

# BFSS Archives ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Brunel  
University  
London





# Overview of the year

We are pleased to present the seventh British and Foreign School Society (BFSS) Archives Annual Report 2020.

On the 23 March, Brunel University London closed its campus to all but essential workers. Over the past months, the Archives team has been working from home, while continuing to provide a limited remote service but with no access to any physical archives. However, we still wanted to provide our annual report this year, though under the current circumstances the report is in a different length and format than usual.

Up until March this year, we had another busy and eventful year. Among the many achievements to tell you about are:

- *Unlocking the Secrets of Slavery and Abolition* Exhibition
- More than 10,000 entries now in CALM – 4,849 entries relate to the BFSS Archives
- @BrunelUniArch Twitter account launched
- Haiti – Foreign Correspondence – letters available online

Over the past year, we have welcomed five enthusiastic and dedicated student volunteers, hosted eleven researchers over 15 days in our Reading Room, and provided another ‘introduction to archives’ session for 2nd year Brunel history students, as well as hosting a visit of the Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society and received 57 enquiries.

We have continued to catalogue the BFSS Archives as part of our commitment to making the archives more and more accessible to a growing audience. This year the work included the student applications cataloguing project, the Haiti letters online, news items and supporting the Being Human events.

We are currently making plans to return to the Old School House. We do hope to be back in the office as soon as it is safe to do so.

## Staff

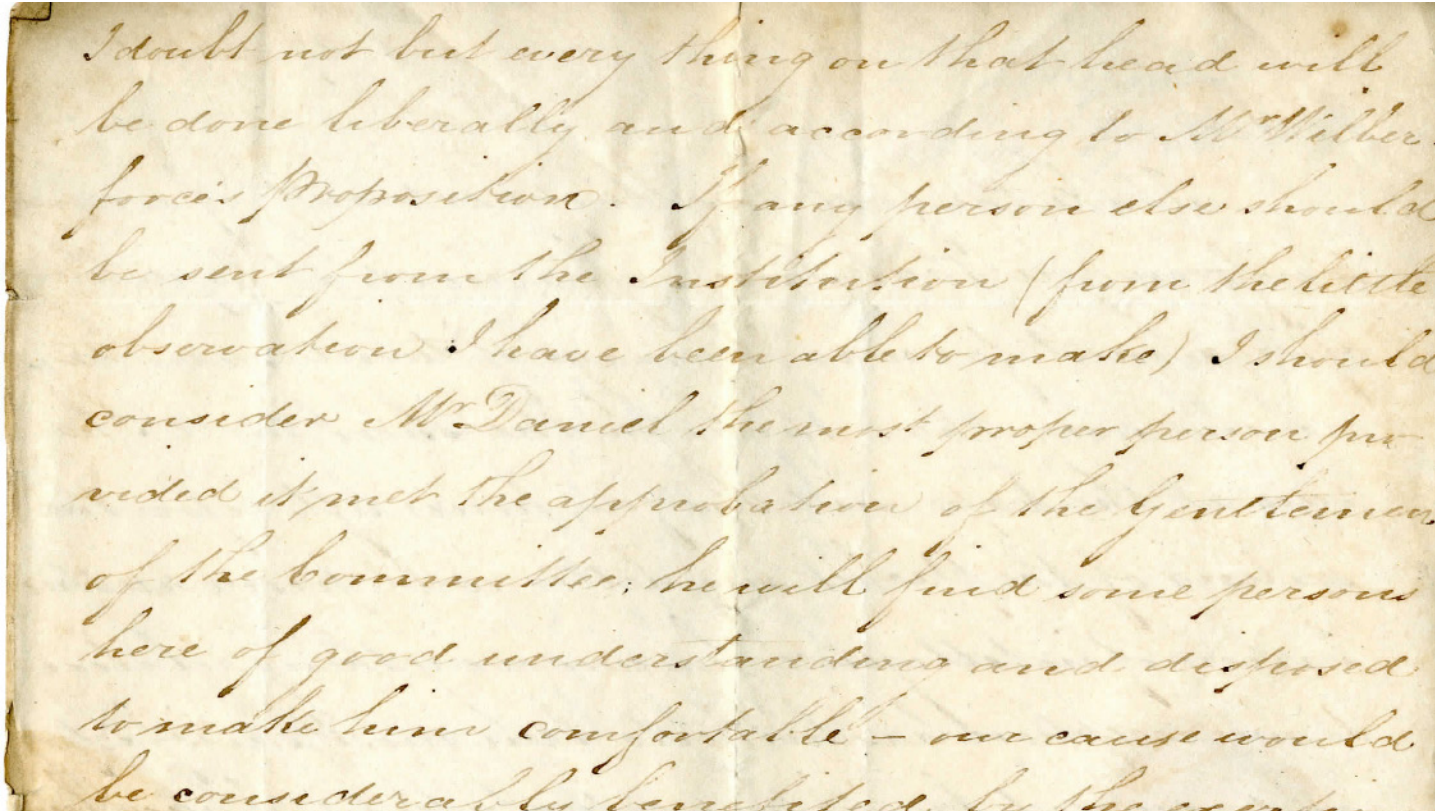
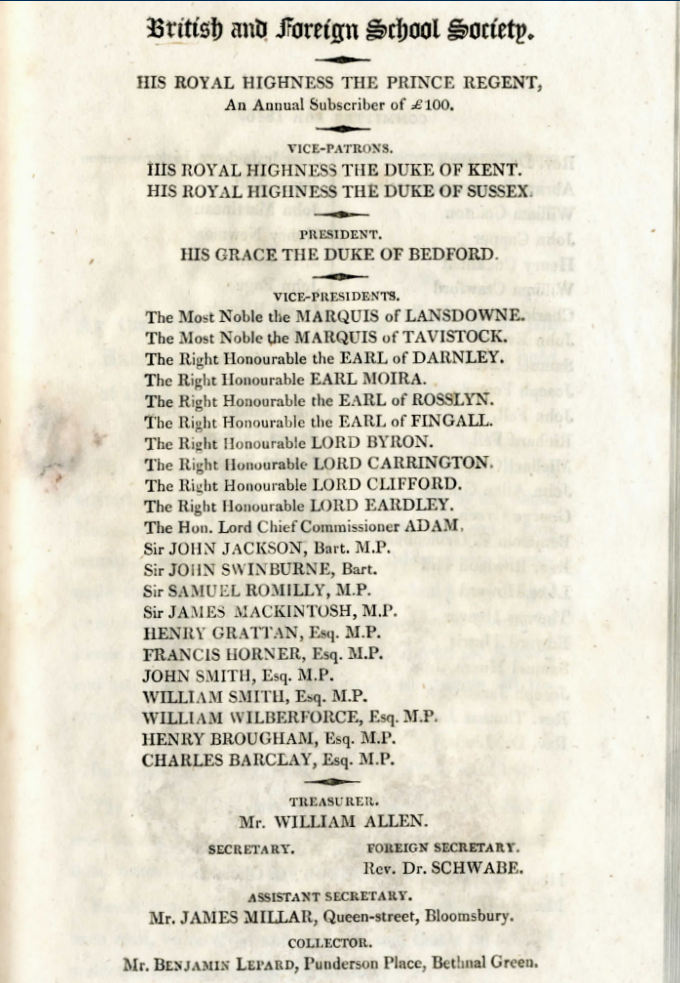
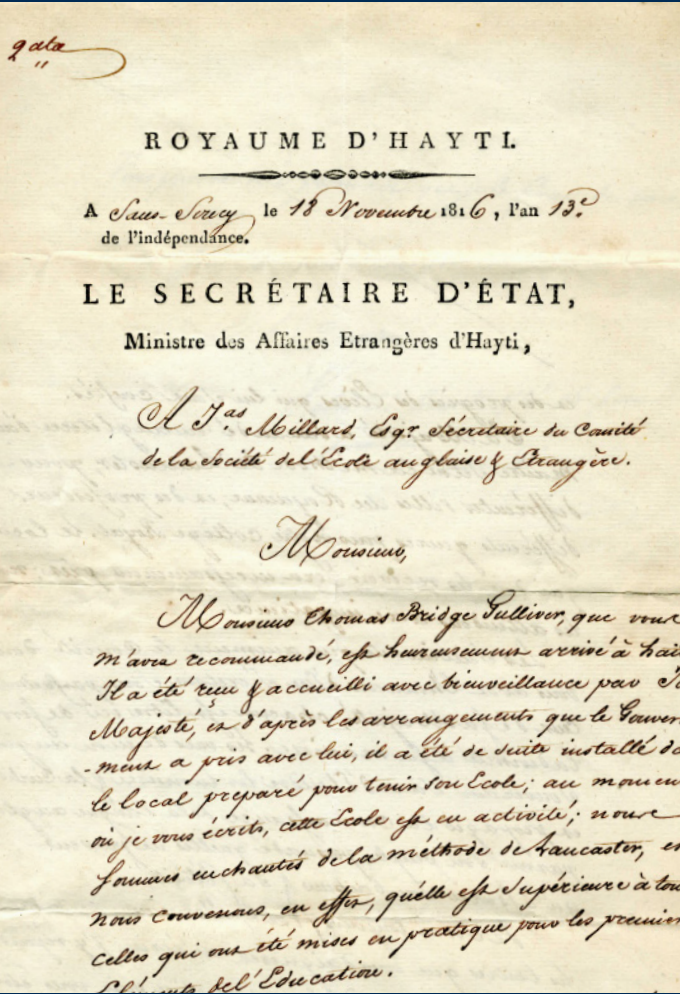
Mandy Mordue, Head of Archives and Records Management

Phaedra Casey, Archivist

Sarah Trim-West, Archive Assistant

Thank you for everything. Again, the letters are fascinating and really just a testament to the exchanges that happened with regards to schooling.

RESEARCHER, DECEMBER 2019



## Archives

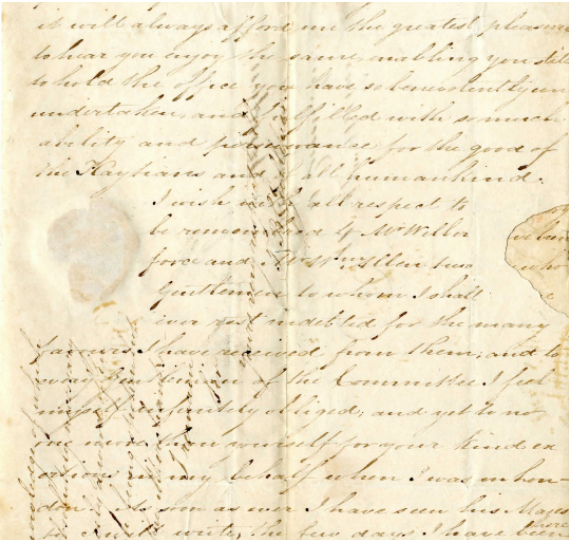
The British and Foreign School Society (BFSS) Archive is a unique collection which covers the period 1808 to 1976. It contains a wide range of materials in many formats such as official papers, letters, publications, student registers, photographs, maps, plans, trophies, clothing and furniture. It is approximately 178 linear metres.

The records include Joseph Lancaster’s letters (1810-12), committee minutes and papers, financial records, handwritten student applications with supporting testimonials and correspondence, student registers, teaching practice reports, establishment and progress of the British Schools, 19th century schools (both UK and foreign) correspondence, Education Commissions returns from British schools, BFSS charities and funds, agents and inspector reports, Annual Reports, student magazines (such as the B’s Hum), photographs of staff, students and buildings, teaching manuals and lesson books, portraits of principals of the teacher training colleges, clothing such as blazers, ties and sporting honours caps, furniture and memorial plaques. It also contains particularly unique and irreplaceable items such as a copybook of work done by slave children from a British school in Jamaica containing examples of handwriting and needlework (presented to the BFSS in 1826), individual sewing samples, sketchbooks and other personal memoirs of former staff and students, and silver ‘monitorial’ medals.

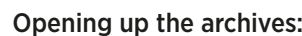
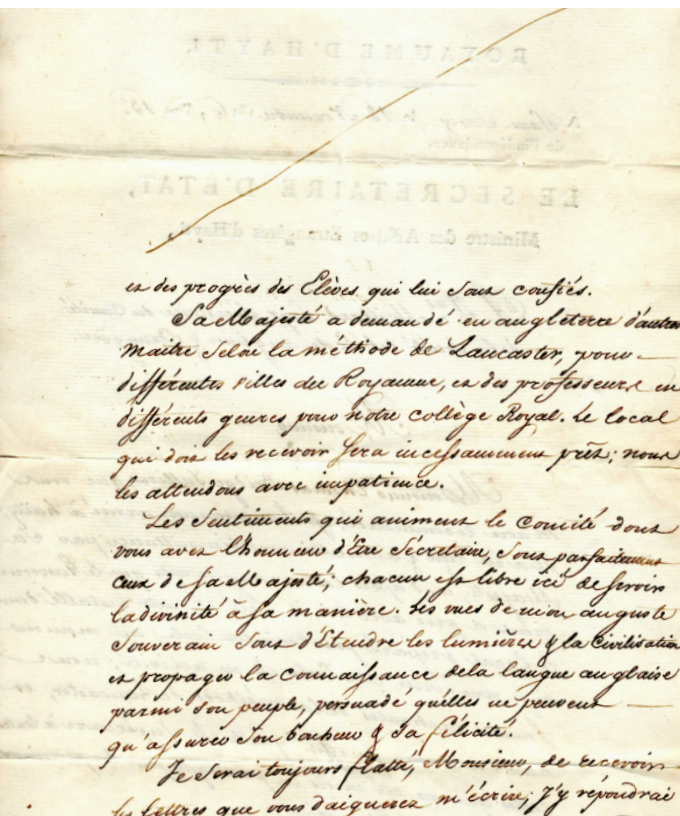
These records contain a wealth of detailed information on the Society and its schools, as well as the progress of education in Britain and overseas.

There is also a large selection of educational books and pamphlets, many of them rare editions, dating from the 19th century including works by Lancaster, Bell, Pestalozzi and Froebel – leading educationalists of the time, and Victorian and Edwardian children’s books. One collection of books was presented by David Salmon, biographer of Joseph Lancaster and former tutor and student of Borough Road College and Principal of Swansea Teacher Training College.

We are delighted that we have reached over 10,000 entries in CALM – 4,849, of which, are entries for the BFSS Archives.



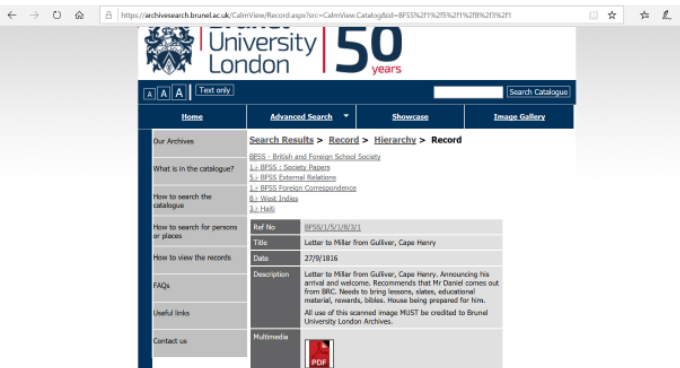




- **Applications** – we have continued with the Borough Road College student applications cataloguing project. With the help of our student volunteers, we have now completed:

Borough Road College – Men applications 1817-1933  
Borough Road College – Women applications 1817-1859

Each student application contained between 1-6 letters, all of which were read, name and date checked, carefully unfolded, had old pins and paper clips removed, were inserted into melinex sleeves if damaged, and were put into a new acid-free paper folder. Finally, each student name was added to CALM under the application year. We estimate that 10,000 student names have now been added to CALM which are key word searchable via our online CALM catalogue, and even via Google!



- **Haiti Letters – BFSS/1/5/1/8/3** – In response to a request for access to the Haiti Foreign Correspondence, from a PhD student at Harvard, we decided to deliver the nineteen letters as PDFs via CalmView (our online catalogue).

The items are now available for everyone to view, making the BFSS Archives even more accessible. This is an area of work we hope to develop further.

Many thanks for uploading these scans! The quality is excellent, and the PDFs are very much legible.

RESEARCHER, JUNE 2019

- ❑ **News from the Archives** – we have added news items relating to Stockwell College Round Robin; William Knibb and the 'Slave Book'; Football at Brunel; Cycling at Brunel; Opening up the Archives – BFSS Schools Folio Digitised; Women Students on Holiday; The First Lancastrian School in the USA; William Allen; and the Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day.
- ❑ **Academic article** – we are delighted to report that Dr Inge Dornan (Senior Lecturer, Social and Political Sciences, CBASS) has published her second article following her research using the BFSS Archives:

*Conversion and Curriculum: Nonconformist Missionaries and the British and Foreign School Society in the British West Indies, Africa and India, 1800-50.*

Published online by Cambridge University Press, 3/6/2019

The article examines the ways in which Nonconformist missionary societies worked hand in hand with the BFSS to provide them with pedagogic training in the British System, and BFSS teaching manuals and resources, as part of their evangelical mission of conversion in the British West Indies, Africa and India in the nineteenth century.

- **Exhibition – Being Human: Unlocking the Secrets of Slavery and Abolition** – This exhibition allowed us to explore the BFSS's role in the introduction of elementary education to enslaved and freed children in the British West Indies during and after slavery. It was only possible because the Archivist had previously catalogued the BFSS Foreign Correspondence down to each and every letter, revealing the hidden stories, particularly those of the women involved.

- **David Olusoga: Unlocking the Secrets of Britain's Slave Past**  
– On 28 November 2019, we attended the lecture by David Olusoga which was part of the Being Human programme of events.

After the lecture, we showed David, our exhibition 'Unlocking the Secrets of Slavery and Abolition'.



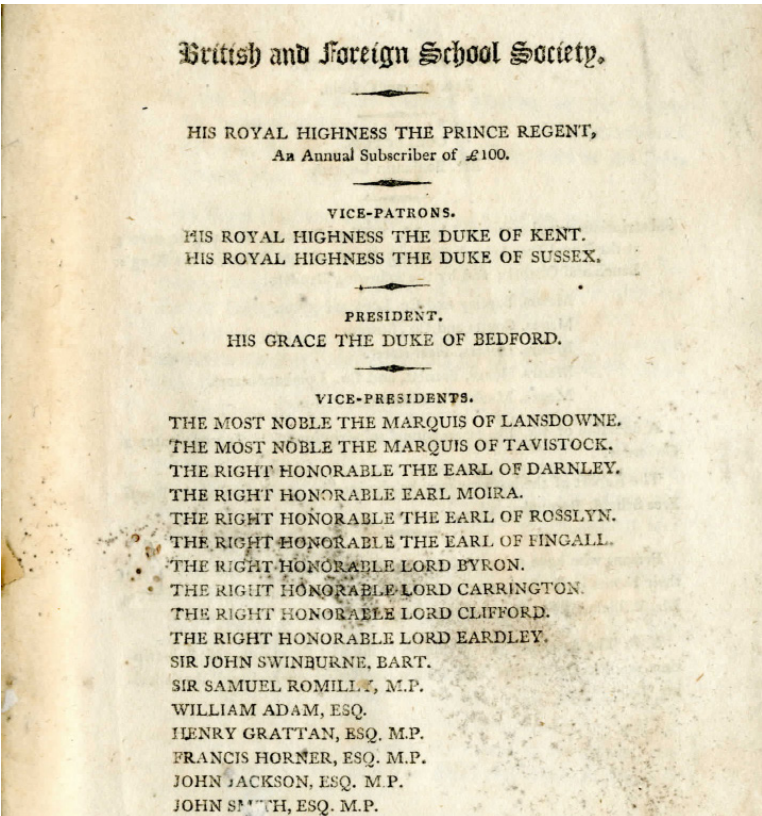
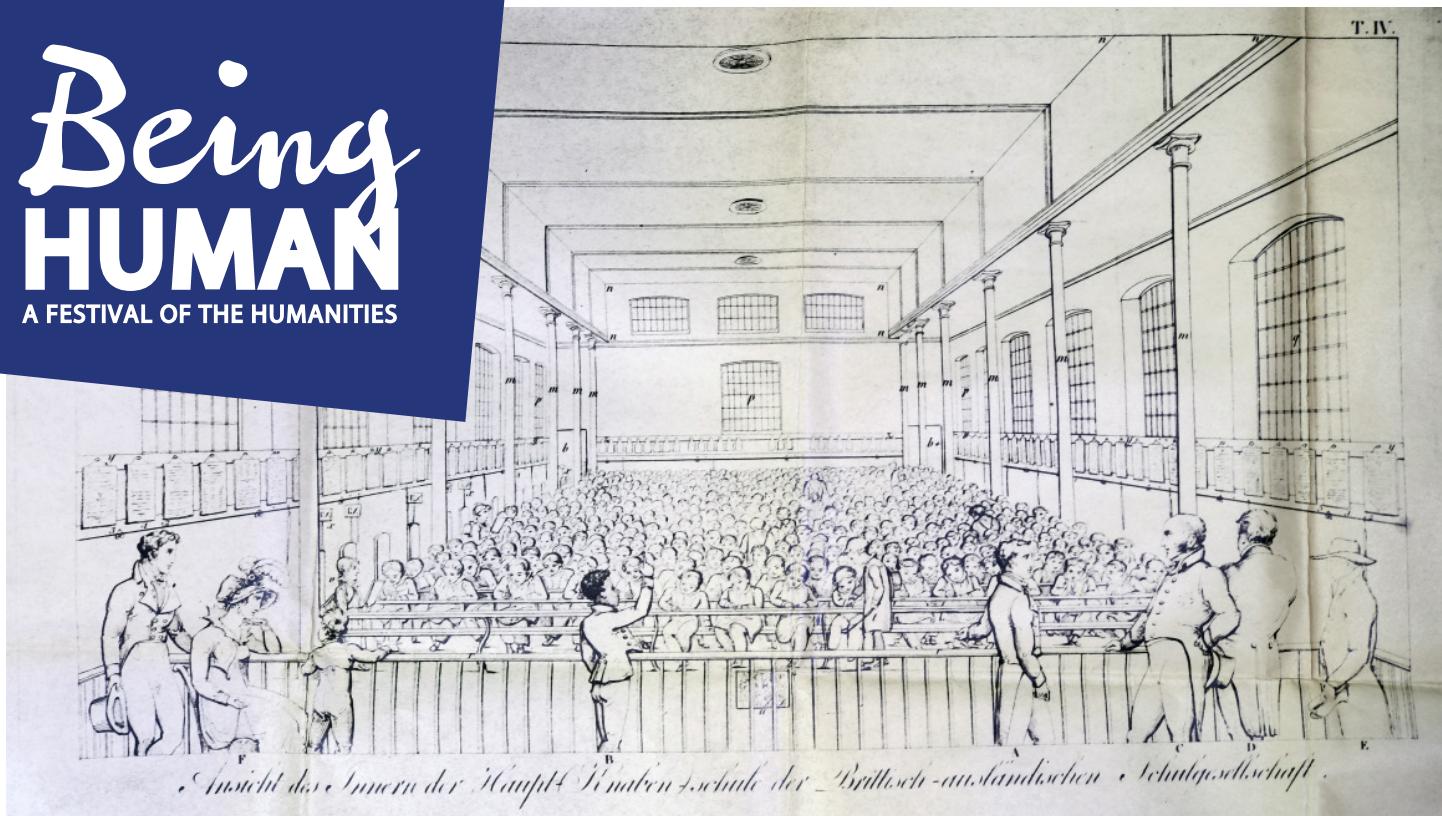
Thank you @BrunelUniArch for your exceptional work with the exhibition

DR INGE DORNAN, JUNE 2020



# Being HUMAN

A FESTIVAL OF THE HUMANITIES



## Unlocking the Secrets of Slavery and Abolition – Exhibition

As part of the UK-wide series of events on the theme “Secrets and Discoveries”, hosted by the Being Human Festival of Humanities, we curated an exhibition with Dr Inge Dornan and Dr Alison Carroll which showcased documents and artefacts from the BFSS archive.

We have reproduced the accompanying leaflet, which gives you a detailed narrative of the exhibition which explored the BFSS’s role in the introduction of elementary education to enslaved and freed children in the British West Indies during and after slavery.

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 Fund 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.

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 (BFSS) 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 “zealous 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 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.







## Visitors to the Archives

This year, we welcomed 11 researchers over 15 days. The majority of the academic researchers were from the UK, while the others came from the USA and Japan.

RESEARCHER	SUBJECT	ITEMS VIEWED	NO OF DAYS	FROM
Academic	Jamaican Schools 1835-45	BFSS Annual Reports Foreign Correspondence: Jamaica	1	USA
Academic	Education of immigrant children	Foreign Correspondence: Jamaica Foreign Correspondence: Canada Foreign Correspondence: Guyana Books – Little Black Sambo’ and ‘The Black Princess’ The Education Record, Volume 11 (BFSS publication)	1	USA
Academic	Information on the British School in Amersham	BFSS Annual Reports 1842-1843, 1846-1849, 1851 – 1856, and 1859 Teaching Appointments (men and women) 1830-1856 Teaching Appointments 1866: Letters from British Schools 1830-1856 Correspondence with schools: Secretary Wilks 1856-1865 Transfers to school boards	1	UK
Academic	Saffron Walden Kindergarten	Saffron Walden Kindergarten BFSS Annual Reports	2	Japan
Academic	Non-Conformist involvement in teacher training; and religious provision when Borough Road College merged to be part of West London Institute of Higher Education (WLIHE)	BFSS Annual Reports Ladies Committee Salmon/136 ‘Calm thoughts in the recent minute....’ Lancaster’s Improvements in Education History of Borough Road College, Bartle Educational Record (BFSS publication) West London Institute of Higher Education – legal merger documents BFSS Dissertations 53 and 58	3	UK
Academic	Relationship between BFSS and British and Foreign Bible Society	Foreign Correspondence: India	1	Japan
Academic	Use of blackboard illustrations as a teaching method especially in 1890s. W.E. Sparkes, Drawing Master at Borough Road College in the 1890’s	BFSS Annual Reports Educational Record (BFSS publication)	2	UK
Academic	Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial system in USA and Sierra Leone	BFSS Annual Reports Lancaster’s letters BFSS Minute book	1	USA
Academic x2	Research into Edwin Nichols Fallaize	BFSS Annual Reports Educational Record (BFSS publication) 1910s-1920s	1[2]	UK
Academic	Research into the BFSS early years, and education system development in Britain and Denmark, especially the role of authors of fiction in these reforms.	BFSS Annual Reports Salmon Collection	1	USA

## Archive Volunteers

Over the past year, we have been very lucky to host five excellent student volunteers.

Although we had to say good bye to Crystal, Emma and James last year, we welcomed Salwa and Josh at the start of this year.

We are enormously grateful to our volunteers for their hard work over the last year – without their hard work, dedication and support we would not have achieved so much. The volunteers have continued to work on sorting and cataloguing student applications under the supervision of the Archivist.

NAME	DAY/TIME
James Farmer, 2nd, 3rd Year and MA History student	16/11/2017 – 17/10/2019
Emma Smith, 2nd Year History student	17/7/2018 – May 2019
Crystal Prescod, MA History student	24/1/2019 – 8/8/2019
Salwa Sandhu, 3rd Year History student	22/1/2020 – 10/3/2020
Josh Mouzouris, 3rd Year History student	25/2/2020 – 10/3/2020



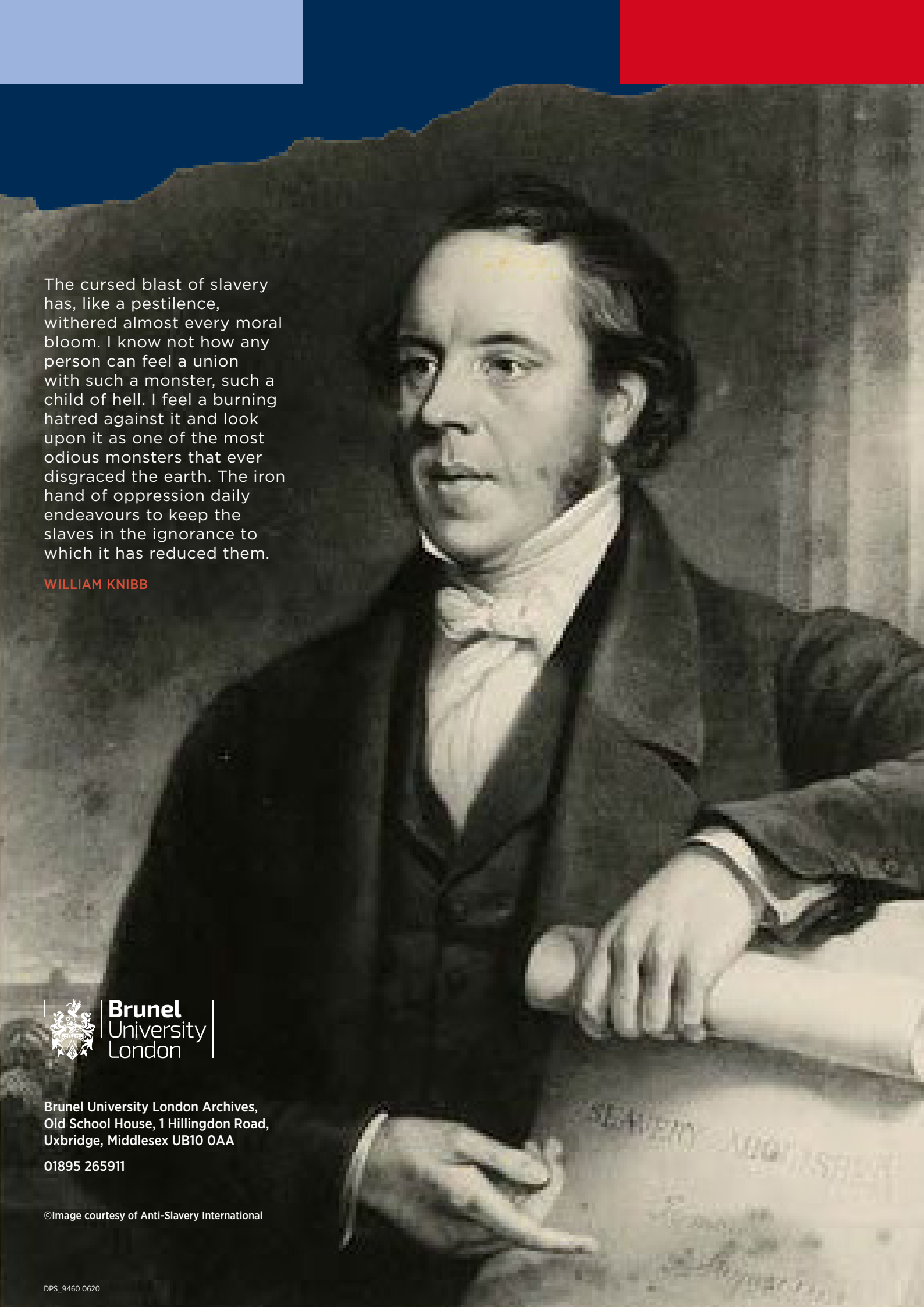
## Looking forward – 2020-2021

In the coming year, we are planning to move into the University Library on the campus, as the lease on the Old School House will expire in October 2021 and the University does not wish to extend it.

It is planned that the new accommodation will meet British Standards for Archival storage, especially in relation to recommended temperature and humidity for the archives – enabling us to further improve how we store the Archives.

There is a lot to do in preparation for such a move, on top of the huge disruption we have all experienced this year, so it is difficult for us to plan any projects at the moment. However, we will update you on all the news in next year’s report.

Until then, stay safe.

A black and white portrait of William Knibb, a man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit and a white cravat. He is seated and looking slightly to the left. The background is dark and textured. The top of the image has a blue and red header.

The cursed blast of slavery  
has, like a pestilence,  
withered almost every moral  
bloom. I know not how any  
person can feel a union  
with such a monster, such a  
child of hell. I feel a burning  
hatred against it and look  
upon it as one of the most  
odious monsters that ever  
disgraced the earth. The iron  
hand of oppression daily  
endeavours to keep the  
slaves in the ignorance to  
which it has reduced them.

**WILLIAM KNIBB**



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