

*Re: The Rustat Memorial, Jesus College Cambridge, [2022] ECC Ely 2*

7. No-one disputes that slavery and the slave trade are now universally recognised to be evil, utterly abhorrent, and repugnant to all right-thinking people, wherever they live and whatever their ethnic origin and ancestry. They are entirely contrary to the doctrines, teaching and practices of the modern Church. However, on the evidence, I am satisfied that the parties opponent have demonstrated that the widespread opposition to the continued presence of the Rustat memorial within the College Chapel is indeed the product of the false narrative that Rustat had amassed much of his wealth from the slave trade, and that it was moneys from this source that he used to benefit the College.

The true position, as set out in the historians' expert reports and their joint statement, is that Rustat's investments in the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading into Africa (the Royal Adventurers) brought him no financial returns at all; that Rustat only realised his investments in the Royal African Company in May 1691, some 20 years after he had made his gifts to the College, and some five years after the completion of the Rustat memorial and its inscription; and that any moneys Rustat did realise as a result of his involvement in the slave trade comprised only a small part of his great wealth, and they made no contribution to his gifts to the College.

I recognise that for some people it is Rustat's willingness to invest in slave trading companies at all, and to participate in their direction, rather than the amount of money that he made from that odious trade, that makes the Rustat memorial such a problem. I recognise also that it does not excuse Rustat's involvement in the slave trade, although it may help to explain it, that, in the words of L. P. Hartley (in his 1953 novel, *The Go-Between*), "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there." I also acknowledge that there is no evidence that Rustat ever repented for his involvement in the slave trade, unlike, for example, the reformed slave ship captain, the Reverend John Newton, whose hymn 'How Sweet the name of Jesus Sounds' was sung at the beginning of the service of Choral Evensong which I attended at the College Chapel and whose history I had to consider in the context of the creation of an educational area dedicated to his life and work in my judgment in *Re St Peter & St Paul, Olney [2021] ECC Oxf 2*.

However, I would hope that, when Rustat's life and career is fully, and properly, understood, and viewed as a whole, his memorial will cease to be seen as a monument to a slave trader. Certainly, I do not consider that the removal of such a significant piece of contested heritage, representing a significant period in the historical development of the Chapel from its medieval beginnings to its Victorian re-ordering, has been sufficiently clearly justified on the basis of considerations of pastoral well-being and opportunities for mission in circumstances where these have been founded upon a mistaken understanding of the true facts.