Liverpool Black Community trail

The Liverpool Black community is the oldest in Europe. In the 1750s Black settlers included sailors, freed slaves and student sons of African rulers. Despite challenges, Black presence has grown and contributed to all aspects of Liverpool life.

Diverse communities are represented throughout the museum. From time to time, different communities may also feature in special exhibitions. Liverpool Jewish, Black*, and Irish Community trails are currently available.

*For the purposes of this trail, Black refers to people with African heritage.

Look out for this symbol to help you find the items on the trail.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade
Slave branding iron (replica) and sugar cone. Objects 1 and 2 in display case

By the 1780s Liverpool was considered the European capital of the transatlantic slave trade. Vast profits helped transform Liverpool into one of Britain’s most important and wealthy cities.

Liverpool ships sailed to West Africa and exchanged goods for enslaved Africans who were brutally transported across the Atlantic and sold. The slave ships then picked up sugar, cotton and tobacco grown on plantations by enslaved Africans and took these goods back to Britain. Supporters promoted racist attitudes to justify their brutal trade. Their racist legacy affects people in Liverpool today.

African Connections
Objects 1-7 in display case

When the British slave trade was abolished in 1807, palm oil, timber, ground nuts and rubber were traded instead. Liverpool was a huge imperial port. African sailors like the Kru, originally from Liberia and Sierra Leone, settled here.

The items on display here all connect Liverpool and Africa in different ways. Some were brought to Liverpool by people who settled here. Others were made in Africa and traded, or brought home by Liverpool merchants.
Working and Health
The right to work
Listen to the Painting with Claire Dove, MBE
Select number 4

In the 1980s Claire Dove faced racism in her hunt for a job. Her response? Claire co-founded the Women’s Technology and Education Centre (WTEC) to provide training for low paid and unemployed women. Today the centre, now Blackburne House, has helped around 20,000 women.

It features in this painting. Unemployment on Merseyside - campaigning for the right to work, by Mick Jones. Listen to her story and find out more here.
Finding a voice 'The Other' (film)

Discover more about Liverpool's past with this film by Derek Murray and Curtis Watt. They explore how discrimination based on religion and ethnicity has shaped the city for more than 200 years.

Timeline 'Liverpool 1981' - an edited version of a film made by Liverpool filmmaker Bea Freeman in 1984

In 1981 getting a job or moving outside of the Liverpool 8 area was hard if you were Black. Black and white residents fought back against unemployment, racism and police harassment in riots in Liverpool 1 and 8, later known as the 'Toxteth Riots'. Organisations like Merseyside Community Relations Council supported local people.

The Merseyside Map

Computer touch screens
Liverpool Transatlantic Slavery Trail - select trails icon then Slavery and Go to Trail

Where in Liverpool were ships used in the transatlantic slave trade repaired? Which Liverpool street was named after a co-founder of the Liverpool Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade? Which important building has a frieze with visual references to the “African Trade” including elephant heads, crocodiles and Black African heads? Discover this and much more here.

Finding a voice Community activism

Anthony Walker Foundation flyer and Colour Blind DVD. Object 10 in display case

In 2005 promising student Anthony Walker was murdered in Huyton, on the outskirts of Liverpool because he was Black and walking with his white girlfriend. His mum and sister, Gee and Dominique Walker, established a special Foundation to celebrate Anthony's life and challenge racism.

Colour Blind was filmed in Liverpool to be shown in local schools to spread the anti-racism message in Anthony's memory.
The Sankofa project is investigating Black social history within the collections of National Museums Liverpool, and also beyond the walls of our museums.

The stories, photographs and objects revealed through the project, which form a rich picture of Liverpool’s Black experiences, can be discovered here liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/collections/research/sankofa/

Join us every year to commemorate Slavery Remembrance Day on 23 August

Our annual commemorations enable us to remember and reflect upon the millions of lives that were stolen through enslavement. They also allow us to consider the many legacies and achievements of people of African heritage throughout the diaspora.

Events include the Walk of Remembrance, a Libation on the waterfront and the Dorothy Kuya Slavery Remembrance Lecture. For more information see liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/srd/

Find out more
For further information about the transatlantic slave trade and Liverpool’s African connections, please visit:

INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY MUSEUM

Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 4AQ
Tel: 0151 478 4499 • liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism
FREE ENTRY • Open daily 10am-5pm

World Museum

William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN
Tel: 0151 478 4393 • liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml
FREE ENTRY • Open daily 10am-5pm