



Islington's Black History story trail

Explore Islington's Black history, and celebrate artists and activists from all over the world.

This trail has been created by authors Avril Nanton and Jody Burton, with the National Literacy Trust, as a free activity alongside their new book *Black London: History, Art and Culture in Over 120 Places*.



**GET
ISLINGTON
READING**

National
Literacy
Trust

THE
READING
AGENCY

f
Islington
Reads



Welcome to our trail!

Welcome explorers, we're very excited to have you join us on our adventure!

Did you know that in Islington you can discover stories and voices from all over the world, including Ancient Egypt, Africa and India?

Have fun finding and meeting freedom fighters, singers, explorers, dancers, and other inspiring characters from Black history on our trail around the borough.

The route

Start: Angel Station, Islington High Street, London N1 8XX

End: Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

Total time: Around 45 minutes

You will need: Paper and a pencil if you want to make some notes



1 Can you guess the name of the country from the flag outside this building? This is the Eritrean Embassy which represents the country's culture and people. An embassy is where an ambassador works to build relationships between their country and the rest of the world.

- If you could choose a colour, a symbol and a person to make an Islington flag, who and what would they be?

2 This was the African National Congress HQ from the 1970s to 1990s. Here, activists worked to free political prisoners like Nelson Mandela and to fight for Black South African rights.

- South African children like playing dikebe (a kick and run ball game). What traditional games or favourite sports do you play?

3 On Donegal Street, you will spot Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School. This school has been visited twice by a lady who was married to the first African American President of the USA. Can you guess who it is?

Over 50 languages are spoken by pupils here. The First Lady said that their multilingualism and ability to adapt to different cultures means that they are 'full of courage'.

- Find the speech online. Who is an inspiring woman in your life? It could be a friend, someone from history, or an author. Draw a picture of this person or write a sentence about how they inspire you to be brave.

4 On Rodney Street, look up and see if you can spy a bird in the trees. You might see a pigeon or a sparrow, but you won't see a little yellow South American bird called Keskidee! If you walked 15 mins to the north west you would discover the Keskidee Centre where Bob Marley filmed *Is This Love?*. It was the Black community's first arts centre in the UK and popular for Afro-Caribbean art, but was destroyed in a fire in 2012.

- Can you name another Bob Marley song?
- The Keskidee Centre taught cooking, painting and literacy classes. If you were to pass on a favourite family recipe, what would it be?

5 Somewhere on the gate of The School of Oriental and African Studies, you will find the name of a singer, actor and activist. He was the first Black person to star as *Othello* in the Shakespeare play since 1860, could sing in 20 languages and played a big part in the civil rights movement. See if you can find his name!

- Choose two pieces of music you would take with you to a desert island. Maybe something that reminds you of home, or with lyrics that make you feel good.

6 Did you know there's a bit of Egypt in Islington? Amelia Edwards was an Egyptologist in the 1800s which means she studied Ancient Egyptian history and campaigned to preserve ancient monuments. She set up the Egypt Exploration Fund which discovered the most famous Egyptian Mummy and King, whose name starts with the word 'Tut'. Do you know who it was?

- Ancient Egyptians were buried with their most precious items like jewellery, food and clothing to help their journey to the afterlife. If you could pick three special items or books to go inside your tomb, what would they be?

7 Go inside the Local History Centre and find special objects which reveal stories of Islington – all the way from its Medieval roots! Here you can discover African posters from The Black-Art Gallery 1984-1988, on display until mid-November 2022.

- The gallery helped Black people see themselves in art and inspired Camden, Brixton and Battersea to do the same. What posters have you noticed in Islington lately? Are there any groups of people who aren't being represented?
- Do your grandparents or older family know any stories about Islington's past? Pick one person and write down some questions to ask them.

8 Sadler's Wells Theatre is a performing arts venue famous for dance and ballet shows. Visit the Well Seasoned online platform and watch some of the "most exciting work from Black choreographers, dancers, and Artists of Colour".

- Use six dance moves, hand motions or act out words that tell a story!
- Can you name three types of dance?





What next?



If you enjoyed this trail, check out some of the National Literacy Trust's fantastic, free [booklists](#), [titles](#) and [bookshops](#) that highlight Black and Black British inspiring figures throughout history.



More activities

For those looking for more Black history plaques and landmarks and activities on these themes:



- Discover the plaque of Andrea Levy, author of best-selling book *Small Islands*, at Twyford House on Elwood Street, N5 1EL
- Find out more about the Black history timeline and landmarks by reading *Black London: History, Art and Culture in over 120 places*
- Write a news report from the perspective of Amelia Edwards about the moment she travelled the River Nile alone. What do you see? What is the climate? What animals are there?
- Write a poem starting with the sentence of Martin Luther King's famous speech 'I have a dream'
- Visit New Beacon Books, the UK's first Black publisher on 76 Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 3EN



Booklists

- Check out our Black British booklists for children from 0-16 years old: literacytrust.org.uk/resources/black-british-book-map
- Check out the [100 Caribbean books](#) that made us, Black sci-fi and more from Islington Libraries.

