

History's Missing Chapters

David Olusoga comes to Bridport to discuss colonial wealth and reparations and why we forget key parts of Britain's past.



Paul Lashmar and Alan Smith at Bayes Business School

When he introduced Alan Smith, First Church Estates Commissioner for the Church of England, at the Craft Lecture at Bayes Business School in 2024, Paul Lashmar talked about how rarely slavery was mentioned when he was a child growing up in East London. He suggested that the record of Empire should be set straight, “so the new generation does not grow up as misled as mine.” He continued: “If Britain is ever going to re-establish its moral leadership role in the world again as an outward-looking, democratic, and progressive nation, it needs to come to terms with its past.”

In December, in one of two Bridport events featuring historian David Olusoga, Paul Lashmar will revisit his conversation with Alan Smith while discussing his book *Drax of Drax Hall—How One British Family Got Rich (and Stayed Rich) from Sugar and Slavery*. The event is a late addition to the Bridport Literary Festival programme and will highlight the story of the Dorset-based Drax family, who are unique in that they are the only colonising family to still own a plantation in the West Indies.

As global movements for racial justice continue to challenge the legacies of empire, *Drax of Drax Hall* offers a vital case study on how Britain's colonial wealth survives—and thrives—in plain sight. From the violent origins of British colonialism in the Caribbean to the quiet entrenchment of inherited privilege in the English countryside, this history exposes the lasting effects of empire—and

the families that still benefit from them. Through meticulous research and compelling storytelling, Paul Lashmar reveals the deep roots of inequality, the persistence of elite privilege, and the unfinished business of reparations. *Drax of Drax Hall* tells the full, unflinching story of the ancestors who pioneered the British sugar industry and created the blueprint for slave-based plantation economies. Chaired by David Olusoga, the discussion will take place at The Bull Hotel ballroom, Bridport, at 4.30pm on December 12th. Tickets can be purchased at the Bridport Tourist Information Office or by calling 01308 424 901.

Fresh from his adventures in the *Celebrity Traitors'* Scottish castle, David Olusoga will then visit the Electric Palace for his own talk: *History's Missing Chapters* at 7.30pm.

Renowned as a public historian, author, broadcaster and newspaper columnist, Olusoga recently interviewed former US President Barack Obama. His current focus is on why and how certain events and individuals are remembered while others are forgotten.

The talk includes examples from the World Wars, the Industrial Revolution and other pivotal moments in global history.

His books include *Black & British: A Forgotten History* (awarded both the Longman-History Today Trustees Award and the PEN Hessel-Tiltman Prize), *The World's War*, *Black & British: A Short Essential History*, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide* and the *Colonial Roots of Nazism*.

Recent television programmes include *Union* with David Olusoga and the series on *Empire*. He also writes and presents the long-running BBC history series *A House Through Time*.

As Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester, he has received numerous awards and is a Fellow of the British Academy, The Royal Society of Literature, The Royal Society of Arts, and the Royal Historical Society.

Tickets for David Olusoga's talk at the Electric Palace on December 12th can be purchased directly from the Electric Palace, online at www.electricpalace.org.uk, or by calling 01308 424 901.



*David Olusoga: Appearing at two
events in Bridport in December*