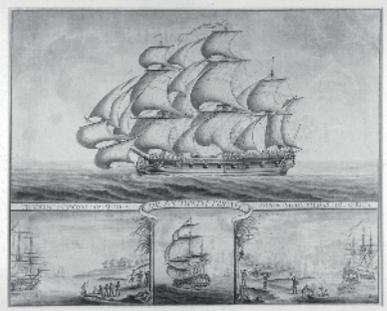




Winding its way from the waterfront, Guinea Street might seem like many other quiet roads around the docks. But this road was at the heart of the slave trade and was home to some of the most notorious slave traders.

You can see how being near the waterfront was handy for the traders to manage their business. Even the name of this street has a connection to the slave trade.

Guinea is a modern country in West Africa, but in the 18th century, it was a name used by traders for the whole of Africa's west coast. And the Guinea was also a famous gold coin that took its name from the gold brought from the Guinea coast by the Royal African Company.



Lower Guinea Street

In Queen Square, you'll have had a good opportunity to look at Bristol's harbour. It was an important port since the 13th Century for trade of all sorts, and for a while it was the second biggest port in the UK after London. But as we know, Bristol's ships didn't just transport goods, they transported slaves – men, women and children between West Africa, the Americas and Europe, with many forced to work on plantations across the Caribbean.

Conditions on the slave ships would have been awful. The ships would have been filthy and people would have been packed in like sardines - chained to the decks in cramped rows, and forced to live in their own waste, and amongst the sick and dying. They would not have all spoken the same language and would probably not have ever seen the sea before – far less an enormous ship.

You may have seen that Colston is a bit of a recurring theme in Bristol... Edward Colston was born in Bristol in 1636. He was a merchant from London who made his fortune from slavery, as one of the owners of the Royal African Company – you might remember from Guinea Street that they procured the gold for coins from West Africa.

So strong was the division of feelings about Edward Colston that his statue was pulled off its plinth by protestors in 2020 and thrown into the harbour.

End
The Georgian House Museum

Bristol Temple Meads was opened in August 1840, 33 years after the abolition of slavery in the UK. Although it was built after abolition, railways are part of the legacy of slavery – part of an industrial revolution fuelled by the riches from global trade – of which slaves formed an enormous part. Factories were hungry for the goods arriving by boat and the railways were vital to move goods inland, as well as take them to waiting ships for export to other countries.

Bristol Temple Meads takes its name from the land on which it was built. In the 12th and 13th centuries the land was owned by the Knights Templar, and Meads is an old word or meadow.

The station was built by the Great Western Railway, which linked Bristol with London. It was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the famous engineer who was also responsible for the SS Great Britain and Clifton's world renowned bridge.

Can you imagine this area as meadows?



Start
Bristol Temple Meads



It seems almost impossible to believe, but Britain was responsible for transporting over 3 million people from their African homelands to other countries far away to be slaves – unpaid and poorly treated workers. Of those 3 million, over half a million were moved on boats from Bristol. Now, whilst that was a very long time ago, we can still see remnants of this dark history in the city. And by learning about it, we can make sure not to repeat terrible mistakes of the past.