competed with other European

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companies for the slave trade, including the Dutch West India Company, the Portuguese, the French, and the Danish.

The minister responsible for the baptism of John Sango was the Rector of Sutton, Henry Wyche. But who was responsible for his enslavement and presence in Sutton?

## Who enslaved John Sango?

John Sango was baptised on 15th April 1677. Two candidates can be identified as potential enslavers of John Sango.

- 1) Rev Henry Wyche, Rector of Sutton.
- 2) Sir Richard Mason, Lord of the Manor of Sutton.

Henry Wyche is possible as his enslaver and owner because his family is connected to the East India Company and the Royal African Company. His will, dated 17th April 1677, 2 days after the baptism of John Sango, however, makes no mention of him as property.

At that time the Lord of the Manor was Sir Richard Mason. He is a more probable candidate for the enslavement and ownership of John Sango.

## Henry Wyche

Henry Wyche was the parish priest of Sutton from 1636 until he died in 1678. Henry Wyche had an MA from the University of Cambridge.

Henry served during the most tumultuous years of the 17th century. In 1642, 6 years after he became Rector, the English Civil War began. The war was fought between King Charles I and Parliament, with Parliament eventually winning in 1649. King Charles I was executed that year.

Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector of England in 1653.

Oliver Cromwell died in 1658. His son, Richard Cromwell, succeeded him as Lord Protector, but he was forced to resign in 1659.

Charles II, the son of Charles I, was restored to the throne in 1660.

The Great Plague struck England in 1665. This was a major epidemic that killed an estimated 200,000 people.

In 1666 there was the Great Fire of London, a massive fire that destroyed much of London.

And in 1678 The Popish Plot was exposed. This was a false conspiracy theory that claimed that Catholics were planning to assassinate King Charles II and take over England.

Henry Wyche came from a very large and well-connected family with his parents having 18 children. Henry was born around 1604; the son of Richard Wyche and Elizabeth Saltonstall. Henry's father Richard Wyche (1554–1621) was a London shipowner, explorer, and merchant.

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Richard Wyche was on the first Committee of Directors of the East India Company and he assisted in the formation of the North West Company in 1612 and was among the adventurers of the Muscovy Company.

His brother Nathaniel Wyche lived in India and was President of the East India Company in the late 1650s.

Another brother was Sir Peter Wyche, Ambassador to Constantinople (Ottoman Empire), who married Jane Meredith. Their children included Sir Peter Wyche, Sir Cyril Wyche, and Lady Jane Wyche, who married John Granville, 1st Earl of Bath.

Granville, who had married Henry's niece, Jane, was a signatory to The Several Declarations of The Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa, a document published in 1667 which led to the creation of the Royal Africa Company. This is speculated to have been influenced by the fact that Granville was close friends with the Royal African Company's leader, the Duke of York (and future King James II), who was brother to Charles II.

Henry's niece, Jane, was a Lady of the Bedchamber to Catherine of Braganza, the queen consort of King Charles II of England.

# Memorializing Slavery?

## Exterior Monuments

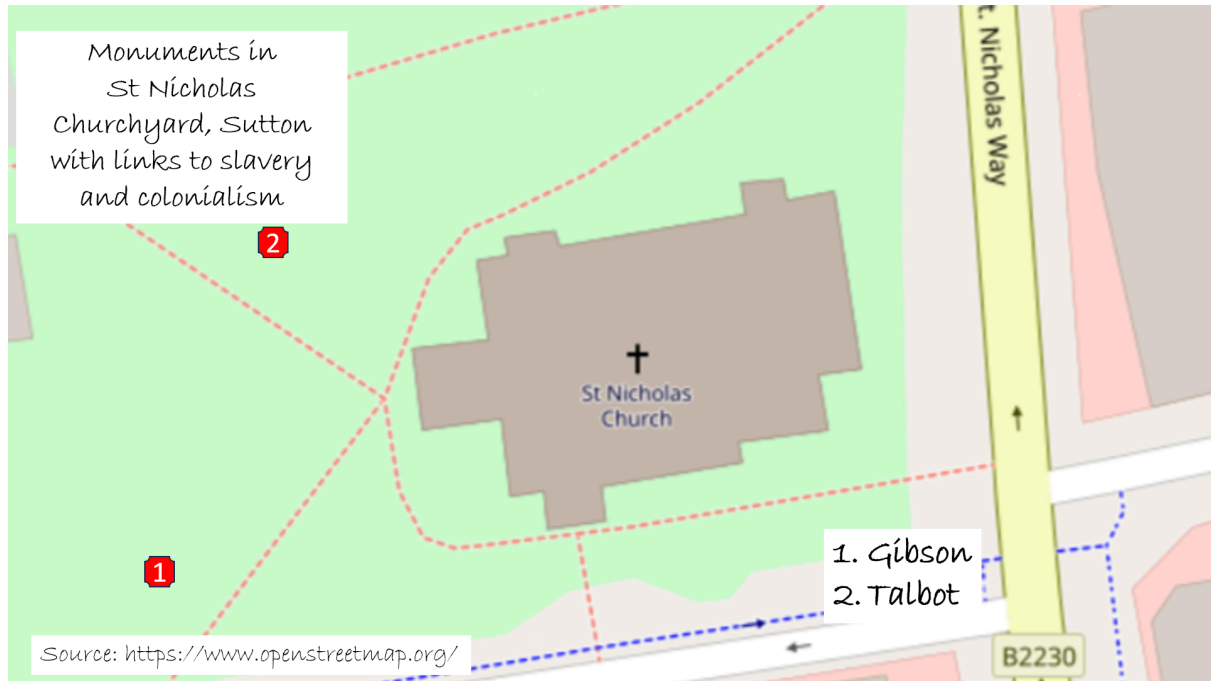


Image: Map of the churchyard showing the location of monuments discussed in this booklet.

## Interior Monuments

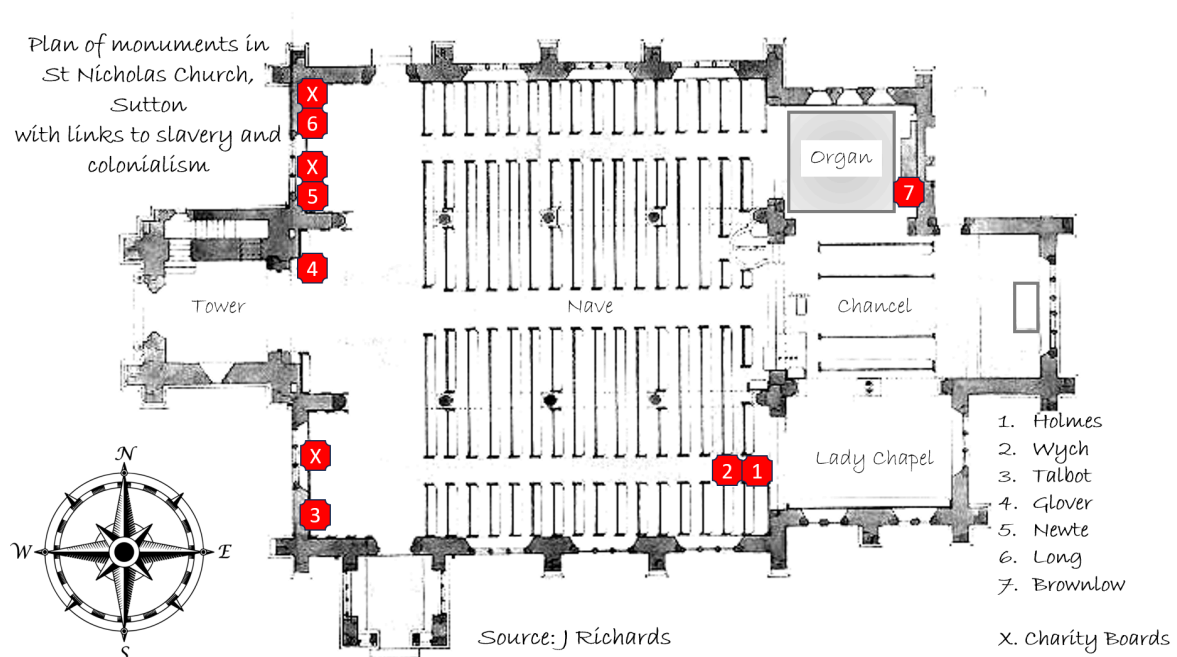


Image: Plan of the church interior showing the location of monuments discussed in this booklet.



## Brownlow Monument

**Sir Richard Mason** was a Lord of the Manor of Sutton in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The monument is to Dorothy his daughter who married Lord Brownlow. The Brownlow seat is Belton House in Lincolnshire. There may be links between the family and the development of slavery. Their descendants (the Cust family) did own slaves. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/8986>



Image: Richard Mason (politician). (2023, September 1). In *Wikipedia*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Mason\\_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Mason_(politician))

## Beeston Long monument

A monument above the charity boards in the northwest corner of the church is to several of Beeston Long's children. **Beeston Long** (4 February 1757 – 1820) is best known for Combe House, Surrey.

Near this place lie the bodies of five children of BEESTON LONG Esq late of this parish & FRANCES LOUISA his wife[.] SAMUEL HENRY born 27 Jun [sic] 1791 died 14 Feb 1792. CHARLES THOMAS born 19 Jun 1792 died 5 Mar 1795. FRANCES LOUISA born 18 Jun 1788 died 27 Apr 1800[.] HARRIET born 9 Dec 1793 died 28 Nov 1800. BEESTON RICHARD born 23 July 1787 died 28 Feb 1803

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/252644746/harriet-long>

[https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Beeston\\_Long](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Beeston_Long)

“He was the son of Beeston Long, a West India Merchant and Deputy Governor of the Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation, and brother of Samuel Long and Charles Long, 1st Baron Farnborough.

Long was a senior partner of the firm of West India merchants (largely trading with Jamaica), Long, Drake & Co, based in Leadenhall Street. He succeeded his father-in-law as Chairman of the West India Merchants. He was a vice president of the London Institution and leader of a group of merchants and speculators who, in a private venture, undertook the construction of the docks at Wapping. The London Docks Company had a 21-year monopoly to unload all vessels entering the port with tobacco, rice, wine and brandy (except from the East and West Indies). Long and the other directors sat in the London Dock House, in New Bank Buildings, from where they oversaw their lucrative trade founded upon the enslavement of Africans.

He was Governor of the Bank of England, a position he held from 1806 to 1808 having served previously as its Deputy Governor. In June 2020 the Bank of England issued a public apology for the involvement of Long, amongst other employees, in the slave trade following the investigation by the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership at UCL.

Long died in 1820, survived by his wife and two children.” – Source: Wikipedia





Image: Beeston Long. (2023, October 25). In *Wikipedia*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beeston\\_Long](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beeston_Long)

## Henry Wyche Monument

**Henry Wyche** has a black monument with a Latin inscription in the south aisle of the nave.

His father was instrumental in the setup of the East India Company - his brother was one of the first resident governors of the company.

His niece married the 1st Earl of Bath who was a major investor in the setup of the Royal African Company that had the English Monopoly on trading slaves.

Henry Wyche baptised the first known African to be named in Sutton - **John Sango** a Moor - in 1677.

Henry's son **Richard Wyche** went to Virginia and became a slave owner.



## Sarah Glover monument

Henry Wyche's predecessor was **Jose Glover**. There is a monument to **Sara Glover**, his wife, in a broom cupboard. The Glover family were West Indian merchants. At that time in the early 1600s, the English possessions were St Kitts and Bermuda. The year before Jose Glover became Rector at Sutton (1624) English and French colonists had cooperated in the ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people of St Kitts, in preparation for the colonization of the island.



Image: Detail of Sarah Glover Monument. Credit, J.Richards



## Talbot monuments



Image: Tomb of Cecil Talbot. Credit, J.Richards.

The Talbot family have two monuments at St Nicholas.

**Cecil Talbot** was the daughter of Charles Mathew of Castell y Mynach, Glamorganshire. Her mother was Cecil Jenkins the daughter of David Jenkins of Hensol.

Importantly she was the great-granddaughter of David Jenkins (1582–1663) who had been a judge known as a staunch Royalist during the Civil War. He had been captured and sent to the Tower of London. Jenkins was eventually released in 1657 before the restoration of the monarchy. His estate in 1652 had been valued at £1,500 per annum.

Cecil was the heiress to the Jenkins and Matthews estates and she had just turned 16 in the summer of 1708 when she married the 23-year-old Eton and Oxford-educated **Charles Talbot** who was studying law.

In the 12 years they were married, Cecil and Charles had 5 sons.

Two of the children had been born before Charles was called to the bar in 1711. Their second son, William, was born in 1710 and would survive to become their heir.

The Talbots had probably settled in Sutton as a convenient family home for Charles' work in the courts while their main family estates were in Glamorganshire. Around the time that the Talbot family were living in Sutton, we know that there were houses with slaves. The **Smith**

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family (who appear in the registers from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century) owned slaves. For instance, “‘Linley’ a Black belonging to Mrs Smith by the name of Samuel.” was baptised at St Nicholas, Sutton on 5th Sep 1734.

In 1717 Charles was appointed solicitor general to the Prince of Wales. In March of 1720, Charles began his political career when he was elected to parliament for the Welsh constituency of Tregony.

But in June of that same year, Cecil fell ill and died and was buried in Sutton. She was 28 years old.

Charles never remarried and threw himself into his career.

After Cecil's death, Charles gained the estates in Glamorganshire but the family also maintained a link to Sutton. Charles' career developed. He became Solicitor General in 1726.

## The Yorke–Talbot Opinion

Charles is remembered as one of the authors of the Yorke–Talbot slavery opinion, as a crown law officer in 1729. Their opinion was sought to determine the legality of slavery: Talbot and **Philip Yorke** opined that it was legal.

"We are of opinion, that a slave coming from the West-Indies to Great-Britain or Ireland, with or without his master, doth not become free, and that his master's property or right in him is not thereby determined or varied; and that baptism doth not bestow freedom on him, or make any alteration in his temporal condition in these kingdoms. We are also of opinion, that his master may legally compel him to return to the plantations."

This opinion was overturned in 1772 by Lord Mansfield, concerning former slaves residing in the United Kingdom.

In 1733 he was made Lord Chancellor and raised to the peerage with the title of Lord Talbot, Baron of Hensol, in the County of Glamorgan.



Image: Charles Talbot, 1st Baron Talbot of Hensol  
by and published by Gerhard Bockman, after John Vanderbank  
mezzotint, circa 1737  
NPG D40537  
© National Portrait Gallery, London



**William Talbot, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Talbot**



Image: Detail of William Talbot's Memorial, Credit, J. Richards.

Cecil Talbot's second son, William (1710–1782) inherited his father's title and the family estates in Glamorgan.

He was Lord High Steward at King George III's coronation and became a member of the Privy Council in 1761. He served from then until his death as Lord Steward of the Household. He was created Earl Talbot on 29 March 1761.

He was buried with his mother in Sutton and his monument is in the church.

His son, **Charles Chetwynd-Talbot**, 2nd Earl Talbot, is listed in the Legacies of British Slave-ownership database.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/20032>

Properties in Jamaica:

Parish, Jamaica St John - Worthy Park - 464 Enslaved

Parish, Jamaica St Thomas-in-the-Vale Mickleton Pen 79 Enslaved



Portrait of Charles (1777-1849) and John Chetwynd-Talbot (1779-1825). In *Wikipedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Talbot,\\_1st\\_Earl\\_Talbot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Talbot,_1st_Earl_Talbot)



## Gibson Mausoleum



Image: Gibson Tomb, Credit, L. Duckworth.

**James Gibson** (Gibson Tomb) was an Iron Monger and Vintner and may well have made his money within the Triangular Trade of the Atlantic.

## Thomas Newte

**Thomas Newte** was born in about 1749. He was known to have been in service with the East India Company in 1773. Thomas Newte was an original subscriber to the "The Society of East India Commanders". It was founded around 1773 as something akin to a London club and mutual society for East India ships' captains. At that time Thomas Newte was recorded as living in Inner Temple, London.

Thomas Newte married Anna Maria Raymond, one of the three daughters of the wealthy East India Company ship owner and banker Sir Charles Raymond, 1st Baronet (1713-1788) of Valentines, Ilford, in Essex.

Between 1790 and 1806 Thomas Newte leased a house in Gower Street. He also leased property including wharves and warehouses in Coldharbour and more in Blackwall that consisted of "a range of 4 warehouses, rigging houses, stable, other buildings, excellent crane" and "a capital wharf 90 feet frontage to the river".

St Nicholas Church, Sutton: Monuments with links to slavery and colonialism.

In 1796 Thomas Newte is recorded as a joint owner (with his widowed sister-in-law) of Duvale, a historic estate in the parish of Bampton, Devon.

He died on 1st August 1806 in Bath. He was buried at Sutton on 11th August 1806.

He was styled as "Thomas Newte, Esq of Sutton Surrey, and Duvale, Devon".

## The wider community of Sutton

The 18<sup>th</sup> century development of Sutton is tied to slavery and the development of the empire.

**Joseph Lavicount** died on 26th December 1880, and having lived at 2 Cressingham Grove, had made unsuccessful compensation claims for nearly 200 people:

- Antigua (Montpelier) £1708 11s 0d [101 Enslaved]
- Antigua (Mount Estate) £1549 4s 2d [97 Enslaved]

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146631649>

I have not found a connection with St Nicholas Church.

Another slave-owning family was the **Pogson** family who worshipped at St Nicholas Church.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146645303>

In 1786, **Bedingfield Pogson** and his family were living in the Manor House (this is from Smith's History of Sutton). Bedingfield Pogson is listed as owning property on St Kitts where he had been born in 1756. There are records of the children's baptisms in St Nicholas in the 1780s.

The family are linked to the East India Company and the development of the British Empire.

His son **Wredenhall Robert Pogson** served in the East Indian Company army. When Col. Wredenhall Robert Pogson died in Secrole, Benares, India aged 57 he was described as "of Sutton, Surrey". He had served as an officer in the 47th Bengal Native Infantry.

He had taken part in the suppression of the Barrackpore Mutiny in 1824. The Barrackpore mutiny was a rising of native Indian sepoys against their British officers in Barrackpore in November 1824. The incident occurred when the British East India Company was fighting the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–26).

Wredenhall Robert Pogson wrote a series of books.

- A History of the Boondelas, 1828
- Captain Pogson's Narrative During a Tour to Chateegaon, 1831
- Memoir of the mutiny at Barrackpore, 1833

### Cliffe family

The Cliffe family was Lord of the Manor - Capt Cliffe (East India Company) had bought the Manor after making his fortune through his service to the company. There is no monument to Henry Cliffe and I think this is because he died insolvent (1719). There is a monument to Rev Giles Hatch (Rector) who arranged for his son to marry the Cliffe heiress.

## Timeline

A timeline of the development of the slave trade and slavery in Great Britain and its colonies, and its eventual abolition:

Year	National	Sutton
1562	Sir John Hawkins led the first English slaving expedition to West Africa	
1625		Rev Jose Glover became Rector of Sutton.
1628		Sarah Glover, the wife of Jose Glover, died and a monument was erected in St Nicholas.
1636		Rev Henry Wyche became Rector of Sutton following Jose Glover's resignation.
1662	The Royal African Company was granted a monopoly on the British slave trade.	
1669		Sir Richard Mason became Lord of the Manor of Sutton.
1677		John Sango "a moor" was baptised by Henry Wyche.
1678		Rev Henry Wyche died and was buried in St Nicholas.
1685		Sir Richard Mason died. Sutton inherited by his daughter Lady Dorothy Brownlow.
1699		Lady Dorothy Brownlow died and a monument was erected.
1700s	The British slave trade reached its peak, with an estimated 100,000 Africans being transported to the Americas each year.	
1716		Ann Brett, Dorothy Brownlow's sister, sold Sutton to Henry Cliffe an East India Company Sea Captain.

St Nicholas Church, Sutton: Monuments with links to slavery and colonialism.

Year	National	Sutton
1720		Cecil Talbot, wife of Charles Talbot died and is buried in St Nicholas Churchyard.
1729		Charles Talbot as Solicitor General, together with Philip Yorke, wrote the Yorke-Talbot opinion that determined slavery was legal in England.
1734		Linley, a black belonging to Mrs Smith by the name of Samuel is baptised at St Nicholas.
1772	The Somerset case rules that slavery is illegal in England.	
1776		James Gibson died and was buried in Sutton.
1782		Robert Holmes died and he left £200 of South Sea Stock in his will to the church. William Talbot, son of Cecil and Charles Talbot died. His memorial was erected in St Nicholas Church.
1783	The British Quakers formed the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.	
1788	William Wilberforce introduced the first bill to abolish the slave trade in Parliament.	
1787	The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed in London	
1791	The French Revolution began, and the Haitian Revolution soon followed. These events raised awareness of the evils of slavery and inspired the abolitionist movement.	William Beek died and he left £200 of South Sea Stock in his will to the church. Samuel, son of Beeston Long, died.
1795		Charles, son of Beeston Long, died.
1800		Frances, daughter of Beeston Long, died. Frances and Harriet, daughters of Beeston Long, died.

St Nicholas Church, Sutton: Monuments with links to slavery and colonialism.

<b>Year</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Sutton</b>
1803		Beeston, son of Beeston Long, died. Monument erected in St Nicholas.
1806		Thomas Newte died and was buried in Sutton.
1807	The Slave Trade Act was passed, abolishing the British slave trade.	
1820		Beeston Long died.
1833	The Slavery Abolition Act was passed, freeing all enslaved people in the British Empire.	
1864		Charity Boards and Monuments from the old church transferred to the new church building.



## Slavery in our time



**Modern Slavery Right Here Right Now!** This is just what is happening in our community today. There are an estimated 50 million victims in the world today, more than 100,000 in the UK, and modern slavery **is** present in every parish in Southwark Diocese.

### What is Modern Slavery? –

*“Modern Slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, servitude, forced or compulsory labour. Traffickers and slave*

*masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment” (Modern Slavery Act 2015)*

The Salvation Army refer to people being **“Tricked, Trapped and Traded”**; at the core of this crime is deception. Survivors of modern slavery tell stories of being sold a better life. They are often vulnerable, coming from areas where there is little possibility of work. They will be forced to work in difficult and degrading conditions with little or no pay, they will face the threat of violence to themselves or their families.

Signs of slavery are all around; in car washes, nail bars, hospitality, domestic servitude, the sex trade, construction and many more. Just look for workers who appear under-fed, under the control of others and who seem scared. What are their working conditions? Do they work long hours with no breaks? Is their business cash only? Is it just too cheap?

Victims may be foreign with limited or no English but be aware that 50% of the victims are British, they can be of any age, gender, ability, nationality or religion. They are no different from us – they all have a favourite ice cream!

### What do I do if I have a concern?

- If someone is in a life-threatening situation call 999.
- Call 101 for non-urgent situations
- Call the Modern Slavery Helpline 0800 121700
- Call CrimeStoppers at 0800 555111

Both The Modern Slavery Helpline and CrimeStoppers give you anonymity, so if you call them make sure you give as much information as you possibly can. If this possibly involves your church you must contact your Safeguarding Officer. Our police rely on Community Intelligence to help them solve these crimes. We can all do something.

*“If you are neutral in situations of injustice you have taken the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say you are neutral the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality!” - Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

If you want to know more contact us at [rasocialjustice@gmail.com](mailto:rasocialjustice@gmail.com)

## Conclusion

This first exploration of the monuments of St Nicholas Church has revealed how the rising prosperity of Sutton in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and local philanthropy is woven together with the dark legacy of slavery. We hope our research provides an understanding of the intricate connections between the church, the East India Company, the Royal African Company, and the South Sea Company.

The Charity Boards show philanthropic donations tied to South Sea stock and illuminate the church's financial ties to the slave trade and the subsequent societal impacts on wealth distribution and social inequality.

The historical baptism record of John Sango, a Moor likely enslaved by the Royal African Company, raises poignant questions about the individuals responsible for his enslavement. The complex web of connections, including the potential involvement of the Rector Henry Wyche and the Lord of the Manor Sir Richard Mason, highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of historical figures' roles in perpetuating or challenging the system of slavery.

As we reflect on this history, it becomes evident that acknowledging the painful past of slavery, the slave trade, and systemic racism is a crucial step towards reconciliation and racial justice.

The Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard hopes that this booklet will serve as a valuable resource, and encourage further research, reflection, and a commitment to addressing historical imbalances. Together, the community of Sutton and the church must actively engage in positive actions to promote justice, equality, and collective memory that honours the complexity of our shared history.

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