

GREENWICH

Where Time Began

By: Derick McGroarty

Greenwich is viewed by thousands on river cruises but it is rewarding to spend a day, or more, in a place where the sheer concentration of art and architecture has earned Greenwich the status of a World Heritage Site.



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fascinated by the Harrison clocks, so important to complete accurate navigation. It was the achievement of an accurate sea chronometer that finally enabled sailors to work out their exact position. The prime meridian line of the world is marked out on the cobbles and by standing with one foot on either side I was able to be in both eastern and western hemispheres simultaneously.

At street level The National Maritime Museum contains the story of Britain at sea. In a modern setting, vessels from all ages are on show with galleries displaying artifacts from polar and other expeditions. In the Nelson collection a poignant item is the coat he was wearing when killed in 1805.

Opposite is The Old Royal Naval College. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The two great buildings are separated by open central gardens allowing a "grand vista" to the Queen's House. The Painted Hall where Nelson's body lay in state after the Battle of Trafalgar is open to the public.

Greenwich is not only historic buildings. The Royal Park offers glorious walks with superb views over London. Deer, introduced in 1510 still roam on an enclosed area called Wilderness. There are large markets on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Even the streets and local shops offer "atmosphere", including an exhibition of unusual elegant fans in the Fan Museum.

British Rail Trains to Greenwich run from London Bridge, Waterloo and Charing Cross. The journey takes around 20 minutes. Jubilee line underground runs to north Greenwich and Canary Wharf where you can change to Docklands Light Railway for Cutty Sark station.

For more information, please contact:
Greenwich Tourist Information
[www:greenwich.gov.uk](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk) ■



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Royal Naval
College

The first Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed

Observations in the 17th century led to the choice of Greenwich as longitude zero and later to universal recognition of Greenwich Mean Time by the 1884 conference in

Washington.

At the top of the hill The Old Royal Observatory houses the telescopes, astrolabes and sextants that enabled Flamsteed to determine time by observing the position of the stars and the moon. I was