

The Arkwrights and Slavery: A Scoping Report
Produced for DVMWHS
by
Dr Susanne Seymour and Dr Cassandra Goptar
University of Nottingham
July 2021

1. Introduction

This scoping report sets out findings from a short research project into the slavery connections of the Arkwrights from the later 18th to the mid 19th centuries undertaken in April to July 2021. It has a specific focus on Richard Arkwright senior, Richard Arkwright junior and Augustus Peter Arkwright.

While the publicly-available archival records for Richard Arkwright Senior and his son, Richard Arkwright Junior, who he was in business with in his later years, are sparse and fragmented it was thought that they would bear further examination from the perspective of slavery connections. This work builds on materials on the Arkwrights found in Fitton (1989), Seymour et al (2015) and Seymour (2018).

The project undertook a range of online research of materials related to the Arkwrights and archival research in Derbyshire Record Office. Appendix 1 includes a list of materials reviewed there. This selection was made based on an assessment of those archives most likely to hold relevant information on slavery connections. Research in other archives was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions, and time and funding constraints.

The report is organised into the following sections:

- Cotton business links to transatlantic slavery
- Raw cotton supplies of Richard Arkwright Senior and Junior
- Other business links to transatlantic slavery
- Social and family links to transatlantic slavery

These are followed by a short conclusion and recommendations for further research.

2. Cotton business links to transatlantic slavery

Richard Arkwright senior was in partnership in Manchester in the early 1780s with **William Brocklehurst** and **John Whittenbury**, Fitton cites them as partners with Arkwright in a Manchester mill on Millers Lane, describing them as “two well-to-do Manchester cotton merchants” of Market Street Lane and Piccadilly.¹ William Brocklehurst, cotton merchant, of Norfolk Street is mentioned in Manchester Directories of 1772, 1773 and 1781. There is evidence that RA senior stayed with Brocklehurst in Nov 1782 as he received a letter threatening his life while there.² However, the partnership was short-lived according to Fitton, and Arkwright sold his interest in the mill to his son Richard Arkwright junior in 1784 who went into partnership with Samuel and John Simpson.³

Both Brocklehurst and Whittenbury were members of the Committee of the Manchester branch of the society for the abolition of the slave trade instituted in 1787.⁴ John Whittenbury and William Brocklehurst junior each invested in two £50 shares in the Sierra Leone Company, an abolitionist and colonial project, and Fitton ascribes Richard Arkwright senior’s purchase of Sierra Leone Company shares to the influence of Brocklehurst and Whittenbury.⁵ Online materials on both Brocklehurst and Whittenbury were scarce and no correspondence between them and the Arkwrights was found in the DRO.

In around 1783 Richard Arkwright senior became partner with **John Clegg** in John Clegg & Co, cotton merchants of Oxford Court, Cannon Street, London.⁶ The Cleggs also had a Manchester base “as cotton merchants of Cromford Court” and “fustian manufacturers of Crow Alley”.⁷ The partnership ended in 1788. The *Manchester Mercury* of 18 Oct 1785 reported the arrival of cotton from Lisbon (most likely sourced from Brazil) for John Clegg (see Figure 1).

¹ Fitton 1989, p.63.

² Fitton 1989, pp.101-2.

³ Fitton 1989, p. 64.

⁴ See Seymour et al 2015, p.155.

⁵ Wadstrom 1794, pp.353, 342; Fitton 1989, p.215.

⁶ Fitton 1989, p.579, who cites London Directory 1783, 1785 but not 1782 and The *London Gazette*, 1788.

⁷ Fitton 1989, p.214 – who cites Manchester Directory 1788.

The William and Jane, S Murray, from Lisbon, w
 pipes wine for J. Rushton, 3 ditto F. Chadwick, 2 do 4
 ditto T. Ryan, 10 pipes ditto H. Hesketh, 4 do. E. Co
 ditto Proctor and Atkinson, 1 ditto Crosbie and Green
 136 pockets cotton Chas. Lowndes, 33 ditto D. Hulme
 co. 29 ditto John Clegg and co. 33 ditto S. Worrall and
 boxes fruit said Master.

Figure 1: *Manchester Mercury* - Tuesday 18 October 1785

Richard Arkwright senior also went into business with **David Dale (1739-1806)**, a leading Glasgow textile manufacturer and specialist in the yarn trade who he met in 1784, developing New Lanark Mills.⁸ They likely met when Arkwright was presented with the freedom of the city of Glasgow at a banquet held by Lord Provost of the City and head of the newly formed (1783) Glasgow Chamber of Manufacturers, Patrick Colquhoun, on 1st Oct 1784. Arkwright senior was on a tour of Scotland investigating the state of manufacturing and fisheries. He then went to Falls of Clyde with David Dale and this led to the development of New Lanark Mills.⁹ Dale and Arkwright were in business for just a year at New Lanark and seemed to have fallen out over a minor matter. Morris reports that Dale's cotton import records no longer exist, "though it does seem inevitable that at least some of the cotton would come from the Atlantic world". He also cites McLaren's view that "Dale's social milieu" would have included members of an informal group of merchants known as 'The West India Club'.¹⁰

But Dale also had abolitionist sentiments. He was an investor in five £50 shares in the Sierra Leone Company in 1791, and was the chair of the Glasgow Society for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade founded in the same year.¹¹ In this role Dale presided over General Meetings of the Glasgow branch (*Caledonian Mercury*, 9 Feb 1792) and assisted in efforts to gather signatures for the Glasgow petition in 1792 in support of Wilberforce's anti-slave trade motion to Parliament.¹²

⁸ Butt 2004.

⁹ Fitton 1989, pp.71-73.

¹⁰ Morris 2018, p.129.

¹¹ Wadstrom 1794, p.343; Fitton 1989, p.215; Morris 2018, p.118.

¹² Legacies of Slavery in Glasgow Museums and Collections, "David Dale".

However, no correspondence between the Arkwrights and Dale was found in the DRO.

Richard Arkwright junior had a partnership with **Robert Spear** from 1788, as Robert Spear & Co, Crow Alley, Manchester, which was dissolved in 1790. Spear had earlier been in business in Manchester with Clegg.¹³ Some business connections continued, however as Spear supplied Arkwright junior and Oldknow with 16 bags of raw cotton from Demerara worth £412.17.04 in 1803 for their Mellor Mill operations.¹⁴ Spear was also a Sierra Leone Company shareholder, purchasing two £50 shares.¹⁵

3. The raw cotton supplies of Richard Arkwright senior and junior

This section presents some new evidence about the raw cotton supplies of the Arkwrights and adds detail to existing knowledge.

Less is known about the origins of the raw cotton supplies of **Richard Arkwright senior** but there is scattered evidence that he acted as a supplier as well as consumer of raw cotton.

Fitton claims “As early as 1780 he [Richard Arkwright senior] was supplying India cotton to Nottingham hosiers”, citing the *Derby Mercury*, 10 and 17 March 1780.¹⁶ The entry for Friday 10 March 1780 (Figure 2) refers to the theft of “290lb. of India Cotton, packed up in Bags, and directed to different Hosiers in Nottingham, the property of Messrs. Arkwright, Need and Strutt”, which suggests all three men could have been acting as suppliers of cotton from India at this point. An earlier *Derby Mercury* article of 14 Nov 1777 describes Arkwright as a “Cotton-Merchant”.

¹³ Fitton 1989, pp.214, 227 who cites Manchester Directory, 1788 and the *London Gazette* 1790.

¹⁴ DRO D7573/BOX/O/138 A/O4 - No 9/ Mellor Stock Accounts, 1803, p.40.

¹⁵ Fitton 1989, p.215; Wadstrom 1794, p.351.

¹⁶ Fitton 1989, p.214.

—At the Town Hall, James Carlisle was arraigned on an Indictment for robbing John Brown near St. Peter's Church the 15th of November last; the Trial lasted three Hours, when the Prisoner was acquitted. Benjamin Wykes, William Turner, and Joseph Archer, were indicted for stealing on the 3d of February last, out of a common Stage travelling Cart, belonging to Samuel Tomlinson of Crich, as it was standing at Southwingfield in this County, 290 lb. of India Cotton, packed up in Bags, and directed to different Hofiers in Nottingham, the Property of Messrs. Arkwright, Need, and Strutt, and which Goods were found in their Possession at the Green Dragon Alehouse in Houndsgate, Nottingham, the 8th of February; and after a clear and impartial Trial, in which several Witnesses were examined, and the Prisoners making little or no Defence, they were convicted of Grand Larceny, for which the Judge sentenced them to be kept to hard Labour for three Years on the River Thames.—There was so much Business on the Nisi Prius Side at Nottingham,

Figure 2: *Derby Mercury*, 10 March 1780

A letter of 28 Mar 1786 also suggests Arkwright was supplying raw cotton to other cotton textile manufacturers. In this letter to Samuel Oldknow Richard Arkwright senior wrote "If agreeable to you, you may as well write to me for the cotton wool when convenient but just as you please. It is not very material only it will keep my accounts more regular other people being concerned in the sale of the cotton wool besides myself."¹⁷ It also implies that Arkwright was working with others to sell cotton wool at this point.

Arkwright was certainly concerned about raw cotton supplies and their quality. For example Fitton makes reference to E Baines Jun's claim of a scheme by RA senior to buy up all the world's cotton.¹⁸ No further information has been discovered relating to this claim.

Arkwright's interests included raw cotton from the Caribbean where enslaved people grew the supplies. Fitton refers to Arkwright's letter to the Society of Arts on 7 November 1782 on a sample of cotton from Barbados. Unfortunately an online copy of this letter was not found.¹⁹ Fitton also refers to Arkwright senior's advice to the Board of Trade in c.1787 on

¹⁷ DRO D978/MB/9 (transcript).

¹⁸ Fitton 1989, p. 213) citing E Baines Junior's 1835 *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*, London, p.196.

¹⁹ Fitton 1989, p.215 cites the Society of Arts LA A9/4.

cotton grown in Barbados from Persian seed.²⁰ It was not possible to check this reference in the National Archives due to Covid-19 restrictions.

There is limited information on where Richard Arkwright senior sourced his raw cotton from. Fitton and the *Derby Mercury* source suggests he used supplies from India in 1780 (see above). In a letter of 4 April 1786 to Samuel Oldknow, Richard Arkwright refers to cotton wool prices and a recent purchase:

“I am informed cotton wool is advancing. If you have not bought any Brazil I bought some from Mr. Lomas of Manchester which proves very good”.²¹

Clearly Richard Arkwright senior was an early purchaser of Brazilian cotton.²²

As from 1790 the Arkwrights and Strutts used Nicholas Waterhouse as their Liverpool broker Seymour argues their supply sources and suppliers were likely similar in the 1790s-1800s.²³

In a letter of 7 Mar 1786 from Richard Arkwright senior at Bakewell to Oldknow Arkwright refers to a need for good quality cotton wool, saying “I think then Bolton which will always make the weft at least”.²⁴ Arkwright could be speaking here of Liverpool merchant, slave trader and plantation owner, John Bolton who Richard Arkwright junior later used as a supplier. This may have prompted his comment to Oldknow noted above in the letter of 4 April 1786.

There is more information on **Richard Arkwright junior**’s raw cotton supplies. In July 1793 he was in discussion with **Nicholas Waterhouse**, his cotton broker at Liverpool, concerning a scheme to import Brazilian cotton via Lisbon.²⁵ Waterhouse refers to little having changed since his recent correspondence with Arkwright, suggesting they were in regular contact. He reports recent news from Lisbon that “a considerable decline in Braziles Cottons is likely to

²⁰ Fitton 1989, pp.215, 223 cites PRO [now TNA] BT 6/246.

²¹ DRO D978/MB/9.

²² For further information on the Brazilian raw cotton trade to Britain see Pereira 2018.

²³ See Seymour 2018.

²⁴ DRO D978/MB/9 (transcript).

²⁵ DRO D5991/4/9, 15 July 1793.

take place there” and advises Arkwright that it would be “much to thy advantage in purchasing there”. He then sets out the following proposal:

“as they have not the advantage in that Market of Picking the Parcels so much as we have here & at times there will be some ord^y [ordinary] ones amongst them – therefore if they were consigned to one house (if thou thought Proper) I could pick all the best Cottons out of them for thy own consumption & sell the remainder”.

He explains that consigning to him on Arkwright’s behalf, “that it might not be known that they were thy Cottons” was advised, “otherwise it perhaps might hinder the Sale of the refuse”. Or if Arkwright does not want to import himself, Waterhouse suggests “thou might do it jointly with some one here or in Manch^t who are in the Habits of it, on the same principle”. Waterhouse suggests “the House of Mawdsley & Co very suitable”, in which Waterhouse’s “Friend Edgar Corrie with whom thou art acquainted is concernd” and as the firm has a house in both Liverpool and Manchester, “& on that acct may have a greater opportunity of selling the refuse”. This, and Waterhouse’s later comment, “please to excuse the liberty I have took, on proposing fresh modes of doing business to thee”, implies Arkwright is not a regular importer of cotton at this point. It is not clear whether the plan was enacted in any form.

Interestingly Waterhouse also reports on the amount and nature of the raw cotton at Lisbon:

“PS. The quantity at Lisbon when the Mail came away was ab^t. 19,500 of which ab^t. 9,000 was Pernams [Pernambucos] – there being at [sic] much greater Crop at Maranham than Pernambucos this y^r.”

There is no mention in the letter of the means of production of this raw cotton.

Seymour (2018) has undertaken analysis of his 1799-1801 account with Waterhouse (see Appendix 2). While this does not indicate where Arkwright’s raw cotton supplies via Liverpool originated from it outlines that “known slave traders or plantation owners supplied just under half (45.9%) of the bags/bales purchased at this time. If the cost/value is considered, over half (50.8%) of Arkwright’s expenditure in the account is to known slave traders or plantation owners.” Furthermore, his two main named Liverpool suppliers, John

Bolton and the Earles, were heavily involved in trading and ownership of enslaved people. A particularly important supplier to Arkwright was leading Liverpool merchant, John Bolton, a large scale slave trader and plantation owner, who sourced cotton from Guyana, the West Indies and the southern states of America.²⁶

There is also information in the DRO of the raw cotton supplies used by Arkwright and Samuel Oldknow in their partnership and mill based at Mellor in Lancashire 1799-1805.²⁷ This indicates that during this time cotton wool was purchased exclusively from the Americas where enslaved labour was widely used. A summary is supplied in Table 1 which reports on the origin or type of raw cotton, the amount in lbs (or bags where lb weight is not available) and its value. It reveals major supply zones to be over this time period to be: the **cotton producing colonies on the north coast of South America (£13,114.06.03)** especially Demerara (£9,371.01.07), with the remainder from Berbice (£3,741.04.08); followed by **Brazil (£7,472.19.02)** mainly from Maranhão (£6,788.13.02), and the **southern states of America (£4,823.05.09½)**, including Georgia (£2,853.14.07) and New Orleans (£1,968.11.02½). A small amount was sourced from the **Caribbean Islands (£477.02.01)**, including Carriacou and the Bahamas.

Table 1: Raw cotton supplies of Arkwright and Oldknow – at Manchester and Mellor, 1799-1805

| Year | Origin/type | Amount lbs | Value £ |
|------|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1799 | Berbice | 9700½ | 1769.14.02 |
| | Demerara | 6197 | 1061.12.02½ |
| | Bahama | 1308 | 199.03.00 |
| | Bowed Georgia [USA] | 505 | 67.06.08 |
| | St Andre? | 47 | 7.08.10 |
| 1800 | Georgia [USA] | 3160 | 367.06.08 |
| | Pernambuco [Brazil] | 2223 | 314.18.06 |
| | Demerara | 1709 | 222.08.03 |
| 1801 | Cotton [unspecified type/origin] | 2559 | 328.09.01½ |
| | Demerara | 1885 | 239.11.00 |
| | Georgia [USA] | 152 | 192.00.00 |

²⁶ Seymour 2018; Krichtal 2013.

²⁷ DRO D7573/BOX/O/138 A/O4.

| | | | |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1802 | Georgia [USA] | 4571 | 533.05.08 |
| | Orleans & Demerara | 3733 | 440.03.02 |
| | Berbice | 3682 | 429.11.04 |
| | Orleans [USA] | 2430 | 227.16.02 |
| | Pernambuco [Brazil] | 1645½ | 225.05.00 |
| | Demerara | 671 | 84.06.03 |
| | Mixed | 425 | 44.05.05 |
| 1803* | Demerara | 8661 + 219 bags | 6958.01.00 |
| | Maranhm [Brazil] | 324 bags | 5761.12.01 |
| | Georgia [USA] | 16083 | 1604.05.09 |
| | Berbice | 69 bags | 1541.19.02 |
| | Orleans [USA] | 6821 | 483.16.04 |
| | Carriacou [Grenada] | 10 bags | 246.00.09 |
| | Pernambuco [Brazil] | 616 | 73.00.09 |
| 1804 | Orleans [USA] | 12154 | 813.02.01½ |
| | Maranhams [Brazil] | 9296 | 1027.01.01 |
| | Georgia [USA] | 932¼ | 89.09.10 |
| | Bahia [Brazil] | 726 | 71.01.09 |
| | West India | 267 | 24.09.06 |
| 1805 | Demerara | 5441 | 585.01.05½ |
| | Orleans [USA] | 3250 | 223.15.01 |

*arranged in cost order as volume measures vary between bags and lbs.

Source: DRO D7573/BOX/O/138 A/O4 - No 9/ Mellor Stock Accounts, 1799-1805.

4. Other business links to transatlantic slavery

Banking

There is evidence of a close relationship between the Arkwrights and **Heywoods Bank**. The Heywood family had been slave traders, based in Liverpool and Lancaster but by the later 1780s had relinquished direct trading and set up their banking house in 1788 in Manchester and Liverpool:

"Born in Drogheda, Benjamin Heywood, along with his older brother, Arthur, not only participated in numerous slaving voyages, but owned a banking business in Liverpool, a sugar plantation in the West Indies, and a cloth manufacturing business in Wakefield. Heywood was most active in the slave trade in the period between 1745-1782. During this time he participated in seventy-two voyages, was the primary owner of twenty-six and the sole owner of two. Contrary to Bristolian Fowler,

however, he managed groups with a larger number of investors. He was the primary owner of fourteen groups of six, a group of seven and eight groups of eight."²⁸

Heywood Brothers & Co (1788-1874), Manchester is a constituent bank of the Royal Bank of Scotland.²⁹ The NatWest archives Customer Ledger of 1791 notes Richard Arkwright had an account in Heywood Bros of Manchester.³⁰

The close relationship between the Arkwrights and Heywoods Bank is confirmed in a letter of 16 April 1793 from Benjamin Heywood to Richard Arkwright Junior.³¹ In this Heywood reports a serious situation in which he has been advised by the Bank of England they "must contract our Drafts or divide our Business with some other House in London". To the latter end Heywood has written to Messrs Thellusson Brothers, prominent London merchants who benefitted considerably from money lending with Caribbean plantation owners and supplying goods for the slave trade.³² He nonetheless acknowledges receipt of Arkwright's "very kind letter" and pledges to pay John Simpson £1,000 or £1,500 as he requires it for Arkwright's account. He says that "When you [Arkwright junior] are next in Manchester we should be glad to have the pleasure of seeing you to explain our situation at the moment, as we are particularly desirous to draw as little as we can possibly help". Significantly he highlights the closeness of the relationship:

"The confidence you have placed in us, during the late trying times requires in particular that you should be convinced it is not misplaced, and that your Money is in hands perfectly safe. For this purpose it is our wish to show you our Accounts, which we believe will not only prove satisfactory but from the friendship we have ever experienced from you will give you pleasure".

However, there were also abolitionist sympathies in the later generations of the Heywood family. The *History of Parliament* notes that Benjamin Heywood junior (1793-1865),

²⁸ McDade 2011, pp. 137-138.

²⁹ <https://www.natwestgroup.com/heritage/companies/heywood-brothers-and-co.html>

³⁰ <https://www.natwestgroup.com/heritage/history-100/objects-by-theme/shaping-our-future-together/customer-ledger-1791.html>

³¹ DRO D5991/4/3.

³² See Seymour and Haggerty 2010 and Haggerty and Seymour 2013.

grandson of Benjamin Heywood (d.1795) and nephew of Benjamin Arthur Heywood (1755-1828) declared against slavery when MP for Lancashire in 1831-32.³³

Richard Arkwright Junior went into business with local banker and cotton spinner **John Toplis** in 1804, forming Arkwright, Toplis & Co. The firm was renamed Richard Arkwright & Co in 1829 after Toplis died in 1826.³⁴ Clients of the Arkwright, Toplis & Co Bank, drawn from local business and landed groups, included Sir Henry FitzHerbert of Tissington Hall, Derbyshire, as evidenced by his bankers book of 1823-35.³⁵ Fitzherbert owned several Caribbean plantations and their enslaved workforces, and received substantial compensation in the 1830s when slavery was abolished.³⁶ Toplis was another Sierra Leone Company investor, buying two £50 shares.³⁷

Richard Arkwright junior also had an account with London bankers Payne, Smith and Payne. A letter of 12 Jan 1821 suggests his account was recently credited with £4,000 and £3,000 annual dividends on £160,000 bonds and £200,000 consuls; a further £6,950, £13,700 and £13,700 in dividends was reported paid to Arkwright in April 1822, Nov 1826 and April 1828 respectively.³⁸ The firm also helped organise a loan for the government in which Richard Arkwright junior was put down for £30,000.³⁹ This link is unsurprising as Smith, Payne and Smith were a leading bank of the period. However, it should be noted that the bank made loans to a number of plantation owners leading to it benefiting from some compensation claims when slavery was abolished in the British Caribbean colonies in 1834.⁴⁰ For example, it acquired through default on a loan, Farm Pen, a Jamaican plantation and enslaved people which it held from 1789-c.1798.⁴¹ The property was then bought by Robert Smith (a senior

³³ <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/heywood-benjamin-1793-1865>

³⁴ Fitton 1989, p.245.

³⁵ DRO D239 M/F 6347.

³⁶ LBS database: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2462>

³⁷ Fitton 1989, pp.215-6; Wadstrom 1794, p.352.

³⁸ 12 Jan 1821, DRO D7573/DRO/20; 12 April 1822 and 3 Nov 1826, DRO D7573/DRO/20; 12 April 1828, DRO D5991/4/26.

³⁹ Letter from Smith Payne and Smith 19 Feb 1800, DRO D5991/4/16.

⁴⁰ LBS database: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/firm/view/1816453197>.

⁴¹ LBS database: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/1482>.

partner in the firm), who as Lord Carrington received compensation for its enslaved people when slavery was abolished in the British Caribbean colonies in 1834.⁴²

5. Social and family connections to transatlantic slavery

Pro-slavery family and social connections

No evidence has been found of pro-slavery views within the Arkwright family though it should be noted that there is little coverage of the topic at all in the family papers reviewed. There is nonetheless evidence that pro-slavery attitudes did not prevent the Arkwrights socialising with those who held them. An example of this is their relationship with the Fitzherberts of Tissington. In a letter of 27th Aug 1807 H Fitzherbert of Tissington Hall wrote to Richard Arkwright junior on behalf of his wife and himself to offer him “our best thanks for a very excellent Pine and Mellon [sic] which you were so good to send to Tissington last week by Mr R Arkwright”. He also shares news of his wife’s recent illness and recovery and reports “She unites in me in best Compliments to Mrs Arkwright”.⁴³ It appears that the families were on good terms socially, unsurprising as both were landowning families by this point. The Fitzherberts’ ownership of plantations and enslaved people does not seem to be an issue in their relationship with the Arkwrights.

Another possible link with a pro-slavery family has been found in the correspondence of Elizabeth Arkwright (1780-1838), 16 year old daughter of Richard Arkwright junior. She wrote on 4 Feb 1797 from Devonshire Place in London requesting permission from her parents to dine with a “Miss Oswald (who you have often heard me speak of)” at her friend’s sister’s. This Miss Oswald, Elizabeth reports, “expects to go to Scotland soon”.⁴⁴ This may suggest a connection to the Oswald family of merchants, based in London but with Scottish origins, and heavily involved in slave trading and plantation ownership.⁴⁵

⁴² LBS database: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/11954>.

⁴³ DRO D7573/DRO/20.

⁴⁴ DRO D7573/DRO/20.

⁴⁵ See Hancock 1995.

A broader insight into attitudes to slavery amongst the different generations of the Arkwright family resident at Willersley Castle may be gained from the 1927 Willersley Castle sale catalogue, drawn up when the family sold the estate, which includes an interesting sales item.⁴⁶ Lot 49 (p.8) is “A PAIR OF BRONZE FIGURES, ON ORMOLU AND MARBLE BASES – *The Crouching Venus* and *The Slave*, 16 in. and 19 in. high”. The catalogue indicates these are illustrated in Plate VIII but this shows only *The Crouching Venus*. Both were popular figures of eighteenth century interiors, though the representation of the enslaved was likely more controversial. It is interesting that the Arkwrights chose to have a sculpture of such a subject in Willersley Castle, albeit in an ante room. Its visual omission from the sale catalogue may speak to its controversial nature. The sales catalogue also highlights how the house was generously furnished with mahogany (as was typical of many 18th and 19th century country houses). Much of this wood was sourced from the forests of South and Central America where it was harvested by enslaved African workers.

Anti-slavery family and social connections

It is known that **Richard Arkwright Senior** was an investor in three £50 shares in the Sierra Leone Company (1791-1807), a colonial initiative supported by abolitionist groups. His motivations for supporting the scheme are less well known and debated.⁴⁷ Unfortunately we have not been able to shed further light on these during this project beyond highlighting that a number of the Arkwrights’ business partners (Brocklehurst, Dale, Toplis) or family connections (Darwin, Evans) also subscribed. Further examination of materials specific to the Sierra Leone Company may be worthwhile.

Another abolitionist figure the Arkwrights were connected to was **Erasmus Darwin**. Darwin was also a subscriber to the Sierra Leone Company and a supporter of the abolition of slavery.⁴⁸ In a letter of 7 Oct 1792 Darwin writes⁴⁸ to William Strutt junior regarding Richard Arkwright junior’s offer of his father’s chaise: “As M^r. Arkwright is so good as to offer me the

⁴⁶ DRO D7573/DRO/16.

⁴⁷ See Fitton 1989, p.215; Seymour et al 2015, p.155.

⁴⁸ Fitton 1989, p.215; Wadstrom, 1794, p.343; McNeil 2004.

chaise of the late S^r. Richard, I shall certainly accept of it with pleasure both as a favor from him, & as a memorial of one, whose genius I looked up to with admiration".⁴⁹

Later generations of the Arkwright family had documented abolitionist sympathies. The *History of Parliament* notes that Richard Arkwright senior's grandson, **Richard Arkwright (1781-1832)**, as MP for Rye (1826-1830) "presented petitions for the abolition of slavery".⁵⁰

He wrote to his father, Richard Arkwright junior, on several political matters, including Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform and the progress of elections but discussion of slavery appears absent in correspondence accessed in the DRO.⁵¹ His departure from parliament in 1830 and his sudden early death in 1832 may account in part for this.

Richard Arkwright junior's grandson, **Augustus Peter Arkwright (1821-1887)** had a long career in the Royal Navy (from 1830-1852). He joined a naval academy at age 9 or 10 when he wrote to his mother of his arrival at Seaforth, near Liverpool.⁵² He served in a number of different locations, including Europe, South America, the west coast of Africa and North America.

His first letter home reports, "We arrived very safely at Liverpool and Miss Davenport met us and took us to Seaforth." It ends with a PS "The Miss Davenports beg their respectful Compliments to you". It is possible that these Miss Davenports might be relations of William Davenport (1725-1797), the Liverpool merchant and slave trader, albeit that he was a bachelor.⁵³ A few months later in his letter of 5th May 1830 Augustus notes his likely first proper visit to Liverpool and his favourable impression of the city: "saw the new Cemetery, the Docks and a great many very fine Vessels, which I was very much delighted with: I saw Lord Nelsons Monument And the Kings Tobacco Warehouse".⁵⁴

⁴⁹ DRO D5591/3/1.

⁵⁰ <http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1820-1832/member/arkwright-richard-1781-1832>

⁵¹ DRO D7573/DRO/20 Bundle of letters (about 70-80) addressed to Richard and Mrs Arkwright from various correspondents and some family members; 1790s - 1820s.

⁵² 2nd March 1830, DRO D55991/10/3.

⁵³ Ibid; Richardson 2004.

⁵⁴ DRO D55991/10/4.

Nine years later, Augustus was preparing for a major voyage to South America. He wrote to his grandfather, Richard Arkwright junior, from Portsmouth on 21st July 1839 outlining he was about to sail on his ship, *HMS Curacoa*, to South America via Barbados: “we take out Sir Chas Metcalf [sic] to Barbadoes [sic] land him and his luggage; then we proceed on to Rio Janeiro: he is going to be Governor of Jamaica” [Metcalf was Governor 1839-1842].⁵⁵

Augustus was stationed in Rio de Janeiro for several months in 1840 but makes no mention of Brazilian slavery or its cotton industry. His letters focus on the weather, his health, the landscape and the colonial inhabitants. For example he gives the following account of the country around Rio in another letter to his grandfather in May 1840:

“I will tell you the little I know about Rio de Janeiro. I often take a ride about 10 miles into the country through forests full of every variety of timber & ornamental wood, through fields of capital pasture land; admirably adapted for the breeding of, and raising of, all kinds of cattle, and over quarries of granite stone; which are very numerous; surrounded by humming birds, and butterflies; in fact a person coming from England or Europe, is quite struck by this country; the scenery is so very grand, and what makes it more so: is, it not being at all cultivated but every thing in its natural state.”⁵⁶

Interestingly, he also reports that many people in the social circles in which he is mixing in Rio and Buenos Aires claim to know the Arkwrights. His letter of 4 July 1840 to his sister Peggy from his new ship *HMS Stag*, stationed at Rio, highlights his frustration at coming from so well known a family:

“I have been trying to keep out of society, as much as possible Notwithstanding my wish not to know anybody, I am acquainted with half the people here; mainly because my name is Arkwright: one introduces himself as he knows some Arkwrights in Derbyshire; another because he was at Eton with several Arkwrights, and a lady the other day, told me she knew another Arkwright, in Derbyshire, as she was staying at a house in Derbyshire with him, his name was George, & called by several Ajax. I am obliged to accept invitations to these peoples houses, and by doing so am

⁵⁵ DRO D55991/10/48.

⁵⁶ Letter to RA junior from Rio dated 9 May 1840, DRO D55991/10/49.

introduced to numbers. I find it a great nuisance; and it puts me to a great expense. I want very much to get away from this place altogether.”⁵⁷

After returning from South America, Augustus served aboard *HMS Pantaloon*, on the west coast of Africa, principally Sierra Leone and the River Gambia, with a main duty to suppress the slave trade. In a letter to his mother in 1841 from his new ship *HMS Pantaloon* Augustus reports they have orders from Admiral Codrington to sail “to the West coast of Africa, to hunt Slave Ships ... & the coast of Africa is the ? station we have”.⁵⁸

However the main personal reason for his service there seems to have been to gain promotion, as in late 1842 he reported, “ For the last few months my time has been wholly occupied on the West Coast of Africa, cruising for Slavers and boating up rivers: an employment attended with every disadvantage, except the chance of promotion.”⁵⁹

His view before departure for Africa was that “2/3rds” of young officers “blush? at the idea of going to the Coast of Africa”.⁶⁰

Writing to his mother in 21st Mar 1841, this time from the *Pantaloon* “Bathurst, River Gambia ... coast of Africa” Augustus recounts being very busy:

“not for want of variety, I complain, because something new in these uncivilised parts, turns up, every day. We have only had one skirmish if it may so be called”.⁶¹

After returning to Britain in June 1841 and with a new commander, Lt Lapidge, Augustus reported his arrival off the African coast on 20th Jan [1842] in a letter to his mother from his ship *HMS Pantaloon*, off the coast of Sierra Leone, 22nd Jan 1842.⁶² They have sailed direct from Plymouth, a journey of 22 days, not stopping at any islands, not even Madeira:

⁵⁷ DRO D55991/10/50.

⁵⁸ DRO D55991/10/53.

⁵⁹ 7 Nov 1842, DRO D55991/10/74.

⁶⁰ DRO D55991/10/53.

⁶¹ DRO D55991/10/54.

⁶² DRO D55991/10/70.

“Numerous, as our friends may be, in that part of the World, our Commander, Lt Lapidge, did not like the plan of touching, at Madeira, or any other islands, we passed; on the way out, and I was much annoyed.”

He reports “Our cruising ground for the next 3 months is to be off the river Gambia, and a very healthy part of the Coast; the reason we are ordered to go there is that the inhabitants are inclined to kick up a disturbance. The Pantaloon is thought quite able to keep them in order: we sail tomorrow. The Slave trade is said to be just now very brisk, but I don’t think we shall catch many where we are going. that remains to be proved!!”. He also tells his mother that he has “commenced” to keep a journal.

Again his correspondence is dominated by comments on the climate and health but he does make some comments on the Black residents at Sierra Leone and wider African populations. Most of the Black residents at Sierra Leone he reports are Methodists.⁶³ In common with many British colonialists he speaks about African people in terms of the scenic, exotic and savage. He speaks of the “picturesqueness” of African villages due to the inhabitants’ love of bright colours.⁶⁴ He recounts to his grandfather what he terms the “curious” products of the local African cultures (gold rings and chains, wild animal skins, “Savage Costume” and “Musical Instruments”, examples of which he intends to collect for his cousins at home. He also speaks of the ‘savagery’ of African people encountered in what he terms a skirmish and how he has been rewarded for his actions:

“I certainly have seen a great deal of life amongst Savages and comparatively have been very fortunate, for few have had the same duties to perform, such as beating off Cannibals when attacked by them; and taking them prisoner when they attempted to shew fight: for the latter Courageous Act both myself, and those subordinate, have been thanked by the Admiralty.”⁶⁵

Augustus was also acknowledged for his role in capturing a Cuban destined slave ship on 19th May 1842. A report presented to parliament outlines how the Brigantine Desico or Deseado was found by HMS Pantaloon “lying at anchor off the south-east end of Kanyabac, one of the Bissagos islands”. However, when crew from the Pantaloon, led by Arkwright,

⁶³ Letter to his mother, 22 July 1842, DRO D55991/10/71.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Letter to his grandfather 7 Nov 1842, DRO D55991/10/74.

went to search the vessel, “she was abandoned by the master and (with the exception of two persons) all the crew, who had carried off with them the ship’s papers, the ensign, and other articles”. Nonetheless a “short examination having established the fact of equipment for the Slave Trade” and the remaining crew’s statements indicating this was a Cuban ship, the commander of the Pantaloon, Lieutenant Lapidge sent the vessel to Sierra Leone “for adjudication in the British and Spanish Mixed Court of Justice”.⁶⁶

6. Conclusions and areas with potential for further research

This scoping study has revealed or elaborated on a range of slavery connections held by the Arkwrights. The cotton textile businesses of Richard Arkwright senior and junior were strongly reliant on raw cotton supplies produced by enslaved African people. Business partnerships were established with merchants who also traded in or used similar supplies of raw cotton. Several of these business partners were also involved in supporting abolition of British slave trading or slavery in the British colonies. However, the business papers consulted say nothing about personal views on slavery. The banking activities of Richard Arkwright junior created links with known slave trading (e.g. Heywoods) and slave owning (e.g. Fitzherberts) families. Social connections were held with pro-slavery (e.g. Fitzherberts) and pro-abolition (e.g. Darwin) figures. There are also signs of anti-slavery sentiments in different generations of the Arkwright family though these views are not made explicit in the documents consulted. Examples are Richard Arkwright senior’s investment in the Sierra Leone Company, his grandson, Richard Arkwright, MP’s support for abolition in parliament and his great-grandson Augustus Peter Arkwright’s naval service in suppressing the slave trade in the 1840s.

There is very limited commentary in family correspondence accessed at the DRO on slavery matters. This is particularly surprising in relation to Richard Arkwright MP’s correspondence

⁶⁶ *Correspondence with the British Commissioners, at Sierra Leone, the Havana, Rio de Janeiro, and Surinam: Relating to the Slave Trade, from January 1 to December 31, 1842, Inclusive: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty*, pp.43-4.

as he supported abolition of British slavery in parliament. The correspondence at the DRO of course is likely not a complete surviving record.

This report has revealed how further information on the slavery connections of the Arkwrights can be gleaned from consulting papers not only directly connected to their business and social lives in Derbyshire but also those relating to their wider connections and activities. With this in mind the following areas have been identified as having particular potential for further research:

- The records relating to Bakewell Mill held in the Devonshire Collection Archives at Chatsworth (ARK 1-97).
- The Arkwright papers in Columbia University, USA (correspondence between 1782 and 1815 http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldpd_4079736/)

There are also some other specific identified records which we were unable to access during this project, namely:

- Richard Arkwright senior's letter to the Society of Arts on 7 November 1782 on a sample of cotton from Barbados (LA A9/4).
- Richard Arkwright senior's advice to the Board of Trade in c.1787 on cotton grown in Barbados from Persian seed (TNA BT 6/246).

It is also possible that more material relating to slavery may be found in the DRO, particularly in less well catalogued collections.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank The Arkwright Society for permission to access archival materials they own held in the DRO and in particular Rosemary Annable for her help in locating relevant archives. Thanks also to all the staff at the DRO and to the DVMWHS staff who supported this research.

References

- Butt, J (2004) Dale, David (1739-1806), merchant and cottonmaster. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Retrieved 9 July 2021.
- Fitton, R S (1989) *The Arkwrights, Spinners of Fortune*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Fitton, R S and Wadsworth, A P (1958) *The Strutts and the Arkwrights, 1758-1830. A Study of the Early Factory System*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Haggerty S and Seymour, S (2013) Property, power and authority: the implicit and explicit slavery connections of Bolsover Castle and Brodsworth Hall in the 18th century, in Dresser, M and Hann, A (eds) *Slavery and the British Country House*. London, English Heritage, 78-90.
- Hancock, D (1995) *Citizens of the World: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Krichtal, A (2013) *Liverpool and the Raw Cotton Trade: A Study of the Port and its Merchant Community, 1770-1815*. Unpublished MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- McDade, K (2011) A Particular Spirit of Enterprise': Bristol and Liverpool Slave Trade Merchants as Entrepreneurs in the Eighteenth Century, PhD Thesis (Nottingham: University of Nottingham). <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/12859/1/555326.pdf>
- McNeil, M (2004) Darwin, Erasmus (1731-1802), physician and natural philosopher. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Retrieved 9 July 2021.
- Morris, M (2018) The problem of slavery in the age of improvement: David Dale, Robert Owen and New Lanark cotton. In Benchimol, A and McKeever, G L (eds) *Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism, 1707-1840*. Routledge, ch.5
- Pereira, T A Z (2018) The Rise of the Brazilian Cotton Trade in Britain during the Industrial Revolution. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 50 (4) 919-49.
- Richardson, D (2004) Davenport, William (1725–1797), merchant and slave-trader. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Retrieved 12 July 2021.
- Riello, G (2013) *Cotton. The Fabric that Made the Modern World*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Seymour, S (2018) *Global Cotton Connections Archival Research*. Unpublished report for The Arkwright Society.
- Seymour, S and Haggerty, S (2010) *Slavery Connections of Brodsworth Hall (1600-c.1830)* (Report for English Heritage: London).
- Seymour, S, Jones, L and Feuer-Cotter, J (2015) The global connections of cotton in the Derwent Valley mills in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in Wrigley, C (ed) *The Industrial Revolution: Cromford, The Derwent Valley and the Wider World*. Cromford, The Arkwright Society, 150-70.
- Wadstrom, C B (1794) *An Essay on Colonisation*, London. Part II pp.341-353 gives a complete list of Sierra Leone Company subscribers.

Appendix 1: Materials consulted in the Derbyshire Record Office (DRO)

D239 M/F 6347 Bankers' book: Sir Henry FitzHerbert with Arkwright Toplis & Co. 1823-35.

D978/MB/9 Letters from Richard Arkwright at Bakewell (to Samuel Oldknow?) concerning orders for cotton thread [Marple Antiquarian Society] 20th century. Photocopied from an original dating from 1786-1790.

D5991/1 Letters to Richard Arkwright senior (1732-1792) - 1789-1802.

D5991/3 Letters to Richard Arkwright junior (1755-1843) from various correspondents on personal matters.

D5991/4 Letters to Richard Arkwright junior (1755-1843) from various correspondents on business matters.

D5991/10 Letters Augustus Peter Arkwright (1821-1887), son of Peter and Mary Anne Arkwright. Items 45-54, 64, 70-76, 86-88.

D6340/1 Facsimile letter of Richard Arkwright, 1772.

D7573/DRO/4 Bundle labelled Sir Richard Arkwright High Sheriff, 1787.

D7573/DRO/6 Small brown volume containing accounts with different members of the Simpson family, 1793-1829, including details of the profits of Bakewell Mill.

D7573/DRO/11 - Bundle in white folder, blue string labelled "Listed as misc papers" - nd [- all 20th century]

D7573/DRO/16 c.1797-1927 Additional box (Grant of Arms, Family Pedigrees, Militia;- Sir Richard Arkwright [five items];- List of Arkwright Societies 1844...;- Samuel Simpson...;- Sundry Family Correspondence 1797-1825 from Eton College, etc.;;- Sir Richard Arkwright as Sheriff; also includes folder of original and copy letters; Sale room sheets 1924; Sale catalogues 1924, 1927; glass plate of Willersley Castle (wrapped in newspaper); argument and judgement in case of Arkwright v Evans 1880; other).

D7573/DRO/14 Roll - copy of letter/s from Richard Arkwright 1792.

D7573/DRO/20 Bundle of letters (about 70-80) addressed to Richard and Mrs Arkwright from various correspondents and some family members; 1790s - 1820s.

D7573/BOX/A/75 Bankbook [Arkwright and Toplis] Charles Hurt Esq. [loose pages] 1822 to 1836.

D7573/BOX/F/8 Small green hand-made notebook marked 'Yearly Statements/ From 1Jany 1831 to 5 Jany 1843'.

D7573/BOX/G25 'Letters from the Duke of Devonshire to Sir R A/ letter from Sir RA to his daughter/ Robert A's account book/ Augustus Peter A's Appointment to various ships/ Richard A Grant of seat in Wirksworth Church/ Peter A's Commissions in Volunteers/ Frederic Charles A do'. No date.

D7573/BOX/G/30 Sir Richard Arkwright/ Burgess of various/ Scotch Boroughs. 1784.

D7573/BOX/G/43 Archive folder - prices for yarn and twist from 1792.

D7573/BOX/G/44 Archive folder - Bill for 1789 and 1790 to Richard Arkwright from Winter and Kaye.

D7573/BOX/G/45 Archive folder - Letter from Papplewick 10 Aug 1792 (in melinex).

D7573/BOX/O/138 A/O4 - No 9/ Mellor Stock Accounts', 1799-1805.

D7573/BOX/P/160 A/4 Dated 2d January 1805/ Deed of Dissolution Oldknow and Arkwright.

D7573/BOX/R/ARI Bundle marked: 'Mellor ?/ No 2 /Dated 3rd August, 1796 /Mortgage from Mr Oldknow and his / prior Mortgages Messrs Smith Payne & Co/ to Richard Arkwright Esq for / £36,000 and Interest ' A/R1, 1793-97.

**Appendix 2: Extract from Seymour, S (2018) *Global Cotton Connections Archival Research*.
Unpublished Report for the Arkwright Society, pp.2-11**

A) The Arkwrights' raw cotton supplies and suppliers

The conventional story has been that there is no remaining archival evidence of the Arkwrights' raw cotton supplies and suppliers, at least in publicly accessible repositories (Seymour et al, 2015: 154). As the Arkwrights used the same Liverpool broker as the Strutts, Nicholas Waterhouse, from around 1790 and into the early 1800s, Seymour et al argued it was not unreasonable to assume that both families used similar raw cotton sources, at least via Liverpool. However, this account overlooked the information available in Nicholas Waterhouse's Ledger, 1799-1802, deposited in the LUSCA.

As the material relating to Richard Arkwright Junior's purchases from Waterhouse only covers the first few months of 1802, the analysis below relates to 1799, 1800 and 1801 when complete year accounts are available. As Arkwright would likely have purchased raw cotton from London as well as Liverpool (as did the Strutts), this analysis relates to only to this (unknown) proportion of his raw cotton supplies in these years.

Table 1: Richard Arkwright Junior's raw cotton supplies via Nicholas Waterhouse (Liverpool), 1799-1801

| Year | Volume in bags | Cost | Supplier | Slave trader (TAST) | Slave owner |
|------|----------------|------|----------|---------------------|-------------|
|------|----------------|------|----------|---------------------|-------------|

| | (% yr total)* | (£) (% yr total) | | | (LBS) |
|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1799 | 1140 | 37,413.16.07 | | | |
| | 348 (30.5) | 15,774.16.07 (41.1) | J Bolton | Y | Y |
| | 281 (24.6) | 7,684.09.06 (20.0) | T & W Earle (inc Gowan and Earles) | Y | Y |
| | 167 (14.6) | 3,502.19.09 (9.1) | Sundries | n/k | n/k |
| | 109 (9.6) | 4,253.03.11 (11.1) | James Kenyon | N | N? |
| | 65 (5.7) | 1,223.17.03 (3.2) | Thos Hinde | Y | N? John Hinde |
| | 59 (5.2) | 2,296.16.08 (6.0) | P & R Dawson | N | N |
| | 40 (3.5) | 1,319.08.07 (3.4) | Titherington & Co | Y? John Titherington | N |
| | 37 (3.2) | 702.10.02 (1.8) | Thos Naylor & Co | N? John Naylor | N |
| | 34 (3.0) | 655.14.02 (1.7) | Thwaites & Co | N | N |
| | | | | | |
| 1800 | 375 | 11,992.19.09 | | | |
| | 215 (57.3) | 5,970.16.06 (49.8) | Sundries | n/k | n/k |
| | 120 (32) | 5,100.05.11 (42.5) | J Bolton | Y | Y |
| | 40 (10.7) | 921.17.04 (7.7) | C Fairclough | Y – 7 | N |
| | | | | | |
| 1801 | 646 | 19,630.17.10 | | | |
| | 312 (48.3) | 10,531.03.11 (53.6) | Sundries | n/k | n/k |
| | 78 (12.1) | 1,682.01.02 (8.6) | Thwaites & Co | N | N |
| | 55 bales (8.5) | 2,075.11.03 (10.6) | J Bolton | Y | Y |
| | 50 (7.7) | 975.12.11 (5) | Robinson & Co | N? | N? |
| | 46 (7.1) | 996.14.05 (5.1) | P & K Dawson | N | N |
| | 42 (6.5) | 1,051.06.04 (5.4) | Ewart & Co | Y – Rutson | Y |
| | 35 (5.4) | 1,342.10.10 (6.8) | Rathbone & Co | N | N |

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------|------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| | 28 (4.3) | 975.17.00 (5) | Cropper & Co | N | N |
| | | | | | |

* Includes only raw cotton measured in bags where the cost is given.

Source: LUSCA LUL MS138, Waterhouse Ledger, 1799-1802, pp.4, 5, 383, 390.

Table 1 shows details of the number of bags (or in a few cases bales) of raw cotton purchased by Richard Arkwright Junior via Nicholas Waterhouse, the costs paid for this raw cotton (which include charges), the supplier and the supplier's status in terms of slave trading and ownership of enslaved people. The table omits reference to bags supplied where there is no cost given for these. It is organised by year with the suppliers ranked in terms of importance, indicated by the number of bags supplied in a particular year. It also includes a calculation of the relative proportion of bags and costs of raw cotton ascribed to the different suppliers. This reveals some differences in the importance of suppliers when cost rather than bag data is used. As the ledger entries for Richard Arkwright do not typically indicate the location where suppliers were sourcing the raw cotton from this it has not been possible to include this information.

Richard Arkwright purchased 1,140 bags of raw cotton via Nicholas Waterhouse in 1799 which are accounted for. This total fell to just 375 bags in 1800 and 641 bags or bales in 1801. A similar 1799 peak and pattern can be found in the Strutt's supplies from Waterhouse and Liverpool more broadly (1799: 1,494 bags via Waterhouse; 1800: 325 bags via Waterhouse; 1801: 457 bags via Waterhouse and 211 via Ewart and Rutson – Fitton and Wadsworth, 1958: 342). Reference is made to charges paid relating to a further 250 bags in 1799 (110 from J Rodie, 80 from J Ryan, 40 from G Goring and 20 from McVicar & Co), 151 bags in 1800 (101 from J Newton, 30 from G Danson and 20 from A Heywood) and 105 bags in 1801 (60 from Matthews and 45 from T More and Co) but the cost of this cotton is not included. However, this suggests Arkwright may have purchased a maximum of 1,390 bags in 1799, 526 bags in 1800 and 746 bags and bales in 1801.

Table 2: Richard Arkwright Junior's raw cotton suppliers via Nicholas Waterhouse (Liverpool), ranked by importance, 1799-1801

| Supplier | Volume in bags (% total)* | Cost (£) (% total) | Slave trader (TAST) | Slave owner (LBS) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sundries | 694 (32.1) | 20,005.00.02 (29.0) | n/k | n/k |
| J Bolton | 523 (24.2) | 22,950.13.09 (33.2) | Y | Y |
| T & W Earle (inc Gowan and Earles) | 281 (13.0) | 7,684.09.06 (11.1) | Y | Y |
| Thwaites & Co | 112 (5.2) | 2,337.15.04 (3.4) | N | N |
| James Kenyon | 109 (5.0) | 4,253.03.11 (6.2) | N | N? |
| P & R Dawson | 105 (4.9) | 3,293.11.01 (4.8) | N | N |
| Thos Hinde | 65 (3.0) | 1,223.17.03 (1.8) | Y | N? |
| Robinson & Co | 50 (2.3) | 975.12.11 (1.4) | N? | N? |
| Ewart & Co | 42 (1.9) | 1,051.06.04 (1.5) | Y | Y |
| Titherington & Co | 40 (1.9) | 1,319.08.09 (1.9) | Y | N |
| C Fairclough | 40 (1.9) | 921.17.04 (1.3) | Y | N |
| Thos Naylor & Co | 37 (1.7) | 702.10.02 (1.0) | N? | N |
| Rathbone & Co | 35 (1.6) | 1,342.10.10 (1.9) | N | N |
| Cropper & Co | 28 (1.3) | 975.17.00 (1.4) | N | N |
| Total | 2161 | 69,037.14.02 | | |

* Includes only raw cotton measured in bags where the cost is given.

Source: LUSCA LUL MS138, Waterhouse Ledger, 1799-1802, pp.4, 5, 383, 390.

Table 2 shows that the two main named Liverpool suppliers to Richard Arkwright were involved in trading and ownership of enslaved people. Known slave traders or plantation owners supplied just under half (45.9%) of the bags/bales purchased at this time. If the cost/value is considered, over half (50.8%) of Arkwright's expenditure in the account is to known slave traders or plantation owners. This is principally due to John Bolton supplying

nearly a quarter (24.2%) of the bags/bales, representing about a third (33.2%) of Arkwright's expenditure on raw cotton in the account.

In 1799, **John Bolton (1756-1837)** was the main raw cotton supplier, providing 348 bags of raw cotton, nearly a third (30.5%) of the total, in seven different transactions. If the cost of these supplies is considered rather than the number of bags, then Bolton's importance as a supplier rises to over two-fifths (41.1%) of Arkwright's expenditure in 1799. It is clear that he regularly supplied Arkwright during this period, providing 120 bags (32% of bags) in 1800, accounting for 42.5% of the expenditure in this year, and 55 bales (8.5% of bags/bales) in 1801, accounting for 10.6% of the year's expenditure.

While the account gives no indication of where these supplies originate from, in her study of the Liverpool cotton market, Krichtal (2013) lists John Bolton & Co as the top Liverpool importers of raw cotton from Guyana from 1796-1815, importing 6,528,311 lbs (p.45), the 8th top raw cotton importer from the West Indies from 1768-1815 (p.35) and a significant importer of American cotton (1,044,360 lb) in 1795-1805 (p.69); she also cites the main cotton supply areas for John Bolton & Co as St Vincent and the Lesser Antilles (p.35). This would tie in with Bolton's early career in the Caribbean as an apprentice, then agent, for the Liverpool merchant firm of Rawlinson & Chorley, when he worked in St Vincent, St Lucia and Barbados (1773-c.1782) (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/7760/>). Bolton's is a rags to riches story. He went to the Caribbean as a teenage apprentice and returned with sufficient capital and vital Caribbean connections to build a merchant trading business. He amassed a sufficient fortune to purchase Storrs Hall in Windermere, Cumberland, a classical villa built for Sir John Legard in the 1790s but "significantly remodelled" by Joseph Gandy for Bolton in c.1808-1809 (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/physical/view/1995967713>).

After his return to Britain in 1782/83, Bolton became very actively involved in the slave trade, taking part in 69 slave-trading voyages between 1788 and 1807. In the early years (1788-1791) Bolton invested alongside a large number of partners but in later years he often acted as sole investor. In 1798-1805 he reached his most active point in the trade, sponsoring at least five ships a year at this time (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/7760/>). Bolton was amongst the first British-based traders to organise slaving voyages to Guyana in 1796 and 1797 and in partnership with Littledale financed many loans in Demerara, with an estimated £200,000 loan investment

there in 1803 (Krichtal, 2013: 44, 46). He was therefore in a prime position to trade in cotton from this colony. He subsequently owned a number of plantations in British Guiana, Belvidere (Demerara) from at least 1815, Bachelor's Adventure (Demerara) from 1817-1826, Waterloo (Demerara) from 1832-1834, some of which resulted from defaulted mortgage loans (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/7760>). At the abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean colonies he was awarded £15,391 17s 11d in compensation for 289 enslaved African people on Waterloo, British Guiana (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/7080>), and £8,723 12s 8d for 164 enslaved people on Maryville estate, British Guiana, due to two outstanding mortgages (from 1816 and 1828) the owners held with him on the property (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/7748>). Bolton also claimed part of the compensation in relation to the sugar plantation (Morgan, 2010: 22), Bostock Park Estate, St Vincent, of which he had been joint owner since at least 1817 (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/3595>). Of the £3,720 6s 6d paid out in compensation for 182 enslaved people on the estate, Bolton's widow and executors were awarded £1,240 2s 2d (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/27113>). Bolton left a fortune of £180,000 at his death in 1837 (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/7760>).

The **Earles**, Thomas and William Earle and their associates, were Richard Arkwright's second most important supplier in 1799 and overall in 1799-1801. They were very active slave traders, involved in financing around 123 voyages, as well as prominent cotton merchants. Krichtal (2013: 44) reports they consigned very little cotton from the West Indies but were very important importers of cotton from Guyana (1.9 million lbs from this area in 1797-1815 and ranked 8th amongst Liverpool-based importers), and activity facilitated by their investment into three slave trading voyages there from 1801-1804. The Earles were also very active importers of cotton via Portugal, importing 2,744,979 lbs and ranked 2nd most important Liverpool importers in 1784-1802 (Krichtal 2013: 57). They were the 10th most important Liverpool cotton importers in the 1790s, dealing in 2,352,000 lbs in that decade (Krichtal 2013: 81).

Thomas Earle (1757-1822) was Mayor of Liverpool in 1787-88. He built a country house, Speklands, close to Liverpool in around 1805. He left a fortune of £70,000 at his death in 1822 (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146660215>). His brother and partner, **William Earle** (1759-1838) left a fortune of under £45,000

(<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/8728>). He was a joint awardee of the compensation for Utile and Paisible estates in British Guiana (a sugar plantation located on the west bank of the River Berbice) which was owned by Thos. Wm. Earle & Co. The partners in the firm at the time of the claim were William Earle, his nephew William Earle the younger (1787-1864), son of Thomas, (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/44514>) and Thomas Leathom, another Liverpool merchant and slave trader (who co-financed 6 voyages with the Earles and 7 voyages with John Bolton (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/27938>)). The payment was £10,197 4s 2d in total as 'compensation' for 197 enslaved people (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/8707>). Further details on the LBS database suggest that the Earles had only recently acquired ownership of the estate as it was owned by James Culley and George Watson as late as 1831 (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/1091>). Littler (1997: 96-97) refers to the Earles acquiring a plantation in Berbice in the 1830s due to a bad debt and this was likely the property. Thomas Earle's son, **Hardman Earle** (1792-1877) was associated with 12 compensation claims, all in Antigua (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/44886>). He was successful in six of these relating to Lynch's Estate (shared £2373 12s 7.5d with Turner?, part of total £4,747 5s 3d claim for 331 enslaved people (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/128>)), Blizards (shared £2158 12s 0d with Turner for 159 enslaved people), Bodkin's St Paul (shared £3604 8s 9d with Turner for 237 enslaved people (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/492>)), Manning's Estate (shared with Turner £943 15s 2d of the total £1008 12s 7d compensation for 58 enslaved people, due to an outstanding mortgage on the property (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/772>)), Thibou's Estate (shared with Turner £445 15s 8d of the total £4194 12s 7d compensation for 276 enslaved people due to an outstanding loan (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/621>)), and Gunthorpe's, St Georges (shared with Turner £3000 of the total £3922 3s 0d for 297 enslaved people, due to an outstanding mortgage on the property (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/187>)).

Krichtal (2013: 35) identifies **James Kenyon** as the 4th largest Liverpool cotton importer from the West Indies, 1786-1815, sourcing 5,277,880 lbs in this time period, and cites his main cotton supply area as Barbados. He was particularly active in the 1790s when he was the 3rd highest Liverpool cotton importer from all locations, sourcing 4,403,000 lbs (Krichtal

2013: 81). Krichtal also indicates he was one of several major Liverpool cotton importers who, while not heavily invested in slave trading, did become strongly involved in the shipping of plantation supplies to the Caribbean (Krichtal 2013: 36).

Krichtal (2013: 35) identifies **Thomas Hinde & Son** as the 11th highest Liverpool cotton importer from the West Indies, 1768-1815, sourcing 2,411,460 lbs over this time period, and as indicates that Jamaica was his main source. Thomas Hinde is identified by Krichtal as a slave trader and both Thomas Hinde Senior and Junior are listed as investors the TAST database, with Thomas Junior involved in around 21 voyages between 1784 and 1798. This involvement may suggest a connection with John Hinde of Jamaica.

Nicholas Waterhouse (d.1823) was both a cotton buying and selling broker, with about two-thirds of his business related to selling and a general merchant (Krichtal 2013: 100, 105-106). He was the main Liverpool buying broker for both Richard Arkwright Junior and the Strutts (and for others including the Earles and Dawsons - Krichtal). He sold cotton for “some of the biggest Liverpool cotton importers”, including John Bolton, the Earles and the Rathbones (Krichtal 2013: 100) and extended large sums of credit to them (p.102). He was also a cotton importer in his own right and it may be that the “sundries” referred to in Tables 1 and 2 are supplies provided by Waterhouse himself. If so he was Arkwright’s most important supplier in terms of bags of cotton in 1799-1801.

Again, there is no indication where the cotton described as sundries came from. However, Krichtal (2013: 57) identifies Nicholas Waterhouse & Co as the 5th most important Liverpool importer of cotton from Portugal in 1784-1802, dealing in 1,814,288 lbs during this period. As part of this business he also dealt with the Lisbon-based agent for the Strutts, Sandeman (Krichtal 2013: 56). Krichtal (2013: 44) argues in relation to the Caribbean that Waterhouse imported mainly from British Guiana and established important trading links in Demerara in the early 19th century, trading manufactured goods from Britain and exporting cotton from the colony. She also identifies Nicholas Waterhouse & Co as the 3rd most important Liverpool cotton importers from Guyana, 1796-1815, supplying 3,832,274 lbs in this period (p.45). Krichtal (2013: 45) indicates that Waterhouse was not involved in the importation of enslaved people into the Guyana colonies. However, his sons Daniel (1796-1861) (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146633512>), Alfred (1798-1873) (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1288549597>) and Rogers Waterhouse (d.1868),

(<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146633504>), partners in Nicholas Waterhouse & Sons, were unsuccessful compensation claimants in relation to Plant John Cove and Craig Miln <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/7186> and Clonbrock estates <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/9062> in British Guiana, both claims being related to loans made on the properties.

Waterhouse again appears to have come from humble beginnings. An 1865 memoir of his life by his daughter, Lucy Fowler, reports Waterhouse was an apprentice to a Bolton fustian manufacturer and worked for a while in a cotton warehouse in Manchester (Hyde et al 1955: 76) before setting up as a cotton broker and merchant in Liverpool in 1790 as Nicholas Waterhouse & Co (Krichtal 2013: 99). He was able to take full advantage of “an unprecedented expansion of raw cotton imports after 1795” (Hyde et al 1955: 79). Dumbell indicates that in 1799 Waterhouse traded around 25,000 bags of cotton which Krichtal (2013: 100) suggests was nearly 30 percent of the cotton on the Liverpool market in around 1800. His annual profits 1799-1801 have been estimated as around £6,000 (Hyde et al 1955: 80). When Waterhouse died in 1823, he was “one of the wealthiest men in Liverpool, with a fortune worth at least £100,000” (Krichtal 2013: 100).

The **Rathbones** and **Cropper & Co** [Cropper, Benson & Co?] were Quaker merchants and dissenters who developed trading ties with fellow Quakers in New York and Philadelphia. James Cropper was an apprentice to the Rathbones. He went into partnership with Robert Benson (who was connected to William Rathbone IV by marriage) in 1799 (Krichtal 2013: 74). **Cropper, Benson & Co** were the 11th most important Liverpool importers of American cotton from 1795-1805, handling 1,582,500 lbs mainly from New York, rising to the 3rd most important from 1806-1815, when they imported 6,736,800 lb again with a main supply source of New York (Krichtal 2013: 69, 77).

The **Rathbones** were early importers of American cotton (1784) – with Waterhouse acting as broker according to Fitton and Wadsworth 1958: 263). They became one of Liverpool’s leading merchant firms and were the leading Liverpool cotton importers from all supply areas in 1800-1809, when they imported a total of 18,321,000 lb (Krichtal 2013: 81). They specialised however in American cotton. The Rathbones were the most important Liverpool importers of American cotton from 1795-1805 in the firm Rathbone, Hughes & Duncan, and from 1806-1815 as Rathbone & Co, when they imported 10,612,800 lbs of cotton, mainly via

New York (Krichtal 2013: 69, 77). Rathbone, Hughes & Duncan were the largest Liverpool cotton importers from 1795-1815 and derived over half their raw cotton from the North American ports of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore and Portland (Krichtal 2013: 74). William Rathbone III was an abolitionist.

Ewart, Rutson & Co were the 7th largest Liverpool cotton importers in the 1790s trading 2,471,000 lbs in that decade and the 5th largest in 1800-1809, dealing in 4,901,000 lbs (Krichtal 2013: 81). They dealt extensively in American cotton, mainly via Charleston. They were the 3rd highest Liverpool based importers in 1795-1805, dealing in 3,445,860 lbs over that period and the 11th highest in 1806-1815, when they imported 3,201,000 lbs (Krichtal 2013: 69, 77). They were also the 4th largest Liverpool importers of cotton from Portugal in 1784-1802, trading in 1,819,465 lbs (Krichtal 2013: 57). William Rutson was involved in financing 45 slave trading journeys from 1779-1793 (<http://www.slavevoyages.org/>). John Ewart (d.1839) (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/465>), was one of the partners in Ewart Myers & Co, a firm of brokers and commission merchants from Liverpool, awarded compensation in the 1830s of £2,790 8s 8d, as mortgagee, for 213 enslaved people on Long Lane Delap's estate, Antigua (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/637>).