

Film transcript of *The Sweetest Thing*:

Sugar by Joy Gregory

In the South-West of England, Exeter sits upon the River Exe. The beating heart of the beautiful county of Devon.

1585 – Exeter given royal permission through a charter (special licence) to trade with Africa.

Manillas were made at the Birdall foundry in Exeter, then exported through Topsham.

In the 17th century, Topsham was the busiest port in England after London.

Ships were built in Topsham shipyards, specifically to trade with the Caribbean.

The town had its own sugar refinery, set up by the Buttall family on the site of 'The Retreat'.

Sugar first came to England in the 11th century, brought back by soldiers returning from the crusades.

The most efficient method of growing sugar is on large plantations with many workers.

John Hawkins – England's first slave trader.

In 1562 he sailed from Plymouth with three ships to the 'Gold Coast'.

Hawkins personal profit from selling the enslaved was so huge, Queen Elizabeth I granted him a special coat of arms.

This has the crest of an individual, bound and enslaved.

Growing sugar was labour-intensive work.

Vast numbers of African people were trafficked and forced to work on sugar plantations.

The enslaved worked from dawn to dusk under white overseers.

Punishments were often brutal and included:

Nose slitting, whipping, stocks.

Shackles and heavy iron collars to prevent escape.

Iron masks to prevent speaking, drinking or eating any of the sugarcane they were harvesting.

Loss of limb (*a runaway – Antigua*).

Death penalty for theft (*of items worth more than 12 pence – Barbados*).

Death penalty by burning (*for striking a white person – Jamaica*).

During harvest it was common for enslaved people to work 18 hours a day.

By 1750 sugar surpassed grain as the most valuable commodity in European trade.

Extract the juice from the cane (milling). The cane was generally hand fed by two enslaved people.

This could be extremely dangerous and caused numerous accidents.

The semi-refined sugar which remained in the pots was dried in the sun, packaged up and sent to Europe.

Previously gracing only the tables of monarchs and aristocrats, by 1800 sugar was on almost every table in England.

British industry benefitted by supplying factory-made goods in exchange for enslaved people.

Banks and insurance companies offered services to slave merchants, which made cities such as London very wealthy.

Afternoon Tea was initially developed for ladies who climbed the echelons of society.

The Devonshire Cream Tea is famous world-wide, usually served with cups of hot sweet tea.

The production of sugar required and killed hundreds and thousands of enslaved Africans.

More than 100 country houses and estates benefitted from the millions of pounds given in compensation to slave owners in the 19th century.

2015 – The British taxpayer finally paid off this debt.

COMPENSATION FOR DEVON OWNERS OF THE ENSLAVED

Claimant: Thomas Davy

Mill Street, Ottery St Mary.

(Knowsley Park), Manchester, Jamaica.

59 enslaved

Compensation: £1,101 3s 8d

Claimant: Thomas Porter

Rockbeare House, Rockbeare, East Burleigh, Devon.

(Pln Enmore); (Pln Paradise); Demerara, British Guiana.

709 enslaved | 385 enslaved

Compensation: £35,960 14s 8d; £19,295 8s 0d

Claimant: James Cunningham

Sidmouth, Devon. Rodney Place, Clifton, Bristol,

Gloucestershire.

St Catherine, (Easthams); (Bellfield Estate); (Paradise Pen);

(Ramble Pen); (Retrieve Pen).

St James (Biddeford Estate); (Hopewell); Trelawney, Jamaica.

879 enslaved

Compensation: £93 5s 7d; £3,798 9s 3d

Claimant: Sir William Laurence Young 4th Bart

Sidmouth, Devon. Hughhenden House, High Wycombe & Marlow Park, Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

(Old Road), Antigua.

114 enslaved

Compensation: £1,691 11s 10d

Claimant: George Stanley Cary

Follaton, Plymouth Road, Totnes, Devon.

(Grange); (Shadwell Park & Westhope Estate), St Kitts.

205 enslaved | 233 enslaved

Compensation: £3,482 17s 6d; £3,613 0s 11d

Claimant: Rebecca Ann Palmer, then Weeks, (née James)

Sidmouth, Devon.

(Palmyra Estate); (Rose Hall Estate), St James, Jamaica.

188 enslaved

Compensation: £1,697 7s 10d; £2,239 13s 2d

Claimant: Henry Adolphus Hawkins

High Street, Biddeford; Victoria Terrace, Exeter, Devon. St Ann's Terrace, York Place, 4 Chester Mews, Regents Park. Belsize Road, St John's Wood, London.

St Catherine, Jamaica.

102 enslaved

Compensation: £364 14s 4d; £19 10s 10d; £1,969 8s 3d

Claimant: Mary Elizabeth Stewart D'Urban (née Mitchell)

Newport House, Topsham, Devon.

(Hope Vale Estate), Grenada.

113 enslaved

Compensation: £3,013 12s 7d

Claimant: Alexander Hamilton, formerly Kelso

The Retreat, Topsham, Devon.

(Samaritan); (Parish of St Patrick), Grenada.

102 enslaved | 38 enslaved

Compensation: £2,862 5s 3d; £922 10s 0d

Claimant: Sir William Templer Pole 7th Bart

Shute House, Shute, Axminster, Devon.

(Golden Rock); (Mills), St Kitts.

170 enslaved | 170 enslaved

Compensation: £2,784 8s 4d; £2,512 8s 0d

Claimant: John Inglett Fortescue

Buckland Filleigh, Devon, Devon & Cornwall, England.

(Hope), St Vincent.

88 enslaved

Compensation: £2,425 10s 10d

Claimant: Thomas Daniel

Stoodleigh Court, Stoodleigh, Devon.

Berkeley Square, Bristol; Henbury, Bristol, Gloucestershire.

(Archibald's & Brown's); (Upper Freeman's St Peter); (Mount Lucy or Blackman's); Mackinnon's Estate), Antigua. (Mount Clapham); (Spring); (Endeavour); (Bagatelle); (Sunbury); (Hampton Estate); (Fairy Valley); (Kirton Estate), Barbados. (Moonshine); (Cliffs Estate); (Blowers); (Over Hill); (St Nicholas), Barbados.

213 enslaved | 167 enslaved | 130 enslaved | 276 enslaved | 157 enslaved | 7 enslaved | 28 enslaved | 3 enslaved | 16 enslaved | 161 enslaved | 55 enslaved | 68 enslaved | 213 enslaved | 167 enslaved | 130 enslaved | 276 enslaved | 157 enslaved | 7 enslaved | 28 enslaved | 3 enslaved | 16 enslaved | 161 enslaved | 55 enslaved | 68 enslaved | 228 enslaved | 219 enslaved | 219 enslaved | 125 enslaved | 23 enslaved | 1 enslaved | 126 enslaved | 11 enslaved | 145 enslaved | 200 enslaved | 109 enslaved | 177 enslaved | 228 enslaved | 219 enslaved | 125 enslaved | 23 enslaved | 1 enslaved | 126 enslaved | 11 enslaved | 145 enslaved | 200 enslaved | 109 enslaved | 177 enslaved | +37 further claims.

Compensation: £3,171 3s 4d; £2,728 15s 9d; £20,43 7s 10d; £3,942 2s 1d; £3,410 0s 10d; £133 1s 10d; £504 18s 1d; £31 1s 5d; £320 8s 5d; £3,384 15s 11d; £1,258 7s 7d; £1,359 7s 1d; £4,998 11s 0d; £4,481 19s 9d; £4,748 0s 9d; £2,874 1s 6d; £295 9s 3d; £29 2s 7d; £2,823 11s 7d; £229 2s 11d; £3,299 7s 1d; £4,180 19s 9d; £2,441 0s 4d; £4,078 1s 5d; +37 further claims.

400 Years – Barbados was claimed from 1625 in the name of King James 1 of England.

Barbados, the birthplace of British slave society. England's first slave plantation island.

Barbados, the world's newest Republic – 30th November 2021.

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