

Facing up to shameful history, angry women and referees' trials

This week marked an important moment in the history of the Guardian with the launch of Cotton Capital, a series revealing the links between the 19th-century Manchester founders of the paper, the transatlantic cotton industry and the enslaved labour upon which the trade was built. The links have been established in academic research commissioned by the Scott Trust, which owns the Guardian. As David Olusoga - a historian and Scott Trust board member - explains, they also reflect the illusory nature of British history in general, which has long preferred to focus on celebrating abolition rather than to its messy complicity in the slave economy.

In addressing our past, the Guardian's editor-in-chief, Katharine Viner, writes that the organisation is "facing up to, and apologising for, the fact that our founder [John Edward Taylor] and those who funded him drew their wealth from a practice that was a crime against humanity". In the coming months, we will continue to explore this history and its lasting impact.

The ties that bind us [Page 10](#) →

In France, protests against the proposed increase to the pension age have become so inflamed that a state visit by Britain's King Charles had to be postponed. Kim Willsher reports on a wave of anger and how women are at the forefront of the demonstrations.

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The lives of top-level football referees were pressurised enough as it was, but the advent of video assistant technology, leading to a slew of controversial decisions, only seems to have made the job even harder than ever. William Ralston goes behind the scenes with the men and women in black.

The whistle blowers [Page 34](#) →



On the cover

This theme uses a thread, linking our past to our present, to create the image of an eye, representing our vision of how we see the world. It makes a compelling opener for the set of illustrations by Elisabeth Michiel who drew all her images for David Olusoga's article on page 10 with one continuous line.

Illustration: Ellen Wishart/Guardian Design



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