

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 9
Issue 3 *September 2006*

Article 18

9-1-2006

Slavery: Unfinished Business

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Recommended Citation

(2006) "Slavery: Unfinished Business," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 3 , Article 18.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol9/iss3/18>

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Call for Papers:

Slavery: Unfinished Business An Interdisciplinary Conference. University of Hull, May 16-19, 2007

The University of Hull, through its newly established Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE), intends to mark the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 by hosting a conference entitled Slavery. Unfinished Business in Hull 16-19 May 2007.

Hull is the birthplace of William Wilberforce, the Parliamentary leader of the British antislavery movement, who in alliance with Thomas Clarkson, Olaudah Equiano and those who fought slavery from within, led the campaign that succeeded in convincing Parliament to outlaw the British slave trade. This marked the beginning of an international crusade against slavery that ultimately resulted in the formal outlawing of slavery worldwide. But two hundred years on from the abolition of the British slave trade, slavery and other forms of coerced labour continue to blight millions of lives. Slave trafficking, child labour, forced prostitution and other abuses of human rights, according to some authorities, have increased in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in the context of globalisation and widening differentials in wealth. The emancipation movement still has unfinished business.

The WISE conference will bring together scholars, educators, heritage practitioners, policy influencers and policy makers to consider both historical and contemporary aspects of slavery, emancipation and human rights. Three sub-themes for the conference have been identified. These are: the past and the present; movement and identity; and the boundaries of freedom and coercion. The agenda for each theme is open, but we expect a healthy mix of disciplinary approaches and of basic and applied research as well as a wide coverage of historical and contemporary forms of slavery and emancipation issues. We would welcome suggestions for panels of up to four papers as well as proposals for individual papers that address one or more of the sub-themes. We also welcome proposals for panels that bring together academics and non-academics. We anticipate holding up to three sets of parallel sessions per day, each set comprising up to five or six panels. Some sessions or panels may be primarily

historical, others more contemporary or policy-related in focus and yet others a mix of various disciplines in the humanities, sciences and social sciences. We intend to introduce each day of the conference with a keynote address.

The conference will be the occasion for the premiere of a number of new pieces of work, including poetry reading and a short piece by the composer Alastair Borthwick on a Wilberforce theme.

The closing date for proposals, whether for papers or for panels (the latter preferably with a chair person) is 30 November 2006. We anticipate finalising the conference programme by 31 December 2006.

Please send proposals in the first instance to Jane Ellison, WISE conference organiser at j.ellison@hull.ac.uk. Anyone wishing to discuss a proposal prior to submission should contact David Richardson (Director of WISE), or Michael Turner or Gary Craig (Associate Directors) at p.d.richardson@hull.ac.uk; m.e.turner@hull.ac.uk; and g.craig@hull.ac.uk respectively.

WISE was formally opened on 6 July 2006 by HE The President of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor. The patron of WISE is Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. The May 2007 conference will be the third in a sequence of four conferences with which WISE is associated between its opening and August 2007. For details of the other conferences and for information on WISE see www.hull.ac.uk/wise.