

IMPERIAL CAREERING AND ENSLAVEMENT IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY: THE BENTINCK FAMILY, 1710-1830S

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Abstract

This paper examines the claims of Eric Williams and the more recent Legacies of British Slave-Ownership projects regarding the influence of enslavement in the building of Britain and its empire through a multi-generational study of a leading British elite family, the Bentincks. Using the concept of imperial careerism, it charts how four men from this family not typically identified as enslavers or abolitionists were entangled with enslavement in Britain's Western and Eastern empires. It concludes that the influence of enslavement was extensive and mainly exploitative, but involved losses as well as gains for these elite protagonists.

Keywords

Imperial Careerism, Slavery, Family, Eighteenth Century, Empire

Introduction

In 1944 Eric Williams argued that profits from the Atlantic slave trade and slavery were of central importance to the Industrial Revolution in England. Furthermore, profits from related industries such as shipbuilding, iron manufacture, cotton manufacture, and activities such as insurance and banking all contributed to the success of the British economy.¹ Joseph Inikori has also argued that African enforced labour was significant in Britain's economic success.² More recently, the Legacies of British Slave Ownership (LBS) project has demonstrated the complicated web of trade, investment and indebtedness that emanated from Caribbean slavery via the compensation claims following emancipation.³ The effects of the slave trade and slavery on the British economy have been hotly debated, and Williams has been criticised due to his polemical style and lack of empirical data, but it is difficult to challenge his basic argument that the slave trade and slavery had a pervasive influence on the British economy.⁴ Indeed, there is no doubt that the West India Interest was shocked by the rise of the abolition movement in the late 1780s, and the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1807 was seen as a stunning u-turn in government policy.⁵

Whilst Williams was mostly concerned with the ‘Atlantic’ first British empire, historians of the ‘Eastern’ second empire have often taken a more cultural turn.⁶ This has included life and/or family biographies, such as Linda Colley’s Elizabeth Marsh or Margot Finn’s Sir Thomas Munro, and especially the use of the concept of ‘imperial careering’.⁷ There is a big debate about exactly when the first British empire ended and the second began; but adopting the concept of imperial careering allows the historian to step outside the bounds of ‘first’ and ‘second’ empire, ‘Atlantic’ versus East, ‘core’ and ‘periphery’, ‘metropole’ and ‘colony’.⁹ It facilitates a more ‘complex spatiality’ and indeed, a more complex and nuanced chronology of empire.¹⁰ This article therefore revisits Williams’ concerns with slavery as an inherent part of the British empire, but adopts the concept of imperial careering; thereby avoiding any false separation of empires either chronologically or spatially, and facilitating a discussion of both economic and cultural aspects. It uses the case study of the elite Bentinck family. Their family careers allow us to trace links with slavery and empire from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth, linking Atlantic and Indian slavery. This article therefore steps across artificial historiographical fractures to consider a variety of imperial encounters.

The Bentincks are not a family well-known for their connections with enslavement. William Henry, third Duke of Portland, was identified by Miranda Kaufmann’s study for English Heritage as having links to slavery as he was petitioned by the abolitionist Granville Sharp.¹¹ Lord William Bentinck is listed as an unsuccessful claimant for compensation at the abolition of slavery on the LBS database.¹² Yet the research presented here on the Bentinck family highlights a range of more complex connections, implicit as well as explicit. The Bentincks were an aristocratic family with, at various times, estates in a number of English counties as well as plantations in Demerara and Jamaica.¹³ However, many of the men of the family were

involved in either high politics, plantation management, colonial management – or a combination of these occupations- in places such as Jamaica, the Guianas, St. Vincent, India, and, of course, London.¹⁴ They therefore are not representative of most British peoples' experiences of empire, but taking four generations of the family means that their story is illustrative of the elite experience. In order to study the Bentinck family, a range of primary sources have been used. These include the Portland Collection in the Manuscripts and Special Collections of the University of Nottingham, Colonial Office records relating to Grenada at The National Archives, the Liverpool Papers at the British Library with regards to colonial management, papers relating to the *Zong* at the National Maritime Museum, and papers relating to the Bentinck family at the National Library of Jamaica and the University of West Indies, Mona. Together these have illuminated the wide variety of experience even within an elite aristocratic family.

The remainder of this article is structured chronologically. It outlines the imperial careers of: Henry Bentinck (the first Duke of Portland) and his links with the South Sea Company and plantation ownership and colonial office; William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck (the third Duke of Portland) and links with slave holding and management of empire; Henry William Bentinck and his colonial service and plantation ownership; and Lord William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck and his links with abolition and colonial service. In following their imperial careers, it is possible to trace one family's complicated and often conflicted links with slavery and empire between the early eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, despite having good access to information, finance, opportunities and networks, the Bentincks were not always able to benefit financially from these connections, and certainly not as easily suggested by Williams. This article therefore does not agree with Williams' implicit suggestion that all individuals involved in slavery and slaveholding necessarily

benefitted, even within the elite. However, it does conclude by agreeing with and adding to Williams and the LBS projects with regards to the pervasive nature of slavery within the British empire, both at home and abroad.

The Bentincks

Henry Bentinck (1682-1726), first Duke of Portland: The SouthSea Bubble and Flight to the colonies

Williams' thesis is certainly challenged by the demise of the first Duke of Portland's estate. When Henry Bentinck inherited the earldom in 1709, his estate was valued at over £850,000 and had been augmented when he married Lady Elizabeth Noel (eldest daughter and co-heir to the second earl of Gainsborough) in 1704.¹⁵ However, when his son, the second Duke of Portland, married in 1734, the estate was valued at only £40,000.¹⁶ Henry Bentinck was already in financial difficulty by 1710, possibly due to his investment in the East India Company. He invested £10,000 in 1698 in patriotic support of King William's war, a gesture many elites made.¹⁷ He may therefore have been hoping to restore his fortunes when he subsequently invested in the South Sea Company. The joint-stock South Sea Company was founded in 1711 as a synthesis of 'finance, commerce and foreign policy'.¹⁸ The aim was to try and monopolise shipping and trading rights in South America as a counteraction to the Iberian empires' control of that region. This aim was furthered at the end of Queen Anne's War (1702-13), when Britain was awarded the *Asiento*, the contract to deliver enslaved Africans to the Spanish colonies. Using Royal African Company ships, the South Sea Company did indeed fulfil its contract, delivering enslaved Africans to various ports in the Spanish Caribbean and mainland.¹⁹ However, the South Sea Company became increasingly

important in helping to finance the Tory government's war debts from 1719 onwards and the initiative was a key part of the 'financial revolution'.²⁰ The hoped-for success of the South Sea Company therefore became an inherent part of the imperial project. This meant that several elite families, including the Crown, with the King as Governor of the Company, acted as patriotic investors. At one point King George I owned £15,383 worth of shares, the Earl of Pembroke £69,052, and the Duchess of Kendall, £47,000.²¹ This all led to the speculation in the Company's shares in 1720.

Henry Bentinck was therefore not unusual in investing in the South Sea Company, but the scale of his investment was. Over the summer of the infamous 'bubble' of 1720, he was involved in deals for over 130,900 shares.²² His investment continued even when the shares fell to 200d in October from a high of 950d in June.²³ It would appear that Henry Bentinck used the South Sea stock he owned as collateral to borrow from other people; at first to buy yet more stock, and later to pay off his debts related to earlier issues.²⁴ For example, his agent wrote to a gentleman named Edwin hoping he would lend Henry Bentinck money against his South Sea stock. He made a point of noting that the duke was a 'person of great Honour, and would be very punctuall [sic] in complying with his Obligations' and in fact eventually under pressure Edwin lent money for the duke to purchase £3,000 worth of South Sea stock for £16,000.²⁵ When the stock price fell and Edwin tried to get further security, Henry Bentinck used emotional blackmail. He begged Edwin not to sell the stock at low prices 'with Tears on his face'.²⁶ The duke was also involved in similar deals with Messrs Caswall & Co., whom he later gave 'Notice not to dispose any part of the said stock' or they would be 'answerable for the same'.²⁷ However, he subsequently reneged on these types of deals, including those with Edwin, Turner, Caswell & Co., and John Meres, many of which were being contested as late as 1738.²⁸ Whilst Meres received his money from Bentinck, Caswall did not.²⁹

We cannot be sure whether Henry Bentinck was a 'greater fool' following the 'herd' of investors, or whether he felt compelled as an elite to support the government's war effort through the scheme.³⁰ Gary O'Shea suggests he was fraudulent and actively reneged on certain contracts by tying up many of his assets in the estate trust for his children.³¹ No doubt he would have hoped to have bolstered his personal wealth with these investments; yet in August 1720 he argued that he could not afford to pay Mr Meres the money he owed him, because if he (the duke) were seen to be selling, the price would fall even further.³² Clearly he believed his actions were influential, whatever his personal motives. It would appear that far from profiting from involvement in the slave trade via the South Sea Company, Henry Bentinck, like many if not all elite landowners, lost out financially to a large degree with serious repercussions for himself and his family in the long term.³³

In an attempt to save these familial financial fortunes, Henry Bentinck tried to develop his imperial career in a different direction and when he took up the post of the Governor of Jamaica in 1722, he became directly involved in a slave society. Jamaica had been taken from the Spanish in 1655, and was by the early eighteenth century a slowly growing sugar colony.³⁴ Henry must have seen this as a great opportunity to replenish his wealth and status, especially as, at the request of the Crown, he was awarded twice the normal salary of £2,500.³⁵ In 1723 he created the parish of Portland in north-east Jamaica, named in his honour, in an attempt to encourage English settlement there.³⁶ He began purchasing property as soon as he arrived in Spanish Town in January 1722. He bought a pen (a small livestock farm), which he then immediately mortgaged for £1,700.³⁷ The precise location of this property is unclear and little is known about its management, but it almost certainly would have included the ownership of enslaved Africans. Although records identifying further purchases have not been identified,

he clearly intended to increase his land and slave holdings in Jamaica. His will records that he left to his wife Elizabeth ‘for ever all the Lands & Negroes of which I shall die seized of or any Wise entitled to within this Island’.³⁸ He also requested that his widow sell the same as soon as possible after his death in order to pay the debts on his estates in England.³⁹

Henry died at the young age of 44, whilst still in office in Jamaica. His move to Jamaica did not save his fortunes. Indeed, it has been argued that Henry Bentinck’s involvement in the South Sea Company prevented his family ‘from playing an influential part in affairs for nearly two generations’.⁴⁰ His albeit short, more direct involvement in a slave society did not rescue his finances either.

*William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck (1738-1809); third Duke of Portland: enslavement and the management of empire*⁴¹

The family fortunes were still suffering from the first duke’s foray into the South Sea scheme when William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck married Lady Dorothy Cavendish in 1766. Neither her substantial £30,000 dowry as the only daughter of the fourth duke of Devonshire nor the income from the Cavendish estates of his heiress mother, Lady Margaret Cavendish Holles Harley, which he eventually benefitted from at her death in 1785, were enough to turn things around.⁴² Two costly property disputes, the most notorious with Tory political opponent, Sir James Lowther in Cumberland, did not help and, in fact, made the third Duke of Portland particularly sensitive to issues surrounding property – in its various forms.⁴³ Indeed, people were able to play on his insecurities and exploit the several important posts he held in the Whig party. As Prime Minister he was lobbied by abolitionists and as Secretary of State for Home Affairs, he had to deal with slavery as part of his role in colonial management.⁴⁴

During his brief term as Prime Minister between 2 April and 18 December 1783, William Henry was drawn into the debates over the infamous *Zong* massacre.⁴⁵ The court case did not centre around the murder of the 133 enslaved Africans on board, but on their value as property; and it was through issues of property that Granville Sharp sought to sway William Henry's opinion on the matter.⁴⁶ For example, Sharp wrote in his covering letter that he rejected the pro-slavery argument that third persons could not intervene because enslaved Africans were property.⁴⁷ The 'supposed Property in their Persons' was 'a very limited sort of Property' [all emphases in originals].⁴⁸ Instead he argued for the right of the enslaved to own their own bodies: 'The property of these poor injured Negroes in their own Lives ... was infinitely superior ... than the ... Slaveholder's or Slave-dealers iniquitous claim of Property in their Persons'. Not content with playing on William Henry's personal proclivities, Sharp also played on the fragility of the Whig party at this time. Condemning the 'monstrous injustice & abandoned Wickedness' of the slave trade, he suggested that the suffering of those in the West Indies from 'Tempests and Hurricanes', and the loss of the thirteen continental colonies was God's vengeance for being involved in slavery – fostered as it was by 'parliamentary Authority'.⁴⁹ He also warned that any delay in stopping involvement in such a trade 'must necessarily endanger a Man's eternal Welfare, be he ever so great in temporal dignity or Office'. Granville therefore brought Portland's personal insecurities together with politics and religion. William Henry did not deign to reply, but we can assume that as a member of the elite, 'he upheld pragmatic British interests and the property rights of slave-owners'.⁵⁰ In 1783 the West India Interest were certainly still firmly and successfully upholding their interests.⁵¹

Later in his career William Henry was again confronted with issues over slavery, this time during his tenure as Secretary of State for Home Affairs and, yet again, issues over property were prominent. Grenada had been ceded to Britain from the French in 1763 as part of the Treaty of Paris, and many French had remained on the island. Neither side trusted the other, partly because of the restricted political advancement allowed to the French.⁵² In 1795 these tensions erupted under the leadership of Julien Fedon, a free man of colour of French extraction. Fedon's rebellion has been characterised by Michael Craton as 'the most serious threat posed to British control anywhere in the Antilles'.⁵³ Around 50 of the leading British planters, including Governor Home, were executed by the rebels.⁵⁴ One hundred plantations were burned and around 7,000 enslaved Africans killed, condemned to death or deported. The total economic losses were estimated at around £2.5 million.⁵⁵ The loss of enslaved labour and the ongoing wars with the French left the islanders feeling insecure and they and their creditors turned to William Henry for protection and recompense.

William Henry's reaction tells us much about his attitudes towards land and the enslaved as property. Many formerly French plantations were forfeited and the sales were being dealt with by local commissioners. William Henry received a lengthy petition in 1797 from several Liverpool merchants who were some of the creditors of these estates. They complained that the commissioners had no 'stake' in the plantation land and therefore had no interest in securing the best prices for it and its associated enslaved workforce, whereas the Liverpool merchants, as creditors of the former French owners, did.⁵⁶ They accused the commissioners of being corrupt and complicit in selling land and enslaved Africans at reduced prices. This is quite possible as, whilst prices for newly imported Africans would have been high, prices for internal local sales between friends and fellow planters may have been kept artificially low. The commissioners had already sold 900 slaves from various estates, and without the

enslaved to work the land, these estates were worthless, meaning that the present owners were even less likely to be able to pay off their debts.⁵⁷ On this occasion William Henry did reply, if somewhat slowly, and was liaising with the Treasury to appoint ‘a proper person’ to deal with the issue.⁵⁸ It is clear, however, that the Liverpool merchants and William Henry understood the enslaved as property, and as property which was important to the physical landscape; without the enslaved, they believed the plantations could not be worked. The enslaved were therefore essential to the success of the slave colonies and the wider imperial project.

Imperial careers were, as Finnpoints out, not just about the individual, and William Henry was active in helping out family members.⁵⁹ He assisted his Anglo-Dutch relations and secured positions for his more immediate family (see below), including the secretaryship of Jamaica and the clerkship-in-ordinary to the Privy Council for his grandson Charles Cavendish Fulke Greville (1794-1865), both of which helped Greville to pay off his debts.⁶⁰ William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck’s political career highlights the links between the elite, the empire, and slavery. The fact that people played on his personal property insecurities tells us that the concept was important to him in private as well as public terms. Furthermore, his core defence of the principle of property included the right to hold chattel property in enslaved persons as part of the imperial project.⁶¹

Governor Henry William Bentinck (1765-1820) and his Anglo-Dutch relations: Colonial Service and Plantation Ownership

Henry William Bentinck was the great grandson of the first earl of Portland, the father of the first Duke of Portland.⁶² He was on the Anglo-Dutch side of the family (which took the title

of Counts Bentinck) and negotiated interests in both the British and Dutch empires. Born in Holland, he was educated in England where he reported having ‘many and near connections’.⁶³ He then served for 12 years in the Prince of Orange’s army before entering British colonial service, spending much of the remainder of his life in the British Caribbean. Henry William had a very direct engagement with slavery and empire, holding a number of colonial offices in the Caribbean, most notably as governor of St. Vincent (1802-1806), Demerara (1806-1812) and Berbice (1814-1820). His Anglo-Dutch identity likely helped him to ease the transfer of the latter two colonies from Dutch to British rule.⁶⁴ He had a close relationship with the third Duke of Portland, to whom his birth was reported and with whom he corresponded from his first colonial posting in Martinique, and visited at Bulstrode, his estate near London. At his appointment as Governor of Demerara, he was introduced in the press as a relative of the third duke.⁶⁵

Henry William was reportedly popular amongst the planters in his role as Governor of Demerara. Before leaving for his appointment in 1806, he was given ‘a very elegant entertainment ... by the Merchants and Planters of this Colony, resident in London’.⁶⁶ This may have been because he was also a property owner in Demerara (see below). In 1811 he wrote first to the Earl of Liverpool as Secretary for War and the Colonies and then to his successor Earl Bathurst begging for relief for both Essequibo and Demerara, where the planters were being hounded by their creditors.⁶⁷ The Earl of Liverpool was a good choice because he had been given the freedom of that port in 1796 in recognition of his support of the town’s interests, including of course, the slave trade.⁶⁸ No doubt Henry William increased his popularity with the planters when in 1811 he delayed enacting the British Government’s ruling against the Demerara Court of Policy’s banning of meetings of enslaved peoples.⁶⁹

However, his fortunes as a plantation owner were mixed. He reported his purchase of a plantation in Demerara, a hot spot for British investment, just before the Peace of Amiens (March 1802), having recently been appointed as Collector of the Customs and Vendu Master of the colony.⁷⁰ Although the property was not identified by name, it is likely to have been La Bonne Intention, then a cotton plantation on the north coast of the colony.⁷¹ As the property was ‘supposed to be capable of considerable improvement if the requisite funds were advanced to support it’, Henry William speculated on the ‘probable profits of those Offices’, taking a loan from the merchant house of Turnbull, Forbes & Co. of London. But the gamble did not go well as the failure of Turnbull, Forbes & Co. in August 1802 led him to declare ‘a loss exceeding his whole private fortune’.⁷² It is likely that his relationship with the Anglo-Dutch merchant, Daniel Willink (1780-1859) (see below), then of London, began in the wake of this failure. Henry William was thus one of the British settlers who were undermined by the decline of profitability in Caribbean cotton planting in the early nineteenth century due in part to increased competition from cheaper cotton supplies from the United States.⁷³

Henry William appears to have been directly involved with the management of La Bonne Intention when resident in Demerara. In 1804, cotton and coffee (and probably sugar) were being imported into Liverpool.⁷⁴ By 1808 Henry William and his brother Charles Ferdinand (Governor of Surinam, 1809-1811) each owned a sixth share in the property with Willink also holding a financial interest.⁷⁵ By his death in 1820, Henry William claimed a two-thirds share in the plantation which he left to his nephews, though the property was still mortgaged to Willink and the assigns of Turnbull & Forbes at this point.⁷⁶ In 1835 the family were still doing business through Liverpool but by then with the banker and shipping agent Daniel Willink (formerly of London), the son of an Amsterdam merchant, and the Dutch consul in Liverpool.⁷⁷ It would appear that Charles Bentinck (Henry William’s nephew) had

just returned from a 'West Indian Trip' during which he had been actively corresponding with Willink concerning estate management.⁷⁸ The letters are concerned with the arrival, quality and prices of sugar into Liverpool, and the shipping of coal to the estate, which suggests that Charles Bentinck had an interest in the use of steam power, a common development after 1807.⁷⁹

La Bonne Intention plantation was also an important and notorious site in the punishment displays that followed the Demerara insurrection by the enslaved in 1823. This uprising is believed to have been started by rumours that the British government had voted for emancipation. Around 9,000 enslaved people were said to have been involved in the rebellion, and the governor estimated that 255 were killed or wounded in the fighting. Summary trials and public executions were part of the violent punishments meted out in front of other enslaved people on a range of estates as well as in the capital Georgetown. This resulted in a further 33 deaths.⁸⁰ La Bonne Intention, by this time a sugar plantation, was burned and Lindor, an estate carpenter, executed as a ringleader and his body notoriously displayed at the plantation as a warning to others.⁸¹ Unsurprisingly, the insurrection appears to have exacerbated financial problems with the estate. In 1837, Henry William's nephews, Charles Anthony Ferdinand Bentinck and Henry John William Bentinck, were awarded £13,378 13s 7d compensation for its 266 enslaved workforce, following abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean. However, this was directly transferred to their agent, Daniel Willink, with regards to two mortgages on the estate held by him worth £10,065 17s 6d and £29,287 9s 1d respectively. It was estimated that the nephews had to furnish a further £16,000 to pay off their debt.⁸² It is likely, given the earlier involvement with Daniel Willink, that the Bentincks had been borrowing from him since the early days of their ownership of La

Bonne Intention. The nephews retained ownership of the plantation into the 1840s, perhaps in the hope that it would become profitable post-emancipation.⁸³

It would appear that Henry William was helped out by his relationship with the third Duke of Portland, and indeed, the Anglo-Dutch Bentincks clearly had many and long-lasting relationships with imperial slavery and with the West Indian colonies post-emancipation. However, Henry William's and his nephews' experience shows that these connections were not always profitable.

Lord William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck (1774-1839): Abolition and Colonial Service

Lord William Henry was the second son of the third Duke of Portland. His career complicates Williams' story of Atlantic slavery because he was involved with enslavement issues in relation to India as well as the British Caribbean. Furthermore, Lord William Henry, unlike his predecessors, was part of the British abolition movement, but his liberal ideas only went so far; he was pro-slavery in India and despite opposing Atlantic slavery submitted a claim for compensation in relation to the enslaved workforce of a Trinidad plantation (see below). His complex story, and his relationships with other members of his family over the issue of abolition, means that we must question simplistic accounts about who was pro-slavery and who was an abolitionist within the British empire.

As noted above, the dukes of Portland were impoverished by the first duke's involvement in the South Sea scheme. This meant that Lord William Henry was reliant on his imperial career to secure his finances and those of his wider family. He entered the army in 1791 and served in several European arenas, including Ireland (1794-1798) and Italy (1799-1801). However,

in 1802 his father exerted his influence and secured him the office of Governor of Madras from 1803.⁸⁴ This post came with a salary of £15,000 per annum and Lord William Henry hoped that he might amass ‘a fortune of between £50,000 and £60,000’ if he stayed in service until 1810.⁸⁵ However, he lost his position in 1807 during the Vellore mutiny, and so never realised his full financial expectations. He estimated, however, that he still managed to save about £20,000 whilst in India.⁸⁶ He used this money to purchase land in Norfolk, buying the 914 acre North Lynn estate near Kings Lynn in 1809 and another nearby farm in 1817, outlaying an estimated £50,000.⁸⁷ Lord William Henry served again in the Army in Italy in the later years of the war against Napoleon, again with controversial results leading to his recall.⁸⁸ An early attempt to become Governor of Bengal in 1822 failed, vetoed by Lord Liverpool and Foreign Secretary Canning after Lord William Henry aligned himself with more radical reformers and against the Ministers.⁸⁹ However, he eventually gained favour and held the office of Governor General of Bengal between 1828 and 1833 and India between 1833 and 1835. These posts secured him savings of around £70,000, much of which he used to pay off his debts on his Norfolk property. His widow (and heir) left £40,000 when she died in 1843.⁹⁰

Lord William Henry married Mary Acheson, daughter of Lord Gosford, in 1803, and her evangelicalism had an important influence on him.⁹¹ Both developed strong associations with the abolitionist and wider humanitarian movements. Following his recall from Madras, Lord William Henry came to know Joseph John Gurney, the Norwich Quaker banker and brother of Elizabeth Fry.⁹² Indeed, Gurney, Birkbeck & Co was one banking house through which Lord William Henry secured loans for the development of his North Lynn estate and he held an account with them from at least late 1813.⁹³ Lord William Henry’s relationship with the Quakers and humanitarians appears to have been long lasting and friendly. Gurney described

him as ‘a man of excellent sense and great integrity of purpose’.⁹⁴ The Bentincks visited Gurney at his residence in Earlham, Norfolk in October 1825. At an Anti-Slavery Society dinner held during their stay, Lord William Henry publicly supported resolutions to abolish slavery in the British Caribbean and met the anti-slavery reformer Thomas Fowell Buxton, whose work he had been sent the previous year.⁹⁵ Gurney’s hope was that Lord William Henry would present these resolutions drafted by the Norwich Anti-Slavery Society to Parliament (where he sat as MP for Nottinghamshire) and just before the visit had sent a copy to him.⁹⁶ There is no evidence that Lord William Henry did so, despite recording his experience at the meeting as ‘very much pleased with things – high hospitality’.⁹⁷

Lord William Henry’s abolitionist attitudes may have put him out of favour with other elites, including his niece’s family who held plantations in Jamaica.⁹⁸ His elder brother, Lord Titchfield (later fourth Duke of Portland), had refused a peerage offered to him by the Ministry of all Talents in 1806 because he objected to their ‘unanimous’ views supporting abolition of the British Atlantic Slave Trade.⁹⁹ Indeed, it may have been his brother’s influence in Lord William Henry’s Nottinghamshire seat which deterred him from presenting in Parliament the anti-slavery resolutions he had publicly supported in Norfolk.

While Lord William Henry condemned the African slave trade as cruel, (see below) his support for abolition in the Atlantic did not stop him from submitting a counter claim for compensation of £2,411 to gain payment for a debt with regards to 46 enslaved persons on a Trinidadian estate under the Slave Compensation Act. The estate was owned by a family which had petitioned the third duke in relation to Saint Domingue war accounts and Lord William Henry on the basis of his earlier support when they had met in Madras.¹⁰⁰ In addition his finances remained fragile and he may have been motivated by the need to call in debts or

he may have wanted to invest in India.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, if we consider his attitudes towards slavery in India, Lord William Henry's position on slavery *per se* is rather more ambiguous, even if we allow for the fact that he may have been swayed by pressure from the directors of the East India Company.¹⁰² He had little regard for Indian cultural heritage, writing in 1829 that India was 'cursed from one end to the other by the vice, the ignorance, the oppression, the despotism, the barbarous and [the] cruel customs'.¹⁰³ 'Examine the whole scheme of this Indian system, and you will find the same result; poverty, inferiority, degradation in every shape. For all these evils, knowledge! knowledge! knowledge! is the universal cure.'¹⁰⁴ Lord William Henry regarded India 'as a great estate, of which I am the chief agent, whose principal business is to improve the condition of the tenantry and to raise the revenues'.¹⁰⁵ While he did attempt to improve education in India through the Foreign School Society, John Rosselli is rather kind with regards to Lord William Henry's motives for not wanting to see abolition in India, arguing that he saw Indian slavery as a social device for coping with extreme poverty, rather than slavery *per se*.¹⁰⁶ Lord William Henry himself reasoned that Indian slavery was 'Divested . . . of all the cruel features which characterised the African trade'.¹⁰⁷ His stance may also have been shaped by the wider tendency of the abolition movement as a whole to position Indian sugar as the ethical alternative to Caribbean sugar, a common argument at this time.¹⁰⁸

Lord William Henry's attitudes towards slavery and empire were certainly contradictory. This may have been partly because of his family's links with both abolitionists and pro-slavers. It is also likely that his attitudes were shaped by his imperial career ambitions. Certainly his attitudes towards sugar and slavery in India fit in with Williams' arguments with regards to 'the new industrial order' and the attack on monopoly.¹⁰⁹

Conclusions

The Bentinck family provides a long-term multi-generational case study through which to examine elite engagements with enslavement in ways which transgress chronologies of empire, boundaries of geo-political spaces and historiographies of pro- and anti-slavery. A focus on the Bentinck family's 'imperial careering' allows us to revisit Williams' arguments over the importance of the slave trade and slavery to the wider imperial project and to build on the more recent work of the LBS projects. The Bentinck family story supports arguments that slavery was pervasive within the British imperial system.

A multi-generational consideration of a family not previously renowned for strong links to slavery has revealed a wide range of complex engagements with enslavement, some deep and long-lasting, others more fleeting. There is strong evidence of the profits to be gained from enslavement and colonial service more broadly. Lord William Henry Bentinck, Henry William Bentinck and even Henry first Duke of Portland benefited directly from governorship salaries, the latter two in Caribbean colonies based on systems of enslavement of people of African descent. Henry William Bentinck and his nephews gained ownership of at least one plantation in British Guiana, identified by Nicholas Draper as one of the most profitable regions of the British Caribbean at the abolition of slavery in the 1830s, profiting from its outputs and, albeit indirectly, the compensation payment for the freed workforce. The first Duke of Portland profited from plantation ownership in Jamaica in the 1720s, albeit briefly, and Lord William Henry Bentinck attempted to profit from the compensation payments at the abolition of slavery. These salaries and profits contributed to the acquisition of English estates (Lord William) or a relief of their indebtedness (first Duke of Portland) and elite metropolitan lifestyles (Henry William and his nephews). However, the Bentinck case

study also reveals that links to enslavement were not always profitable, even in the period of the 'first empire'. Most notably the first Duke of Portland lost significantly from his investment in the South Sea Scheme and Henry William's plantation was heavily mortgaged. This evidence of mixed profitability from enslavement also supports the findings of the LBS compensation database which reveals a long chain of investment and indebtedness in enslavement by the 1830s as early core investors borrowed money during periods of profit squeeze. Furthermore, there is evidence that some members of the Bentinck family (Henry William and his nephews) continued to make investments in enslavement during the period in which Williams argues the system had become economically moribund. Conversely, and in support of Williams' periodization, Lord William Henry Bentinck set out to seek his fortune in the east of empire rather than the Atlantic world.

The Bentinck family also reveals complex and wide geographies of connections to enslavement, supported by networks of family patronage which stretched across the British and Dutch empires, and which facilitated changes in national colonial regimes in the Caribbean. The third Duke of Portland was a particularly influential figure, both as an active politician and as a staunch correspondent with family members in the Netherlands, a range of British Caribbean island colonies, Dutch and British Caribbean colonies on mainland South America and the Indian subcontinent. Finally, the Bentinck case study reveals multiple and complex, though mainly exploitative, engagements with enslavement. The third and fourth dukes of Portland were staunchly against the abolition of the slave trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but by the 1820s at least, Lord William Henry Bentinck (their son and brother respectively) was openly supporting abolition of slavery in the Atlantic world and closely connected to strong anti-slavery and humanitarian networks in Norfolk and Clapham. However, even he was not averse to making a claim for compensation at the

abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean. Furthermore, Lord William expressed differential attitudes to enslavement in the Atlantic and Indian spheres.

Although not strongly associated in the past with enslavement, this case study supports the claims of Williams and the more recent work of the LBS projects which highlight the importance of slavery to the development of British colonial and domestic fortunes. Indeed, this case study of a leading aristocratic family broadens and refines the claims of both Williams and the LBS projects by highlighting the reach of enslavement entanglements in elite circles and examining both the profits and the losses experienced by such British landed elites.

Notes

¹ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

² Joseph Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³ They also argue for the various legacies of slavery to include descendants of slave owners in the twenty-first century. Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donnington and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave Ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3-4.

⁴ David Richardson, 'Market Structure and Profits of the British African Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Comment', *Journal of Economic History* 43, no. 3 (1983): 713-721; David Richardson, 'The Slave Trade, Sugar, and British Economic Growth, 1748-1776', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XVII, No. 4 (Spring, 1987): 739-60; David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, 'The Importance of Slavery and the Slave Trade to Industrializing Britain', *Journal of Economic History* 60, no.1 (Mar, 2000): 123-44. See also Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman (eds.), *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁵ David Beck Ryden, *West Indian Slavery and British Abolition, 1783-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁶See for example: Kathleen Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History: Culture, identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Hilary M. Carey

(ed.), *Empires of Religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁷ Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: How a Remarkable Woman Crossed Seas and Empires to become Part of World History* (London: Harper Perennial, 2008 [2007]); Margot Finn, 'Anglo-Indian Lives in the Later Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no. 1 (2010): 49-65; Catherine Hall, 'An Empire of God or Man? The McCaulays, Father and Son', in *Empires of Religion*, Hilary M. Carey (ed.), (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 64-83; David Lambert and Alan Lester (eds.), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁹ See for example: Vincent T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793*, 2 Vols (London: Longmans, Green, 1952); Peter J. Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas I, The Old Colonial System, 1688-1850', *Economic History Review* XXXIV, no. 4 (1986); P. J. Marshall, 'Britain without America – A Second Empire?', in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Vol. II, The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 576-95; C. A. Bayly, 'The First Age of Global Imperialism, c. 1760-1830', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26, no. 2 (1998): 28-47.

¹⁰ David Lambert and Alan Lester, 'Introduction', in *Colonial Lives*, 1-31, .3.

¹¹ Miranda Kaufmann, *English Heritage Properties 1600-1830 and Slavery Connections* (London: English Heritage, 2007).

¹² See <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1299780778>, accessed 3 Aug 2017.

¹³ A. S. Turberville, *A History of Welbeck Abbey and Its Owners, Vol. II* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1938-39), 14-15, 60.

¹⁴ For more on the Bentincks and their estates more generally see: A. S. Turberville, *A History of Welbeck Abbey and Its Owners, II Vols* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1938-39); David Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland: Politics and Party in the Age of George III* (Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003). There are also good biographies of the family members in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edition.

¹⁵ Turberville, *History of Welbeck, II*, 14-15; Paula Watson and Ivar McGrath, 'Bentinck, Henry, Visct. Woodstock (c.1682-1726) of Titchfield, Hants', in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1690-1715*, D. Hayton, E. Cruickshanks and S. Handley (eds.) (Martlesham, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), online, accessed 2 Aug 2017.

¹⁶ Pat Rogers, 'Bentinck, Margaret', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online, at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40752>, accessed 4 May 2017.

¹⁷ J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986): 80.

¹⁸ J. Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (London: Cresset Press, 1960), 53.

¹⁹ England held the *Asiento* until 1748 – though it effectively ceased in 1730 with the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear. Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 59. The *Asiento* was important in opening up the Spanish colonies for other trades in the long term because of associated trading rights. Adrian Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 18–20.

²⁰ P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688-1756* (London: MacMillan, 1967). See chapters five, 90-121, and chapter six, 122-56 on the South Sea Bubble.

²¹ Dickson, *Financial Revolution*, 280.

²² Manuscripts and Special Collections University of Nottingham (MSCUN) PI F2/6/178, Series of accounts etc, relating to purchases and sales of South Sea stock by the duke of Portland, 1720-1721. The transactions are laid out in Gary S. Shea, ‘Sir George Caswall vs the Duke of Portland: Financial Contracts and Litigation in the Wake of the South Sea Bubble’, in *The Origins and Development of Financial Markets and Institutions from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, Jeremy Atack and Larry Neal (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 121-60, 153-55.

²³ They were 130d at the start of the year. Julian Hoppit, ‘The Myths of the South Sea Bubble’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 143-44.

²⁴ MSCUN PI F2/6/310, List of South Sea stock bought by the duke of Portland in 1720, or contracted to be bought by him, 1720-1741.

²⁵ MSCUN PI F2/6/210, Series of cases for the opinion of counsel ..., 20 Sep 1720.

²⁶ MSCUN PI F2/6/210, Series of cases for the opinion of counsel ..., 20 Sep 1720.

²⁷ MSCUN PI F2/6/135/2, Portland to Messrs Turner Caswell & Co., 20 Mar 1721.

²⁸ MSCUN PI F2/6/222-225, Pleas in Caswall v Duke of Portland, 1738. Meres may have been the son of Sir Thomas Meres, Stuart Handley, Meres, Sir Thomas, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18583>, accessed 4 May 2017. Meres was not ruined in the South Sea Bubble, and he was later an officer in the Royal African Company. O’Shea, ‘Sir George Caswall’, 143.

²⁹ O’Shea suggests that this was due to Meres’ obsequiousness and persistence, or possibly because he was clerk in Chancery, or simply because Meres’ debt was affordable where others were not. O’Shea, ‘Sir George Caswall’, 141-3.

³⁰ Peter Temin and Hans-Joachim Voth, ‘Riding the South Sea Bubble’, *American Economic Review* 94, no. 5 (2004): 1654-68. See also Peter M. Garber, *Famous First Bubbles: the Fundamentals of Early Manias* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), who argues against the

case for irrational market behaviour during the South Sea ‘bubble’. Helen J. Paul argues that the South Sea Bubble was a rational bubble, *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), chapter six, 54-74.

³¹ O’Shea, ‘Sir George Caswall’, 154, 148.

³² MSCUN PwB 53, A narrative of all that hath been transacted by his grace the duke of Portland, or on his behalf with Sir John Meres, 8 Dec 1721.

³³ Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble*, 104. Beckett highlights how some landowners, such as Lord Gower and Lord Cowper, did profit from South Sea Company investments by selling their stock before the bubble burst. Most lost out in a huge way. See Beckett, *Aristocracy in England*, 81-82. Some mercantile investors did make large fortunes, however; see Temin and Voth, ‘Riding the South Sea Bubble’.

³⁴ Sheridan calls the period 1714-39 one of laggard growth. Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1974), 216.

³⁵ O’Shea, ‘Sir George Caswall’, 148.

³⁶ He also had plans to develop the town of Titchfield, named after his manor in Hampshire. Turberville, *History of Welbeck*, II, p.15; Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica* (London: Printed for T. Lowndes, 1774), 173-174.

³⁷ MSCUN PI F2/7/27, Memorandum on the State of the Duke of Portland’s lands in Jamaica, n.d. (post 1726).

³⁸ MSCUN, PI F2/7/26, Copy of the Will of Henry first duke of Portland, 2 Jul 1726.

³⁹ His other properties were in Westminster, Essex, Norfolk, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Sussex and elsewhere. Turberville, *History of Welbeck*, II, 14-15; Watson and McGrath, ‘Bentinck, Henry’.

⁴⁰ Carswell, *South Sea Bubble*, 195..

⁴¹ William Bentinck, the second duke of Portland, lived a quiet life on his estate at Bulstrode. As he did not engage in politics or colonial management he is not discussed here. See: [https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/portland/biographies/biographyofwilliambentinck,2nddukeofportland\(1709-1762\).aspx](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/portland/biographies/biographyofwilliambentinck,2nddukeofportland(1709-1762).aspx), accessed 26 Apr 2017.

⁴² Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland*, 60-61.

⁴³ Sheryllynne Haggerty and Susanne Seymour, “‘Property, Power and Authority: the Slavery Connections of Bolsover Castle and Brodsworth Hall’, in M. Dresser, A. Hann and M. Kaufmann (eds.), *Slavery and the British Country House* (London: English Heritage, 2013).

⁴⁴ He was also Lord Lieutenant of Ireland briefly from April to August 1782. Wilkinson, *Duke of Portland*, chapter two. For more on his career, see D. Wilkinson, ‘Bentinck, William Henry Cavendish Cavendish – third Duke of Portland (1738-1809), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online at <http://via.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2162>, accessed 27 Jul 2017.

⁴⁵ James Walvin, *The Zong: A Massacre, the Law, & the End of Slavery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), argues that the massacre was pivotal for the abolition movement.

⁴⁶ On the case itself see Anita Rupprecht, ‘Excessive Memories: Slavery, Insurance and Resistance’, *History Workshop Journal* 64, no. 1 (2007): 6–28; Jeremy Krikler, ‘The Zong and the Lord Chief Justice’, *History Workshop Journal* 64, no. 1 (2007): 29-47; Ian Baucom, *Spectres of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery and the Philosophy of History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁴⁷ Recent work argues that this is Portland’s personal copy of this letter – a later fair copy of which is in the British Library, the final version being lost – possibly destroyed by the Admiralty. Michelle Faubert, ‘Granville Sharp’s Manuscript Letter to the Admiralty on the

Zong Massacre: A New Discovery in the British Library', *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no.1 (2017): 178-95.

⁴⁸ All the quotations from Sharp in this paragraph are from National Maritime Museum REC/19, Documents relating to the case of the ship *Zong*, Sharp to Portland, 18 Jul 1783. See also Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland*, 55, 60-61.

⁴⁹ Williams argues that the loss of the North American colonies was central to the decline of the West Indies because of their importance in providing provisions. *Capitalism and Slavery*, chapter six.

⁵⁰ Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland*, 70. In 1783, Portland also received a petition from Denys Rolle, a colonist, for presentation to George III. Rolle had recently lost his extensive plantation lands and substantial enslaved African workforce in West Florida, which he estimated were worth £28,488, when the colony was ceded to Spain and was seeking compensatory land grants in the Bahamas. MSCUN PIC 49/7/1-2, Copy memorial from Denys Rolle to George III and sent to third duke of Portland, 10 Sep 1783.

⁵¹ On the rise and fall of West India Interest see: Lowell Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833* (New York and London: Century, 1928); Selwyn Carrington, 'The American Revolution and the British West Indies' Economy', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1978): 823-50; David Beck Ryden, *West Indian Slavery and Abolition, 1783-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); see also *Atlantic Studies* Christer Petley (ed.), Special Issue: Rethinking the Fall of the Planter Class, 9, no. 1 (Mar 2012).

⁵² Edward L. Cox, 'Fedor's Rebellion of 1795-6: Causes and Consequences', *Journal of Negro History* 67, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 7-19; Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Barbados: Canoe Press, 1974), 65.

⁵³ Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 165.

⁵⁴ Mark Quintanilla, 'The World of Alexander Campbell: An Eighteenth-Century Grenadian Planter', *Albion* 35, no. 2 (2003): 254-255.

⁵⁵ Cox, 'Fedor's Rebellion', 15.

⁵⁶ The National Archives (TNA), Governor Green to the Commissioners, 12 Oct 1797, CO 101/35, f.116. The commissioners of bankruptcies and insolvencies were usually creditors who had a stake or interest in the property (collecting the book debts of the merchant in question); Julian Hoppit, *Risk and Failure in English Business 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 35.

⁵⁷ TNA, Governor Green to the Commissioners, 12 Oct 1797, CO 101/35, f.116.

⁵⁸ TNA, Duke of Portland to Governor Green, 22 Nov 1798. CO 101/35, f.204.

⁵⁹ Finn, 'Anglo-Indian Lives'.

⁶⁰ The dates of these appointments are not given in Christopher Hibbert, 'Greville, Charles Cavendish Fulke' (1794–1865), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11515>, accessed 27Apr 2017.

⁶¹ Ironically, it is worth noting the importance of the alienation of property as an element of Parliamentary authority at this time. For example, whilst the slave traders received no compensation in 1807 for the 'robbery' of Africans, the plantation owners received £20 million in 1833 as recompense for their loss of property. Julian Hoppit, 'Compulsion, Compensation and Property Rights in Britain, 1688-1833', *Past & Present* 210 (Feb 2011): 93-128, 119.

⁶² Haggerty and Seymour 'Property, Power and Authority'.

⁶³ MSCUN Pw F 672 Memorial of Henry W. Bentinck to Viscount Castlereagh, 3 Nov 1805; Rodway, *History of British Guiana*, Vol.2, 179, 180.

⁶⁴Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo were Dutch colonies taken by the British in 1796 to 1802, regained in 1803 and officially ceded to Britain in 1814, though with a history of British influence since the 1730s: Gert Oostindie, “‘British Capital, Industry and Perseverance’ versus Dutch ‘Old School’?” *Low Countries Historical Review* 127, no.4 (2012): 28-55. They were collectively known as British Guiana from 1831: Nicholas Draper, ‘The Rise of the New Planter Class? Some Countercurrents from British Guiana and Trinidad, 1807-33’, *Atlantic Studies* Special Issue: Rethinking the Fall of the Planter Class, Christer Petley (ed.), 9, no. 1 (March, 2012): 65-83 67.

⁶⁵ MSCUN Pw F 511 Letter from C.F.A Bentinck, Hague to the third duke of Portland, 8 Nov 1765; MSCUN Pw F 671, Letter from Heinrich W. Bentinck, Martinique to the third duke of Portland, 18 Jul 1795; MSCUN Pw F 670, Letter from Heinrich W. Bentinck, St Pierre, Martinique to the third duke of Portland, 7 Aug 1795; MSCUN Pl C 52/19, Letter from Charles Bentinck, London to the third duke of Portland, 20 Sep 1801. Rodway, *History of British Guiana*, Vol.2, 179.

⁶⁶ The *Essequibo and Demerary Gazette*, 17 May 1806. Online at <https://www.vc.id.au/edg/18060510edg.html>, accessed 4 Jul 2017.

⁶⁷The creditors were both Dutch and English. Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 29.

⁶⁸ The earl of Liverpool at this time was Charles Jenkinson, formerly Lord Hawkesbury. John Cannon, ‘Jenkinson, Charles’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online, at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14737?docPos=1>, accessed 28 Apl 2017; British Library, Lord Liverpool to Thomas Naylor, 16 Jul 1796, Liverpool Papers, Add. 38310.

⁶⁹Rodway, *History of British Guiana*, Vol.2, 198.

⁷⁰ MSCUN Pw F 672 Memorial of Henry W. Bentinck to Viscount Castlereagh, c.3 Nov 1805. As Vendue Master he would have overseen sales of enslaved Africans in the colony who were being imported in large numbers at this time; more than 6,000 a year from 1796-1808, see Oostindie, 'British Capital, Industry and Perseverance', 35, 38, 47.

⁷¹ The LBS database provides evidence of a 1798 map which lists La Bonne Intention as a cotton plantation belonging to the widow Changuion

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/86>, accessed 1 Aug 2017.

⁷² A Commission of Bankruptcy was declared against Turnbull, Forbes & Co. on 28 Aug 1802, *London Gazette*, published 22 Mar 1803, at

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/15569/page/342>, accessed 4 Aug 2017; MSCUN

Pw F 672, Memorial of Henry W. Bentinck to Viscount Castlereagh, c.3 Nov 1805

(quotations).

⁷³ Oostindie, 'British Capital, Industry and Perseverance', 48; on the United States cotton industry see Stuart Bruchey, *Cotton and the Growth of the American Economy: 1790-1860, Sources and Readings* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1967).

⁷⁴ Liverpool Record Office, William McBean to Samuel Sandbach, 4 Feb 1804, 920 PAR IV/1/1/8.

⁷⁵ University of West Indies, MS 1824, Transfer of power of attorney from William Frederick Christian Bentinck, The Hague, to Charles Anthony Ferdinand Bentinck in respect to the management of La Bonne Intention, a plantation in Demerara. *Essequibo and Demerary Royal Gazette*, 17 Sep 1808 at <https://www.vc.id.au/edg/18080917edrg.html>, accessed 5 Jul 2017; LBS entry on Daniel Willink <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/8670>, accessed 1 Aug 2017. The LBS database also reports that in 1817 La Bonne Intention was held by Bentinck & Changuion, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/86>, accessed 1 Aug 2017.

⁷⁶TNA, PROB 11/1889/78 Will of His Excellency Henry William Bentinck, Lieutenant Governor of Berbice, South America. William Frederick Christian Bentinck (1787-1855, later third Count Bentinck), Charles Anthony Ferdinand Bentinck (1792-1864, later fourth Count Bentinck) and Henry John Bentinck (1796-1878).

⁷⁷ Willink also had strong links with the Barings of London and Hopes of Amsterdam. Stanley Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain: from the Industrial Revolution to World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 87.

⁷⁸ National Library of Jamaica, MS 790, Letters from Daniel Willink to Lt. Col C. Bentinck, 24 Aug and 31 Oct 1835.

⁷⁹ B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1995 [1984]), 166.

⁸⁰ da Costa, *Crowns of Glory*, 222-24, 243.

⁸¹ Joshua Bryant, *Account of an Insurrection of the Negro Slaves in the Colony of Demerara, which broke out on the 18th of August, 1823* (London, 1824), Plate 12; A Stevenson (ed.), *Report of the Trials of the Insurgent Negroes...* (Georgetown, 1824).

⁸² See LBS project, claim number 558, at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/8649>, accessed 28 Apr 2017. For more on the slave compensations see Nick Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-Ownership, Compensation and British Society at the end of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸³ Certainly until 1833, fresh soil and a higher investment in new production techniques helped to account for an advantage in sugar production in the former Dutch islands. Draper, 'The Rise of a New Planter Class?', 68.

⁸⁴ Douglas M. Peers, 'Bentinck, Lord William Henry Cavendish', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2161>, accessed 2 May

2017. See also John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist 1774-1839* (London; Chatto & Windus for Sussex University Press, 1974), 88.

⁸⁵ MSCUN PwH 249/1-5, Letter from Lord W. H. Cavendish Bentinck, Fort St. George, Madras, India, to fourth duke of Portland, 6 Sep 1805.

⁸⁶ Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 89.

⁸⁷ Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 90.

⁸⁸ Peers, 'Bentinck'.

⁸⁹ Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 72.

⁹⁰ Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 99.

⁹¹ Peers, 'Bentinck'.

⁹² Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 55-66.

⁹³ John Rosselli, 'An Indian Governor in the Norfolk Marshland: Lord William Bentinck as improver, 1809-27', *Agricultural History Review* 19 (1971). Table 1 indicates that the main loans came from Drummonds bank and relations; MSCUN Pw Jd 5936/1 and 2, Lord William Bentinck's account with Gurneys Nov 1813- Feb 1814; MSCUN Pw Je 344-48.

Correspondence between Gurneys, Birkbeck & Co. and Lord William Bentinck, 1817-1824.

⁹⁴ Cited in Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 62.

⁹⁵ MSCUN Pw Je 349, Correspondence from Joseph John Gurney to Lord William Bentinck, 13 Oct 1825; MSCUN Pw Je 1026/1-8. Plan for Abolition of Slavery, Feb 1824 and Improved Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, Feb 1824; Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, p.62.

⁹⁶ MSCUN Pw Je 349, Joseph John Gurney to Lord William Bentinck, 13 Oct 1825; MSCUN Pw Je 350. Copy of resolutions passed on the slavery issue, c. Oct 1825; Peers, Bentinck.

⁹⁷ MSCUN Pw Je 1078, Annotated Almanack of Lord William Bentinck, 19 and 20 Oct 1825.

⁹⁸ His niece, Lucy Cavendish-Bentinck, daughter of the fourth duke of Portland, in 1828 married Charles Augustus Ellis (1799-1868), sixth Baron Howard de Walden whose family held five Jamaican holdings at emancipation and whose father Charles Rose Ellis (1771-1845), Lord Seaford, was regarded as ‘perpetual chairman of the West Indian body’ in the House of Commons. Cited in H. M. Stephens and rev. H. C. H. Mathew, ‘Ellis, Charles Rose’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online, at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8688>, accessed 5 May 2017.

⁹⁹ MSCUN PwH 333, Draft of letter from marquis of Titchfield to third duke of Portland, Mar 1806.

¹⁰⁰ The estate was called L’Amitie. LBS, Claim 1684, at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs>, accessed 2 May 2017; MSCUN Pw F 6931, Letter from Major Montalembert, Ramsgate, to third Duke of Portland, 20 Jul 1808; MSCUN Pw Jd 4993, Letter from Lt Colonel Montalembert, Brighton, to Lord William Bentinck, 20 Sep 1813.

¹⁰¹ Rosselli, ‘An Indian Governor’, pp.63-64. Many people invested profits from ‘old’ colonial slavery into the ‘new’ Eastern empire. Nicholas Draper, ‘Helping to Make Britain Great: The Commercial Legacies of Slave-Ownership in Britain’, in *Legacies of British Slave Ownership*, Hall et al, 78-126.

¹⁰² Bowen refers to Bentinck as one of the Governors-General ‘rather more inclined’ to keep in line with the EIC directors. H. V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 206.

¹⁰³ Cited in George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 162.

¹⁰⁴ Cited in George D. Bearce, ‘Lord William Bentinck: the Application of Liberalism to India’, *Journal of Modern History* 28, no. 3 (Sep 1956): 234-46, 236.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Peers, 'Bentinck'.

¹⁰⁶ Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 216.

¹⁰⁷ Cited in Andrea Major, 'The Slavery of East and West: Abolitionists and "Unfree" Labour in India, 1820-1833', *Slavery & Abolition* 31, no.4 (2010): 501-25, 506. Slavery in India was 'delegalised' in 1843, but was not criminalised until 1860. Indian slavery was not seen as particularly oppressive, but EIC officials presented it as a way of employing the poor. Major, *Slavery, Abolitionism and Empire in India, 1772-1843* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 9, 336, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Major, 'The Slavery of East and West', 502; Major, *Slavery, Abolitionism and Empire*, chapter eight, 293-320. Interestingly, Bentinck did support the abolition of Sati (widow burning) in India. Buxton was full of praise for him when he heard the news of his banning sati in the Bengal Presidency in December 1829, which stimulated further actions in Madras and Bombay in early 1830. Clare Midgley, 'Female emancipation in an imperial frame: English women and the campaign against sati (widow-burning) in India, 1813-30', *Women's History Review* 9, no.1 (2000): 95-121, 109.

¹⁰⁹ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, chapter eight. See chapter nine for the campaign for East Indian sugar.

Acknowledgements

The research for this paper was part funded by an English Heritage £10,000 grant on a project entitled 'The Slavery Connections of English Heritage Properties'.