

Rodborough and the 1834 Abolition of Slavery

AWARDEE Peter Hawker

Jamaica St Andrew 111 (Liberty Hall Pen) £699 17s 8d [26 enslaved]]
Absentee slave-owner by virtue of his marriage to Caroline Stephenson
In Rodborough, Gloucestershire, 26/05/1823.

She was heiress of George Stephenson of Liberty Hall, St Andrew, Jamaica.

I wonder what life was like for George Stephenson? I wonder what Peter Hawker and Caroline did with their compensation? I wonder what happened to their enslaved people?

List some questions that you would like to ask of George Stephenson and questions that you would like to ask of the 26 enslaved. Read the below first:

Let the past speak for itself, courtesy of the pages of Jack P. Greene's erudite tome, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain*.

One 18th century critic asserted that George 'know no Medium in Things; a Man with you must either be either absolutely a Slave, or licentious free, free from all Restraints of Law.'

Another opponent of enslavement wrote thus:

'The negroes in our colonies endure a slavery more compleat, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time.'

And another wrote of George:

'Cruel Task-masters ... petty tyrants over human freedom ... sincere Worshippers of Mammon ... civilized violators of humanity ...'

And to conclude:

Their days are full 'of Idleness and Extravagance ... habituated by Precept and Example, to Sensuality, Selfishness, and Despotism ... at the Expence of the poor Negroes who cultivate their lands.'