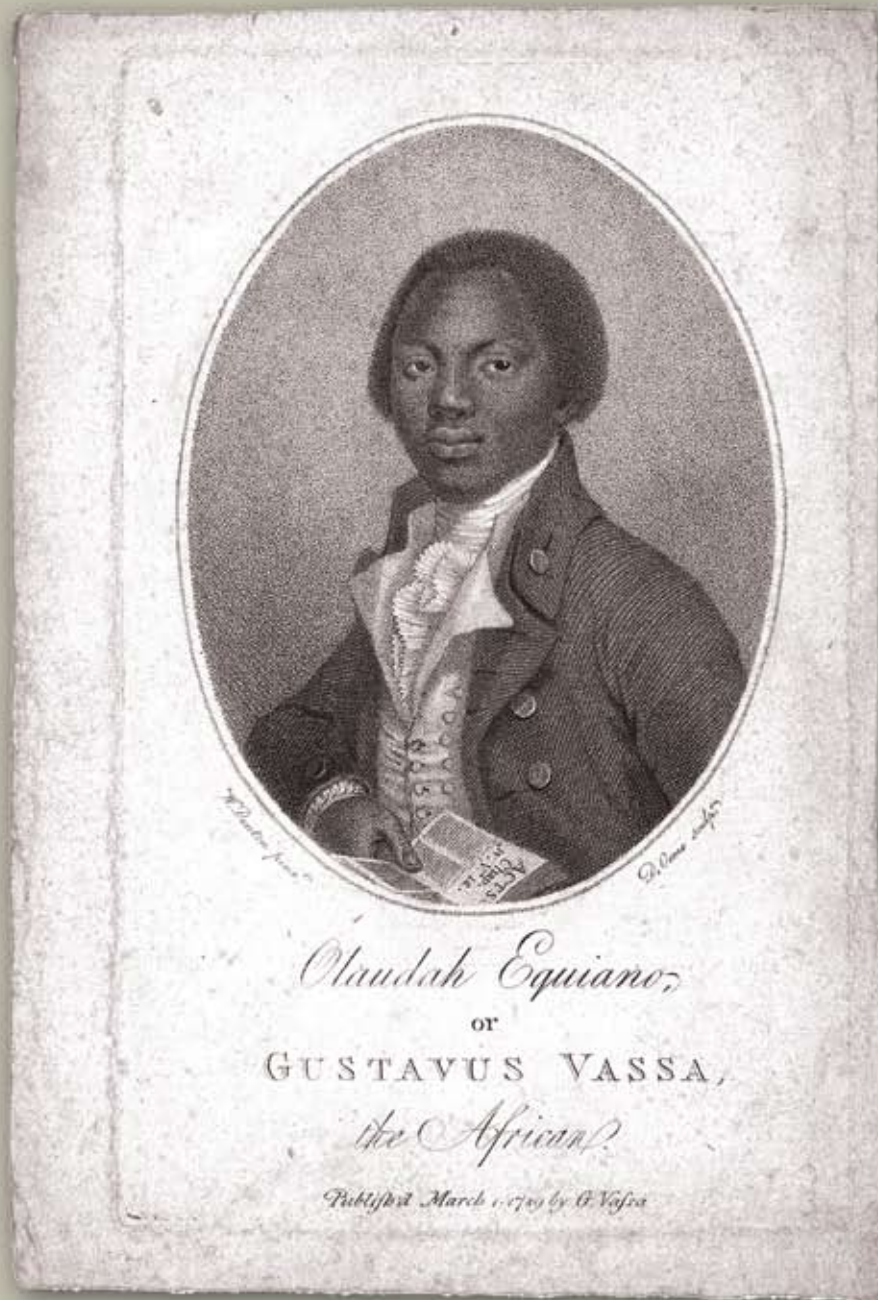


Greenwich: Transatlantic Slavery Trail

What have Britain, London and Greenwich got to do with transatlantic slavery?



Look around you. This trail is designed to show you that a lot of what you see around Greenwich is part of the history of transatlantic slavery. The walk will look at themes of slavery, anti-slavery and legacy. The trail will start inside the Museum and will take 90 minutes.

- 1** The National Maritime Museum
- 2** The Old Royal Naval College
- 3** Crowley House and Crowley's Wharf
- 4** Maze Hill and Olaudah Equiano
- 5** Montague House and Ignatius Sancho
- 6** The 'Chocolate House', West Grove
- 7a** The Grange
- 7b** William IV Statue



The Slavery Trail

We have suggested a planned route for you to follow but of course you do not have to follow this exactly: *you can start at any point of the trail. Remember that some of the highlights are now people's houses. Please respect their privacy while enjoying the trail.*

We hope you will find this trail useful in learning about how the history of both Greenwich and Britain is linked to transatlantic slavery and the trade between West Africa and Britain's former colonies in the Americas.

Introduction For 250 years, from the 16th century to the early 19th century, transatlantic slavery was a major source of wealth in Britain. Just one slave-trading voyage could make a profit of a million pounds in today's money, and even more came into Britain through the sale of commodities produced by slave-labour on plantations in the Caribbean and American colonies.

London, Bristol and Liverpool were Britain's major slave-trading ports. In the early 18th century, London was the leader before being overtaken by Bristol and then Liverpool. The headquarters of the Royal African Company, the East India Company and the South Sea Company, all with direct involvement in the slave trade, were based in London. The finance houses, insurance companies, outfitters and suppliers were also London-based.

Transatlantic Slavery and Greenwich

Greenwich has a number of links to transatlantic slavery. Many Royal Naval ships left for Africa, Asia and the Caribbean from the royal dockyards at Deptford and Woolwich and merchants, slave traders, captains and seafarers took up residence in Greenwich, Blackheath and Deptford. The Navy was not directly concerned in transatlantic slavery, but it protected British shipping involved in it from enemy attack, as well as slaving outposts on the African coast.

One of the legacies of Britain's links to transatlantic slavery was a more diverse population, including enslaved Africans who were referred to as 'servants', others who were sailors and also free men and women. Some lived and worked around Greenwich Park. The earliest known record of an African in Greenwich is of Cornelius, 'a blackamore' buried at St. Margaret's Lee in 1593.

Two notable Africans who lived in Greenwich for a time were abolitionists, Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho. Greenwich also drew performances by the world-renowned Jubilee Singers, a group of formerly enslaved African-Americans who introduced spirituals and gospel music to Europe while on tour in 1873.

Go to Gallery 21 of the National Maritime Museum on Level 2. Outside the 'New Visions' gallery is a painting called 'The United Services'. If you look closely at the painting, you will see an African sailor.



This picture of Chelsea and Greenwich Pensioners in the Painted Hall of Greenwich Hospital was first exhibited in London in 1845. The key at the bottom of the frame identifies the African sailor as John Deman, who served with Admiral Lord Nelson when he was a young captain in the Caribbean.

2

The Old Royal Naval College

Walk out of the main entrance of the Museum and go over Romney Road via the crossing to your left. You will be in the grounds of the Old Royal Naval College. Walk around for a few minutes to appreciate the magnificence of the site.



Before these buildings became a Naval College they were the Royal Hospital for Seamen, also known as Greenwich Hospital. From 1705 to 1865 the Hospital was a retirement home for disabled and destitute naval seamen, and paid pensions to many more. The royal charter also charged the Hospital with looking after the widows of sailors (who were employed as nurses) and the education of their children. John Deman, the African whom we saw in the painting, was one of a number of black Pensioners in the Hospital.



A Transatlantic Slavery Trail around Greenwich

3

Crowley House and Crowley's Wharf

Walk down to the River Thames and take one of the gates onto the Thames Path. Turn right and walk along the path until the end, turn right and then immediately left down Crane Street. Continue along Highbridge Wharf and past Trinity Hospital. On the right you will come to Greenwich Power Station, the site of a 17th-century mansion called Crowley House. The riverfront here is still called Crowley's Wharf.



Ambrose Crowley, a leading iron manufacturer specializing in finished iron goods, occupied Crowley House with his warehouse next door to it. Crowley was most famous for making anchors and chains for naval vessels but his firm also produced hoes for sugar cultivation on slave plantations and manacles, leg-irons and collars for slaving vessels. Crowley was also a deputy governor of the South Sea Company, which supplied slaves to the Spanish colonies.

4

Maze Hill and Olaudah Equiano

Now head up Hoskins Street, back towards Greenwich Park. You have to cross Trafalgar Road and then start walking up Maze Hill. You will come to 111 Maze Hill on the left hand side of the road.



Olaudah Equiano was an enslaved African who was sold in America at a young age to a Captain Michael Pascal. Pascal took Equiano with him on naval service and named him Gustavus Vassa, after a Swedish king. When Pascal visited England, Equiano stayed with the Guerin sisters at 111 Maze Hill and it was in London that he was baptized. Equiano thought he was a free man in England but Pascal had him kidnapped at Deptford and resold into

slavery in 1762. However Equiano's strength, character and enterprise put him in a position to purchase his own freedom four years later. He returned to Greenwich and after some years as a merchant seaman came back to England again, determined to help end the slave trade. He wrote his autobiography in 1789 and travelled around the country speaking against slavery. He died in 1797 but his book, describing his experiences of slavery, had an enormous impact on the abolition of transatlantic slavery in Britain.

5

Montague House and Ignatius Sancho

Walk up the hill, cross the road and turn right into Greenwich Park through the Maze Hill House Gate. You need to walk across the Park so follow the signs and the path to the Ranger's House. On the far side of the rose garden, to the left of the Ranger's House, you will come to Queen Caroline's Bath by the Park wall.



This bath and part of the wall is all that remains of Montagu House. You will also see a plaque here commemorating Princess Caroline of Brunswick, estranged wife of the future George IV. She lived in the house which had previously belonged to the Duke and Duchess of Montagu. There is also a plaque commemorating Ignatius Sancho. John, 2nd Duke of Montagu, was noted for his support of African people and sponsored

Francis Williams, a freeman, to study at Oxford. He befriended Ignatius Sancho (c. 1729 –80), who was born on a slave ship and brought to England at the age of two to become a domestic servant in Greenwich. Sancho was encouraged to learn to read and write by the Duke and was employed as a butler by the Duchess. She left him a generous annuity on her death and he used his money to develop such interests as composing music, acting and writing. He later owned a grocer's shop in Westminster and was a minor celebrity in his day with many friends among literary men of the time. He is most famous for a book, *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African*, which was used by abolitionists to argue against transatlantic slavery.



6

The 'Chocolate House', West Grove

Exit the park via the Chesterfield Gate and turn right. Walk straight on until you come to West Grove, formerly known as The Grove.



In the 1700s The Grove was informally known as 'Chocolate Row'. In the first three decades of the 18th century, numbers 4 and 5 were officially known as 'his majesty's chocolate house'. It was a place where merchants, aristocrats and royalty met to drink the newly fashionable drink, chocolate. Chocolate houses were introduced to England in 1657 and, because of the high import duties on cocoa, were only patronized by the wealthy. Enslaved Africans on the plantations of the Americas grew the cocoa for making chocolate. Chocolate drinks were also sweetened by plantation-produced sugar. Across the main road (Blackheath Hill) is Dartmouth Grove, former home of slave traders like Thomas King of Camden, Calvert and King. At one time, a fifth of all slaving ships that set sail from London belonged to this firm.

7

William IV Statue

7a Head back towards Greenwich Park and turn left down Cade Road, which leads to Croom's Hill. Go down the hill. Half way down on your left is a house called The Grange. From 1748 to 1757 this was home of Edward Falkingham, Comptroller of the Royal Navy. Shortly before he died in 1757, he had his black servant, John Bristol, baptized.

7b Walk back into the Park through the gate, turn left and walk down the path back towards the National Maritime Museum. At the bottom of the main road, by the vehicle gate, is a statue of William IV, who succeeded his brother George IV in 1830 and reigned until 1837.



Long before he became king, William had been a professional naval officer, serving with Nelson in America and the Caribbean during and after the War of American Independence. He became Duke of Clarence in 1789, was closely associated with London slave-trading interests, and led the royal opposition to the abolition of the slave trade in the House of Lords. He was king when slavery itself was abolished in 1833.

You may want to consider William's association with slave-trading interests in comparison to the anti-slavery imagery used on the figurehead of his father, King George III, on display in the 'Atlantic Worlds' Gallery. What does this tell us about the royal family and their involvement in transatlantic slavery and the abolition campaign?

This is the end of the transatlantic slavery trail. However, you might also like to visit St Alfege's Church, which contains the baptism and burial records of many African and Asian people from the time of transatlantic slavery. John Julius Angerstein, who was part owner a slave estate in Grenada, has a memorial inscription in the church.

We hope you have learned something about transatlantic slavery and the maritime link to this period of history.