



ROYAL
MUSEUMS
GREENWICH

**THE
GREAT
GREENWICH
WINDRUSH
TRAIL**

INTRODUCTION

The transport ship *Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury Docks, near London, on 22 June 1948. On board were hundreds of West Indians (mostly Jamaican men) who, as British citizens, had come to seek their fortunes in what many thought of as the 'Mother Country'.

The Borough of Greenwich soon became home to a slowly increasing number of families from the Caribbean. Initially, Woolwich, with its light industries and proximity to Deptford (which had long-standing links to Black seafarers), was a preferred area to live. As the new arrivals ventured south towards Kent they faced challenges common to Caribbean settlers across Great Britain: the 'colour bar' that restricted their rights and freedoms, securing employment and accommodation, and casual racist abuse and violence.

Despite these obstacles, the Windrush Generation's pioneering spirit laid the groundwork for much of the social and cultural landscape of Greenwich today.

This trail serves as an introduction to a handful of these trailblazers and sites connected to their impact on the arts, medicine, local government and much more.

LEGACY

1. WOOLWICH SIMBA PROJECT 48-50 ARTILLERY PLACE, LONDON SE18 4AB

Founded in 1979, the Woolwich Simba Project was a community centre for people of African and Caribbean heritage living in Greenwich. As well as hosting musical artists and visiting sound systems, Simba was a centre for civil rights organisation and a Saturday school. The project closed its doors in 2006 but its influence still resonates across the borough through the Simba Housing Association and other groups that have adopted its aims and ideas.

simbaha.org.uk

2. SIMBA HOUSING ASSOCIATION 121B VICTORIA WAY, LONDON SE7 7NX

Simba Housing Association (Greenwich) was created in 1995 as an offshoot of the Woolwich Simba Project. It was formed to address discrimination in housing within the borough and still works to provide shelter and housing to young single people of African and African Caribbean heritage.

simbaha.org.uk

3. CARIBBEAN SOCIAL FORUM **51-53 WOOLWICH NEW ROAD, LONDON SE18 6ES**

Founded in 2015, the Caribbean Social Forum was started by Dr Pamela Franklin (of Barbadian heritage) for Windrush-era elders and their 'matured children'. With more than 600 members, the forum works to preserve the history of Caribbean people in the borough as well as sensitively supporting its members through their senior years. The organisation also works with the National Maritime Museum and the University of Greenwich as well as local and national heritage institutions, to centre the Caribbean experience in their practice through arts, music and writing.

caribbeansocialfor.wixsite.com/caribbeansocialforum

4. GREENWICH AND LEWISHAM YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE (TRAMSHED)

51-53 WOOLWICH NEW ROAD, LONDON SE18 6ES

Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre was a creative hub that attracted and nurtured the talents of several Black actors and playwrights, including Bernardine Evaristo OBE and Michael McMillan. The theatre officially closed in 2019 but its tradition of community engagement continued after its relaunch as the Tramshed.

tramshed.org



PEOPLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE



5. MAVIS BEST MBE 35 WELLINGTON STREET, ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH COUNCIL, LONDON SE18 6HQ

Mavis Best came to Britain from Jamaica in 1961. She trained as a community development youth worker and dedicated her life to working tirelessly for the civil rights of Black people across London and further afield. She was central to the scrapping of earlier 'stop and search' laws that enabled police to unfairly target young Black people and was awarded an MBE in 2002. From 1998 until 2002 Mavis Best served as a councillor for the Borough of Greenwich, after which she was an Alderwoman and granted freedom of the borough in 2021. She died at the age of 83 in 2022.



6. ANN-MARIE COUSINS
35 WELLINGTON STREET, ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH
COUNCIL, LONDON SE18 6HQ

Together with Mavis Best MBE, Ann-Marie Cousins was instrumental in setting up the Greenwich African Caribbean Organisation (GACO). She is its current chair, while Fabian Best (widower of Mavis Best) is its treasurer. In her role as an elected Greenwich councillor, Cousins strives to raise the political, cultural and economic profiles of African and Caribbean communities in the borough. She is British-born of Jamaican heritage and sits as the cabinet member for Equality, Culture and Communities.



7. PROFESSOR NOLA ISHMAEL OBE
QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, STADIUM ROAD,
LONDON SE18 4QH

Nola Ishmael was born in Barbados in 1943. She trained as a nurse in Britain at a time when the National Health Service relied heavily on African-Caribbean healthcare staff. In 1988 she became the Director of Nursing for the Borough of Greenwich, the first Black person in London to hold such a post. She was awarded an OBE in 2000 and an honorary doctorate from Birmingham City University in 2003.



8. BARONESS ROS HOWELLS OBE **UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH, PARK ROW, LONDON SE10 9LS**

Born in Grenada in 1931, Ros Howells has been a long-standing campaigner for racial equality in Greenwich and Lewisham. She fought for justice for the victims of the New Cross Fire in 1981 and is an avid supporter of the Stephen Lawrence Family Campaign. She became director of the Greenwich Racial Equality Council in 1994 and was the first female member of the Court of Governors of the University of Greenwich. In 1999 she was raised to the peerage as The Baroness Howells of St Davids, of Charlton in the London Borough of Greenwich.



9. BERNARDINE EVARISTO OBE, FRSL, FRSA
173 EGLINTON ROAD LONDON SE18 3SJ

The Booker Prize-winning author was brought up in a large ramshackle house (since demolished) on Eglinton Road in Woolwich. The Evaristos were among the first Black and mixed families to move into Woolwich and were often subjected to racial hostility. *Lara*, a semi-autobiographical account of her time there, was published in 1997. Her novel *Girl, Woman, Other* won the Booker Prize in 2019.

bevaristo.com

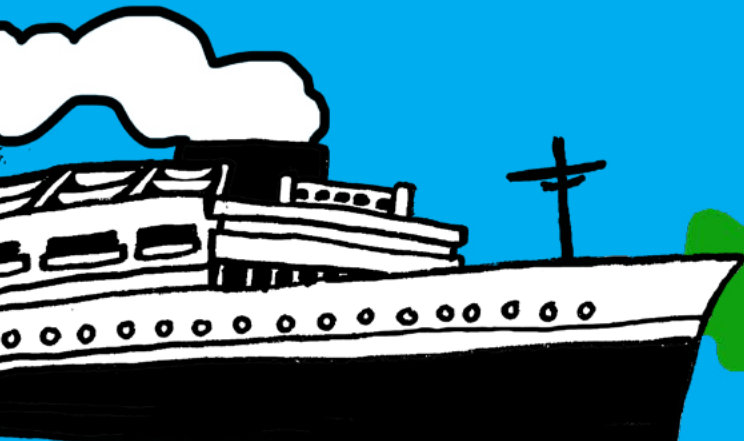
RESISTANCE AND REMEMBRANCE

10. DEPTFORD RACE RIOT, 1949 BROOKMILL ROAD, LONDON SE8 4HR

One year after the arrival of the *Empire Windrush*, Deptford was the scene of racial violence. In July and August 1949, Black men were attacked on Deptford High Street and Deptford Broadway. This culminated in a 600-strong mob launching an assault on Black men who were lodging at Carrington House in Brookmill Road. A police cordon was drawn across the road to keep the attackers at bay. Fifteen men, among whom were eight Black and five white men, were charged at Greenwich with assaulting the police or using threatening language or behaviour. In spite of these events, Deptford (with its centuries-long African and Caribbean presence) has continued as a key site of Black settlement.

11. COLOUR BAR IN DEPTFORD, 1958 CHURCH STREET, LONDON SE8

The operation of a 'colour bar' (the refusal of service to people on account of the colour of their skin) was a feature of life for Windrush-era settlers in south-east London. Given Deptford's long-standing Black population, its cafes and pubs had conducted business in this way for decades. In 1958 the MP for Deptford, Sir Leslie Plummer, described the situation as 'shocking and deplorable'. He threatened to oppose the renewal of a licence to the Robin Hood and Little John pub (demolished in 1977) in Deptford Church Street if it continued to discriminate. At this time several hundred West Indians were living in Deptford.



DEPTFORD

12. ROY MCFARLANE

WICK TOWER, 138 POWIS STREET, LONDON SE18 6LR

In February 1956, Roy McFarlane, a 24-year-old Jamaican, was refused a sales position at the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society (RACS) department store in Woolwich because of his race. RACS was known to only reserve jobs for Black workers in its laundry. Despite protests to the media and the local authorities, McFarlane failed to secure a post with RACS. He later became an estate agent as well as co-founder of *The Magnet*, one of London's earliest Windrush-era newspapers. *The Magnet* was edited by the Guyanese novelist Jan Carew and featured articles from high-profile West Indian authors and journalists.

13. ROLAN ADAMS

11 ARNOTT CLOSE, LONDON SE28 8BG

Fifteen-year-old Rolan Adams was murdered on the Thamesmead estate on 21 February 1991. The young man of Jamaican heritage was ambushed by a racist gang who had been drinking nearby in the Wildfowler pub. Rolan's parents experienced a lack of police concern and unfounded assumptions of their son's supposed criminality that would plague similar murder investigations for years to come. They organised the Rolan Adams Family Campaign to extend support to the families of other victims. The Wildfowler pub has since closed and is now the Christian Life Centre – a Black church.

GREENWICH

WOOLWICH

PI

14. ORVILLE BLAIR

THAMESMEAD ESTATE, SOUTH-EAST LONDON, LOCATION UNCERTAIN

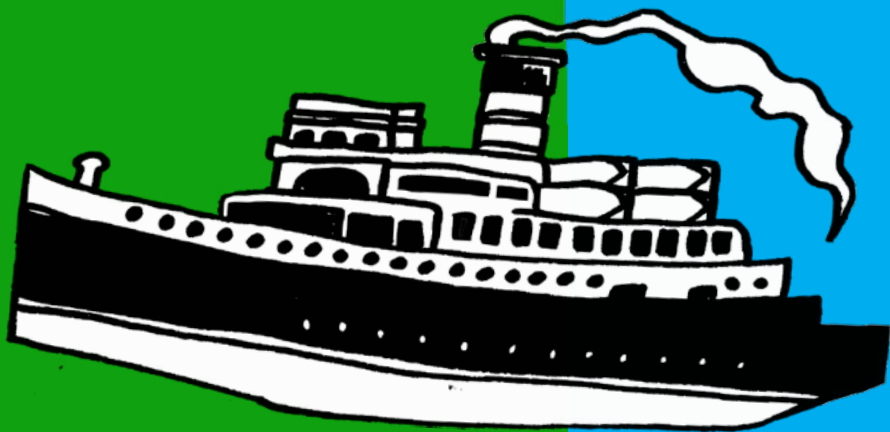
Orville Blair was murdered in May 1991 by a local white gang. Orville belonged to one of the oldest Black families on the estate. His murderer was one of his friends, Paul Snell. Snell served a three-year sentence for manslaughter.

15. STEPHEN LAWRENCE

320 WELL HALL ROAD, LONDON SE9 6UE

Greenwich-born Stephen Lawrence was murdered on 22 April 1993 by a group of white teenagers in Eltham. His death drew attention to the indifference and hostility of the Metropolitan Police towards Black victims of racist murder and their families. The inquiry that followed his death and the subsequent Macpherson report prompted public bodies, especially the police, to reconsider how they deal with visible minorities. Legislation to promote equality and diversity was also initiated as a result of the Lawrence family's tragedy.

THAMESMEAD



LUMSTEAD

MONUMENTS AND REMEMBRANCE

16. CHARLTON HOUSE JUNE BERRY TREE, OLD POND GARDEN, CHARLTON HOUSE, CHARLTON ROAD, LONDON SE7 8RE

In 2010, the Greenwich African Caribbean Organisation dedicated a juneberry tree to the 'memory of African ancestors in the borough'. A ceremony is held in their honour every August.

greenwichheritage.org/visit/visit-charlton-house-and-gardens

17. THE STEPHEN LAWRENCE REMEMBRANCE PLAQUE 320 WELL HALL ROAD, LONDON SE9 6UE

The Stephen Lawrence Remembrance Plaque can be found on Well Hall Road, where the 18-year-old was murdered in a racially motivated attack in 1993. The original memorial was donated by stonemason Gordon Newton from Maidstone. It was vandalised beyond repair and replaced in 1995. The replacement was also attacked and was substituted with the current plaque in 2019.

CHARLTON

ELTHAM

**18. STEPHEN LAWRENCE GALLERY, UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH
10 STOCKWELL STREET, LONDON SE10 9BD**

The Stephen Lawrence Gallery was founded in 2000 in the wake of the Macpherson report into the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry. The location of the gallery, at the University of Greenwich, was chosen as Stephen's mother, Doreen Lawrence (now Baroness Lawrence), had been a student there at the time of her son's murder in 1993. As well as showcasing architecture, which Stephen had hoped to study, and the digital arts, the gallery promotes diversity and hosts community-based projects.

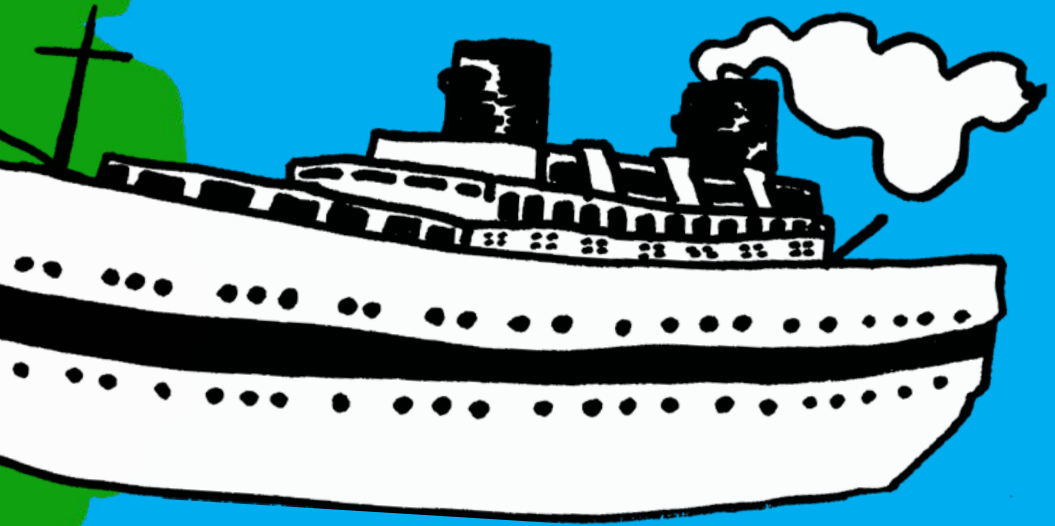
greenwichunigalleries.co.uk

**19. NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, ROYAL MUSEUMS GREENWICH
ROMNEY ROAD, LONDON SE10 9NF**

The National Maritime Museum is the only major London museum to commemorate the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. This takes place annually on 23 August. The Museum also works with the Greenwich-based Caribbean Social Forum and other community groups to host a 'Caribbean Takeover' and Windrush Day commemorations. Archives and resources relating to the Transatlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans and Windrush-era passenger ships can be accessed by joining the Museum's Caird Library.

rmg.co.uk

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE



EDUCATING AGAINST RACISM IN GREENWICH

The resources are suitable for Continuing Professional Development, curriculum development and governance in schools.

To access these resources, visit the link or scan the QR below.

bit.ly/educateagainstracism



The Great Greenwich Windrush Trail is part of Royal Museums Greenwich's Windrush Festival. The Festival has been generously supported by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, allowing Royal Museums Greenwich to take the programme out across the Royal Borough of Greenwich with a series of events across Greenwich town centre, Woolwich and Thamesmead.

As a borough, Greenwich has a rich history shaped by the Windrush Generation and its descendants. This trail, developed with heritage consultant S.I. Martin and illustrator Olivia Twist, has been created to mark the people and stories that make Greenwich the place it is today.

Illustrations © Olivia Twist

Developed in consultation with



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