

Quaker Trail

of Birmingham



WALK 1 From Bull Street to the Museum

Begin the Quaker Trail at the gate of Bull Street Quaker Meeting House 1.

A number of Quaker families made their homes in Birmingham in the 17th and 18th centuries. They came because, being dissenters, they were able to follow their religious faith in a non-'Charter' town. Their businesses were located in and around Bull Street: Barrows were grocers, Southalls chemists, and Cadburys traded first in linen and later in tea and cocoa.

The Meeting House was built on this site in 1702 and the original Priory Rooms were built in 1861 for Adult Schools and for lettings.

We shall see the site of the first Quaker Meeting House and burial ground later. The remains from the first burial ground were reburied in a vault on this site and during recent alterations were taken to Lodge Hill Cemetery. The burial plaque of Mary and Samuel Lloyd of Wednesbury are both, with others, now displayed in the garden. Mary Lloyd and Lucy Townsend, wife of the vicar of Wednesbury, co-founded 'The Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves'. This was a very important network of women who worked to change public opinion to end the practice of slavery.



Barrow's Store, Bull Street, 1865. [WKC/8112/543]



Old Square, by W. Westley, 1732. [WKC/811/842]

Leaving the gate behind, turn left and go through the Minorities to the Old Square 2.

The mural in Old Square depicts many of the Quakers associated with this one-time desirable residential area.

Charles Lloyd (1748-1828) lived here. His father Sampson II (1699-1779) had set up Lloyds bank with partner Taylor in 1765. There is a plaque in Dale End marking the site of Taylor and Lloyd's bank whose symbol was The Beehive. Did Equiano (1745-97) stay with the Lloyds here? He came to Birmingham in 1790 and thanked Charles and Sampson Lloyd (1728-1807) for hospitality. John Lloyd (1751-1811), a third brother, had businesses in London and Birmingham. He was also instrumental, with other Quakers and Thomas Clarkson, in sending a petition to Parliament for the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Walk on to Steelhouse Lane 3.

On Steelhouse Lane a new office block stands on the site of the Quaker Galton's workshop for assembling guns for the slave trade. Parts for the guns were produced by small firms from the Black Country towns and the Gun Quarter of Birmingham.

Frederick Douglass (1818-95), a former slave and anti-slavery campaigner, made speeches in Ebenezer Chapel in 1846, which stood where the Police Station now stands.