

# GREENWICH A World Heritage Site

## The Prime Meridian



The Royal Observatory is also the source of the Prime Meridian of the world, Longitude 0° 0' 0". Every place on the Earth is measured in terms of its distance east or west from this line. The line itself divides the eastern and western hemispheres of the Earth – just as the Equator divides the northern and southern hemispheres.

The Prime Meridian is defined by the position of the large 'Transit Circle' telescope in the Observatory's Meridian Building. This was built by Sir George Biddell Airy, the 7th Astronomer Royal, in 1850. The cross-hairs in

the eyepiece of the Transit Circle precisely define Longitude 0° for the world.

Since the late 19th century, the Prime Meridian at Greenwich has served as the co-ordinate base for the calculation of Greenwich Mean Time. Before this, almost every town in the world kept its own local time. There were no national or international conventions to set how time should be measured, or when the day would begin and end, or what the length of an hour might be. However, with the vast expansion of the railway and communications networks during the 1850s and 1860s, the worldwide need for an international time standard became imperative.

The Greenwich Meridian was chosen to be the Prime Meridian of the World in 1884. Forty-one delegates from 25 nations met in Washington, D.C. for the International Meridian Conference. By the end of the conference, Greenwich had won the prize of Longitude 0° by a vote of 22 in favour to 1 against (San Domingo), with two abstentions (France and Brazil). There were two main reasons for the victory:

- the USA had already chosen Greenwich as the basis for its own national time-zone system.
- at the time, 72% of the world's commerce depended on sea-charts which used Greenwich as the Prime Meridian.

The decision, essentially, was based on the argument that by naming Greenwich as Longitude 0°, it would inconvenience the least number of people. Therefore, the Prime Meridian at Greenwich became the centre of world time, and the starting point of each new day, year and millennium.

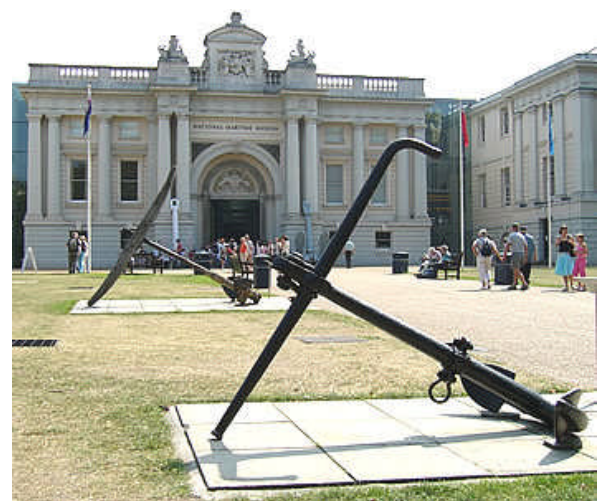
## The Queen's House

The Queen's House, Greenwich, was commissioned by Anne of Denmark, wife of James I (reigned 1603–25). James was often at the Tudor Palace of Greenwich, where the Old Royal Naval College now stands – it was as important a residence of the early Stuart dynasty as it had been for the Tudors.

Traditionally he is said to have given the manor of Greenwich to Anne in apology for having sworn at her in public, after she accidentally shot one of his favourite dogs while hunting in 1614.



## National Maritime Museum



The NMM the world's largest maritime museum!

The Maritime galleries are housed in the western of two wings built between 1807–76 to flank the 17th-century Queen's House. The Museum was opened the public by King George VI on 27 April 1937. A full modern redevelopment of the main galleries, centring on what is now the glass-roofed Neptune Court, was completed 1999.

Some of the most special items include:

- a love token from Nelson to Emma Hamilton
- a watch, frozen in time, from the 'Titanic'
- John Harrison's legendary timepieces

### A bit of Brit talk- Brit Sports!

Soccer



Bar hopping  
Standing in line



Football, Footie

Pub crawling  
Queuing

A Brit quality is Fair Play: a sense of sportsmanship and fairness, trying to be a good sport. Does not necessarily apply to football fans.

# This week's events

## Monday, February 15th

### Course Registration Day!

All students must sign and return the Course registration form handed out in the weekly meeting by the end of the day today.

**12:00 pm** **Mandatory group meeting** with a presentation by Toby from STA Travel, Russell Square branch.

## Tuesday, February 16th

**2:00 pm** **National Maritime Museum visit (Empire).** Meet Keith at the top of the escalators (street level) of Cutty Sark (for Maritime Greenwich) DLR station. DIRECTIONS: Take the Central line from Chancery Lane to Bank. At Bank change for the DLR line. Get a DLR train heading towards Lewisham and get off at the Cutty Sark stop.

**7:30 pm** **Enron, Noel Coward Theatre (Theatre).** DIRECTIONS: Take the 91 bus from Southampton Row and walk up past the National Gallery on to St. Martin's Lane -OR- take the Piccadilly line from Holborn to Leicester Square.

## Thursday, February 18th

**2:00 pm** **National Gallery Visit (British Masters).** Meet Carole outside the Sainsbury Wing entrance of the National Gallery. DIRECTIONS: Take the 91 bus from Southampton Row to Trafalgar Square -OR- take the Central line to Tottenham Court Road, change for the Northern line to Charing Cross.

## next week

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|-----------|---|
| 23 Feb    | Tate Britain - extended class (Brit Masters)<br><i>Twelfth Night</i> , Duke of York Theatre (Shakespeare) |
| 24—26 Feb | Scotland overnight trip!  |

## Looking ahead

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|-------|---|
| 1 Mar | <i>Dunsinane</i> , Hampstead Theatre (Theatre)              |
| 2 Mar | <i>The Caretaker</i> , Trafalgar Studios (Theatre)          |
| 2 Mar | Victoria & Albert Museum (Empire)                           |
| 4 Mar | Tate Britain (Brit Masters)<br>Doughty Street visit (Novel) |
| 5 Mar | Birmingham day trip   |

## Transport tip

Plan your route beforehand! Allow enough journey time to reach your destination. To find the best public transport route:  
<http://journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk/>

## Web Update

Have a look at [www.ahalondon.org.uk](http://www.ahalondon.org.uk) to see your excursion pictures. If you have great pictures you want posted on the site, please email them to [leah.aha@btconnect.com](mailto:leah.aha@btconnect.com).



## Enron

The only difference between me and the people judging me is they weren't smart enough to do what we did.

One of the most infamous scandals in financial history becomes a theatrical epic. Mixing classical tragedy with savage comedy, it follows a group of flawed men and women in a narrative of greed and loss which reviews the tumultuous 1990s and casts a new light on the financial turmoil in which the world finds itself in 2009.

Based on real life and using music, movement and video, ENRON will be directed by Headlong Theatre's Artistic Director Rupert Goold in his Royal Court directorial debut. His recent credits include the award-winning *Macbeth* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *King Lear*, *No Man's Land* and *Oliver!*

Lucy Prebble won the George Devine Award and the Critics Circle Award for Most Promising Playwright for her debut play *The Sugar Syndrome* at the Royal Court in 2004.

