

Transcripts of extracts from documents in the Granville Sharp collection (also included as video clips on the DVD).

## Transcript 1

### **Granville Sharp's account of his meeting with Jonathan Strong in 1765** *(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/3/28)*

Nothing can be more shocking to Human Nature than the case of a Man or Woman who is delivered into the absolute Power of Strangers to be treated according to the New Masters Will & pleasure; for they have nothing but misery to expect; and poor Jonathan Strong, who was well acquainted with West India Treatment seemed to be deeply impressed with that extreme horror which the poor victims of the inhuman traffic generally experience.

## Transcript 2

### **Diary entry re. Death of Jonathan Strong** *(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/4/2)*

19 April 1773 poor Jonathan Strong, the first Negro whose freedom I had procured in 1767, died this morning.

## Transcript 3

### **Diary entries re James Somerset, 1772** *(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/4/2)*

1772 Jan 13th James Somersett a negro from Virginia called on me this morning...to complain of Mr Charles Stewart- I gave him the best advice I could. Jan 14th Mr Cadew called on me on favour of J Somersett Jan 29th gave cash £6 to retain 2 counsel on the case of Somerset June 22 this day Jas S came to tell me that judgement was this day given in his favour.

## Transcript 4

### **Diary entry re Pitt & Wilberforce** *(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/4/2)*

1788 21st April Mr Pitt 1.00 o clock Mr Pitt said his heart was with us- that he had pledged himself to Mr Wilberforce that the cause would not suffer- but believe that the best way would be to give time to collect all possible evidence and to obtain an order of the present Sessions if the rules of the House would permit ...and to resume the business early in the next Sessions.

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## **Transcript 5**

### **Letter to John Sharp re lobbying the clergy, March 1779**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/4/2)*

I have lately made it my business to call upon the Archbishops and Bishops to request their influence and assistance towards putting a stop to the slave trade, as the House of Commons have appointed a committee to enquire into the state of the African Trade, & therefore I think there is an opportunity of exposing the iniquity of it which ought not to be let slip. ....The Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishops of Lichfield, St Davids, St Asaph, London, Ely, Bangor & Oxford strongly express their horror against it and the Bishop of Peterborough since I called on him, has exerted himself in a very extraordinary manner in calling upon a variety of people that have knowledge of the trade and reading all books that he can find upon the subject, in order that he may be enabled to answer the pleas of interested people who endeavour to promote the trade

## **Transcript 6**

### **Letter to John Sharp about society for the abolition of the slave trade 19 July 1787**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/S)*

A society has lately been formed here for the purpose of opposing the slave trade. Though the members are chiefly Quakers, I thought it my duty when invited to join them in so just a measure and I wish for the honour of the Church of England that some of our dignified clergy would subscribe to it

## **Transcript 7**

### **Letter to John Sharp about voyage to Sierra Leone colony**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/S8)*

June 1787: I had the pleasure of hearing this day of the safe arrival of the African settlers at the Madeira islands and that all the jealousies and animosities between the whites and blacks had subsided....schools are established on board each ship as I had proposed and they have daily prayers.

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## Transcript 8

### **Letter to John Sharp re Sierra Leone colony**

**31 October 1787**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/S8)*

I have had hitherto but melancholy accounts of the .....unfortunate colony to Sierra Leone. But I have however discovered that most of the evils have arisen from the allowance of rum distributed on board the ships; and the landing just in the rainy season on an un-cleared woody country when they were so enervated and infatuated by the rum that there was no prevailing on them to clear the underwood as I had recommended.....They have purchased 20 miles square of the finest and most beautiful country ... that was ever seen. The hills are no steeper than Shooters Hill and fine streams of fresh water run down the hill on each side of the new township and in the front is a noble bay where the river is about 3 leagues wide, the woods and gorges are beautiful beyond description and the soil very fine. So that a little good management and a prohibition of rum and spirits will produce a thriving settlement.

## Transcript 9

### **Letter to William Baker re Zong incident**

**23 May 1783**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/B1)*

My time has been much taken up lately in endeavouring to obtain evidence against the master and crew of a Liverpool slave-ship who cast overboard about 123 poor Negro slaves alive into the sea with their hands fettered. The owners of the ship obtained a verdict last march against the insurers for the value of the said negroes- and the insurers last week moved for a new trial which was granted; and I suppose will be appointed in the sittings this term. The contest between the owners and insurers of the ship is a mere mercenary business about the pecuniary value of the Negroes; but I hope to obtain from it sufficient evidence to commence a criminal prosecution ... for murder....

They pleaded a necessity through the want of water to destroy some the cargo...in order to save the rest; but it appears that upwards of 60 had died of the gaol distemper (as they always do, at least one third are regularly destroyed by this distemper on every voyage of the slave dealers, through their detestable avarice and cruelty in cramming too great a number down the hold of the ship) even before they discovered that there was a want of water; and 54 of the poor negroes were picked from amongst the sick and cast into the sea that very day they discovered the want of water, even before they were put to short allowance; so that if there be any necessity at all in the case, it is the necessity (incumbent upon the whole nation) to put an immediate stop to the slave trade....

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## Transcript 10

### **Letter to Archbishop of Canterbury re helping slave, 1786**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/C3)*

Last Friday morning early, two poor Negroes came to inform me that one of their friends was [??] by his Master on shipboard at Gravesend to be sent as a slave to Barbados. All the judges being out of town on the circuit I could not obtain either warrant or writ of habeas corpus after the most unwearied endeavours till late on Saturday night and in the meantime I had notice that the ship was sailed from Gravesend. However I sent off by an attorney and the young man's friend in a post-chaise that same night to Deal in hopes that the ship might not yet have quitted the Channel and they happily arrived in the Downs just in time to save the poor despairing man: a delay even of a single minute more would have been fatal! However they brought the young man safe to me yesterday at noon and after proper consultation I sent him this morning with officers to catch his master but he had prudently decamped and fled to Scotland. The young man confessed that he had intended to jump into the sea as soon as it was dark in order to avoid slavery by death!

## Transcript 11

### **Letter to Granville Sharp re need for labour saving invention to help slaves, 1768**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/W22)*

May your pamphlet come to the hands of some person, concerned in the American plantations and who may be moved by it to soften the yoke of his slaves. Even so, it may do considerable good. But it is to be feared that no strength of argument will be sufficient to prevail against the slave trade in general. Happy would it be, if it could be eradicated by other means. An evening or two ago some conversation passed on this subject with your worthy good brother James Sharp in which he expressed his wishes that some mechanical instrument could be invented for the culture of rice, tobacco and sugar, analogous to the plow for corn- something like the instrument for hoing bean in Kent. What honour, what infinite happiness would the inventor of such an instrument enjoy? ..... For if the invention of such an instrument was brought to perfection and introduced properly into America, the planters would soon, though gradually, fall into the use of it. As the great object of it would be to save human labour perhaps one Negro slave might by its assistance do with ease more work than ten at present can achieve in misery and toil. Consequently the expense of the purchase of slaves would proportionally cease: that is, nine parts in ten of the natives of Africa which are now annually exported to the hard work of American slavery, would remain at home; and those that were brought to America would have much lighter burdens on them than before.

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## Transcript 12

### Letter from John Moreton

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/M20)*

Grenada 10th May 1790 received 6 July 1790

Sir I did myself the honour of writing to you in January last which I hope went to hand. The late Parliamentary proceedings respecting the slave trade have much alarmed the planters and other owners of slaves in these parts. I have frequent opportunities of hearing their testaments, many of whom have impertinently wished that they had you, Sir William Dolbin and Mr Wilberforce with all the other friends of slaves in their fields to handle hoes, and they would cut you up and convince you that severe toil cannot be accomplished without a constant supply of slaves; such are the malicious sentiments of these callous taskmasters. The different legislative bodies of these islands have been at their wits fabricating memorials which they have sent home to lay before parliament. They have all laboured hard to strive to persuade that encouraging and promoting wars in Africa and forcing human beings from their native places of innocence and luxuriance and ease and dooming them and their posterity to hard labour, hunger, chains and torture are not contrary to the laws of God, nor are the means of murdering 100,000 human beings yearly.

It is true they have made some laws with a politic view to show the Parliament of England that they wish to encourage and protect slaves; yet it must clearly appear that all these laws not any part of them, have the desired effect; the Guardians for slaves are only nominal. I aver it with great sincerity, that they take little or no pains on themselves to redress the wrongs of injured slaves; it is always more pleasing to them to sit down to a good dinner and eat and drink heartily than to enquire into the causes of suffering humanity.

I have a catalogue of cruelties which I have known to be exercised on slaves with the names of the estates, owners, slaves of the perpetrators which would shock humanity, many of which have come to the knowledge of the guardians and passed unnoticed.

Indeed there is no one clause in any of our laws to protect the life of a poor slave; for the evidence of a slave is not admitted and there are seldom more than two or three white men on an estate so that a white man may flog, torture or murder as many as the ferocity of his nature will prompt him to do and he cannot be brought to trial for the same. I shall just recite a few acts of barbarity which have been committed here lately and then conclude.

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## **Transcript 13**

### **Exchange of letters with Ann Jemima Sharp re Gustavus Vassa (Olaudah Equiano)**

*(Gloucestershire Archives D3549 13/1/S6)*

#### **1811 Jemima to Granville Sharp**

I have been reading very lately about Gustavus Vassa the Negro man to Mrs Paxton and I saw your name mentioned a good many times, pray do you know him?

#### **Granville Sharp's reply, Feb**

I was acquainted with Gustavus Vassa. Many years ago he was advised by General Oglethorpe to call on me. He was afterwards for a short time in my brother James Sharp's service. He was an honest, sober man and I went to see him when he was on his deathbed and had lost his voice so he could only whisper.