

It is not easy to trace the career paths of women teachers like Kingdon, Yarnold and Anstie in the archives because once they married they taught under their husband's name – like Anstie, who after marriage became Mrs P Cornford. Overall, British women teachers played a vital role in setting up girls' schools and promoting female education throughout the British West Indian colonies in the nineteenth century.

The British and Foreign School Society supported a racially inclusive vision of education reform. Some of Britain's first black professional teachers were trained at Borough Road College. Thomas Jenkins journeyed from Africa to Britain in 1803, as a freeman, and upon William Allen's recommendation was enrolled in Borough Road College as a trainee teacher in 1818. In 1820, Jenkins helped to establish a new British School in Pimlico, London, where he also taught, and for which he was commended for his "zeal and able conduct". On 1 August 1821, Jenkins was awarded a BFSS teaching certificate, and on 6 August set sail for Mauritius, where he spent the next 37 years enjoying a successful career as a teacher of elementary education.

William Jagon, also from Africa, was a contemporary of Jenkins at Borough Road College (1816-18), and became a monitor general at Borough Road School, before travelling to Dominica in the British West Indies to teach.

Charles Knight, Joseph May and William Allen, all from Sierra Leone, studied at Borough Road College in the 1840s. After qualifying as teachers, they returned to Sierra Leone and introduced the British System into schools in Freetown, a colony which had been founded as a refuge for former British American slaves. They received high praise for their 'diligent efforts' in a report sent to the BFSS by fellow missionary, Reverend Badger.

Trainee male teachers from the British West Indies also came to study at Borough Road College, such as Joseph Phillips, from Antigua, who afterwards returned to the island to teach. In comparison, there are no records of trainee women teachers from the British West Indies studying at Borough Road College in this period. Yet the BFSS archives show that emancipated women were trained as teachers in the former slave colonies by BFSS trained women teachers such as Anna Anstie.

The BFSS adopted a broad and liberal approach to education by the standards of early nineteenth-century Britain. It supported the education of the enslaved in the British Caribbean. It also championed female education and actively promoted the expansion of the teaching profession to women. It also pursued a racially inclusive vision of teaching and worldwide education reform, through supporting the education and training of men and women from Africa, the West Indies and many other places throughout the world.



This exhibition is curated by Mandy Mordue and Phaedra Casey (Brunel University London Archives) and Dr Inge Dornan, with assistance from Dr Alison Carrol.

With grateful thanks to Anti-Slavery International for permission to use the image of Reverend William Knibb.

For further information about the BFSS archives please visit: <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/Archives>



Being HUMAN

A FESTIVAL OF THE HUMANITIES

SALTER'S HILL MANUAL

FOR 1863,

CONTAINING

REPORTS OF THE CHURCH,

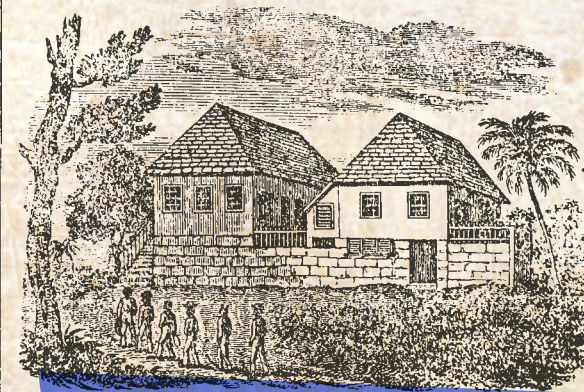
DAY AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS,

AND

MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION, FOR 1862.

AND

DIRECTORY FOR 1863.

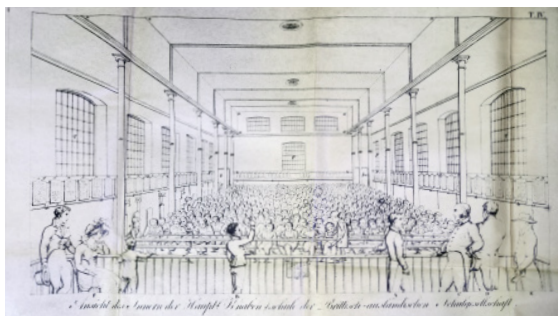


UNLOCKING THE SECRETS
OF SLAVERY & ABOLITION

Unlocking the Secrets of Slavery and Abolition is an exhibition exploring the British and Foreign School Society's (BFSS) role in the introduction of elementary education to enslaved and freed children in the British West Indies during and after slavery, showcasing documents and artefacts from the BFSS archives held by Brunel University London Archive. It is part of a UK-wide series of events on the theme of "Secrets and Discoveries" hosted by the Being Human Festival of Humanities. The Festival is sponsored by the London School of Advanced Study, in partnership with the Arts & Humanities Research Council and The British Academy.

The BFSS was the UK's most influential non-denominational education society in the nineteenth century. In 1804, it established Britain's first teacher training institution, Borough Road College, in Southwark, London, before moving into purpose-built premises in 1817. The College opened its doors to both men and women and to British as well as overseas trainee teachers. Here they learned the BFSS's method of nonsectarian instruction known as the "British System". The BFSS minute books, Annual Reports and correspondence record the progress, achievements and challenges the Society faced in delivering widespread educational reform at home and abroad.

By 1815, nonconformist missionaries were being trained as teachers at Borough Road College and dispatched by their home societies to deliver instruction in mission schools in all four corners of the globe — including the slave societies of the British West Indies.

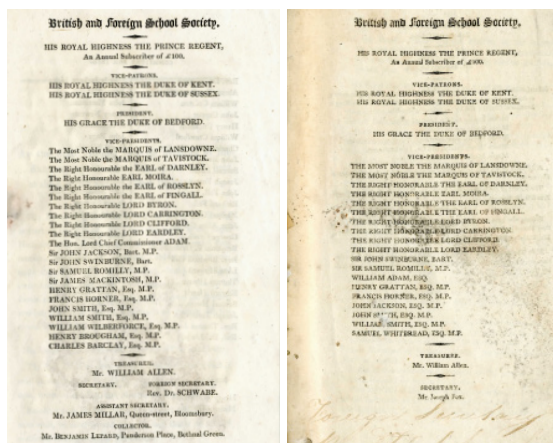


Following the Slavery Abolition Act (1833), Parliament turned to the colonies' missionary societies to set up elementary schools throughout the former slave colonies. The BFSS played a key role in training teachers, and dispensing teaching manuals and education materials – such as writing slates, books, pencils, maps, and globes – to nonconformist missionaries and teachers across the British West Indies. In addition, they assisted and advised on the planning and building of schools. Schools that taught the BFSS's curriculum and pedagogy were known as "British Schools". Almost all islands in the British West Indies had British Schools.

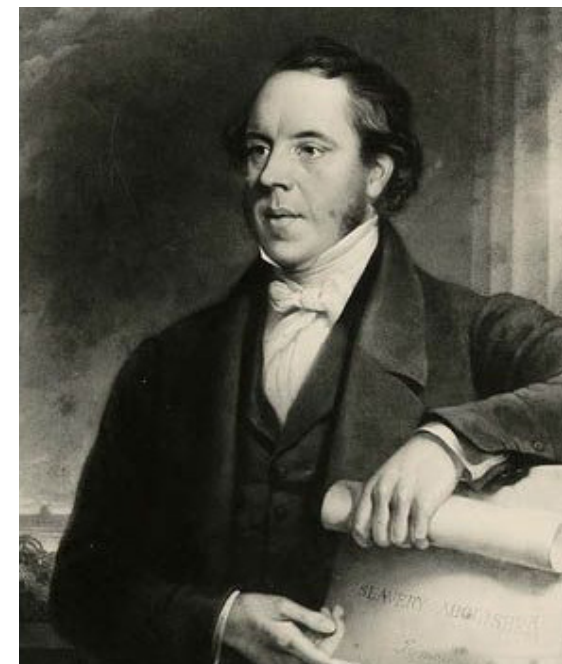


In the decades after emancipation, missionaries faced considerable obstacles in running elementary schools, including British Schools, in the former slave colonies. Funding was limited, teaching resources scarce, and trained teachers were in short and expensive supply. In 1845, the British government terminated the Negro Education Grant that had been introduced in the wake of abolition to establish a system of elementary education in the colonies. This dealt a severe financial blow to the fledgling education system, and coincided with spiralling economic depression in the colonies. As testified by missionaries' pleas to the BFSS to send them supplies of books, maps, globes, and writing materials.

The BFSS counted among its ranks the leading lights of British abolition, who believed Christian-based instruction was essential to preparing West Indian slaves for freedom. MP William Wilberforce, who led the parliamentary campaign to abolish the British slave trade, was a member of the BFSS committee. Founding member of the Anti-Slavery Society, MP Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, was a Vice-President of the BFSS. William Allen, chemist, philanthropist and abolitionist, was treasurer of the Society. The BFSS's list of subscribers also included well-known abolitionists, such as the Scottish statistician, and co-founder of the Anti-Slavery Society, Zachary Macaulay, who was also a founder of London University.



Members of the royal family, and business and banking families such as Barings, Barclay, Gurney, Whitbread, and Fry also donated generously to the BFSS. So too did such prominent figures as the English potter, MP and abolitionist, Josiah Wedgwood II, the poet Lord Byron, and utopian socialist reformer, Robert Owen.



One of the most outspoken opponents of slavery in the British West Indies was the Baptist missionary, Reverend William Knibb. He trained in the British System at Borough Road College in 1824, before departing for Jamaica to set up mission schools teaching enslaved and freed children to read and write. He sent the "Slave Book" to the BFSS in 1826. This artefact is a rare record of enslaved children's handwriting: West Indian planters generally prohibited their slaves from learning to read and write in the belief that it fuelled slave resistance. Many Baptist missionaries, including Knibb, faced persecution, violence and arrest for their opposition to slavery in the British West Indies.

Less well known and often overlooked in this story are the women who trained at Borough Road College and went to teach in the British Caribbean, such as Lucy Kingdon, Anna Anstie and Sarah Yarnold. Kingdon set up a girls' school in Spanish Town, Jamaica, in 1834; Anstie taught in William Knibb's school in Trelawny, Jamaica, in 1841, before opening a girls' school in Montego Bay; and Yarnold founded a girls' school in Falmouth, Jamaica, around 1842.