

# About the mission and values of the SS Great Britain Trust

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## 1. Goals, Mission, Values, Equality, Inclusion, Diversity and Global Citizenship



The SS Great Britain Trust is a dedicated education charity (No.262158) that cares for Brunel's SS Great Britain and the national Brunel Collection within a 19<sup>th</sup> century dockyard complex in Bristol. It is Accredited as a museum, and its collections are Designated as of national importance by Arts Council England. It preserves the *SS Great Britain* and two related museums, and cares for the collections and library from the Brunel Institute, in a partnership with the University of Bristol.

The Trust tells the stories of many people from history in order to enthuse people and help elucidate understanding of our past and our future. It has a particular focus on inspiring young people, using the legacy of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, with contemporary science and engineering and helping them understand not only the world today but their own potential within it.

As a registered charity the Trust raises funds, sells tickets, and operates a gift shop and catering outlets. All the funds raised are devoted solely to delivering the formal charitable objects of the Trust as legally required. These are:

### **A - To preserve the *SS Great Britain* in the Great Western Dockyard for all time - for the benefit of the public**

*“To conserve and preserve the SS Great Britain in the Great Western Dockyard for all time for the benefit of the public as a ship of historic and scientific interest and to place the same upon public display as a museum accessible for all.”*

### **B - To increase the sum of public knowledge and to promote the study of history, engineering & science, and the life and works of I.K. Brunel - for the benefit of the public**

*“To increase the sum of public knowledge and to promote the study of: maritime & industrial engineering & science; maritime archaeology & social history; the life and works of I.K. Brunel and his historic context and significance in the modern world; and to collect, conserve, and make accessible as a museum, artefacts and specimens that demonstrate and reflect a tangible link with the past and present of those subject areas, for the benefit of the public.”*

**The Trust has a vision of** *'A world inspired by the life and legacy of Brunel.'*


**The Mission of the Trust is** *'To preserve the SS Great Britain and Brunel's legacy, and to help as many people as possible enjoy discovering them.'*

## 2. The Values of the Trust

Everyone that works or volunteers at the Trust commits and adheres to its core values. These are **Surprise, Authenticity, Fascination, Excellence, and Relevance** and they are expressed in everything we do. The Trust is also committed to becoming genuinely **'accessible for all'**, and continues to change and improve its accessibility for staff, volunteers, visitors, supporters and stakeholders of all kinds, all needs, and all backgrounds equally.

**EXCELLENCE**

Everything from Brunel's SS Great Britain is built on relentless standards of quality, integrity, and research.

A black and white portrait of Isambard Brunel, wearing a top hat and a dark coat, with a pipe in his mouth.

**SURPRISE**

There's always something new to delight and inspire.

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark blue dress and brown boots, stands in a workshop or museum setting, holding a long tool.

**FASCINATION**

There's a wealth of rich content and collections to explore that encourages learning and builds knowledge.

A man in a white shirt and dark vest is smiling as he looks at a young boy who is writing on a piece of paper at a wooden desk.

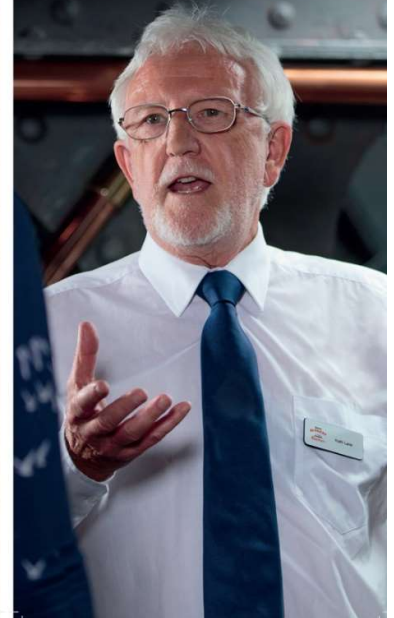
**AUTHENTICITY**

Uncover the evidence for the real stories of the ship and collections as they actually were.

A woman in a grey cardigan is looking at a box in a large archive or storage room filled with many boxes on shelves.

**RELEVANCE**

Feel part of the story, and understand the importance of the past for the present and the future.

A man with glasses, wearing a white shirt and a blue tie, is speaking and gesturing with his hands.

## Authenticity

Uncover the evidence for the real stories of the ship and collections as they actually were. The SS Great Britain Trust and the staff and volunteers of the Brunel Institute continually researches into the stories of the lives of everyone affected or involved with the *SS Great Britain* and Brunel. In that task we uphold our core value of Authenticity at all times in all communications and displays by the staff and volunteers that serve the Trust. The Trust always aims to reflect the truth as best as it can be ascertained at any one time in order to represent our understanding to the public as far as possible of what this history was actually like. The stories we tell do change as our own understanding is changed and updated by research and collaboration, but we do not shy away from telling difficult and challenging histories. The ship carried many people to and from Australia, Russia, Turkey, Malta, United States of America, Chile, Sicily, the Falkland Islands, and India. Some of those 32 global voyages carried soldiers to the war against Russia in the Crimea, and to fight in the Indian Mutiny, one of the first wars of Indian independence from Britain. We shall always display integrity and honesty in delivering authenticity to all our audiences.

## Fascination

There's always a wealth of rich content and collections to explore and delve deeper into that encourages learning and builds knowledge. The Reality is often more fascinating than the myth. New stories are added to the familiar, and our understanding changes all the time. Finding out new things and relating stories new and old to audiences of all backgrounds is alluring and attractive to the storyteller and to the listener/viewer/participant.



*The Trust's Future Brunels programme*

## Excellence

Everything from the SS Great Britain Trust is built on relentless standards of quality, integrity, and research. The Trust has built on this value inexorably, and all the staff and volunteers have contributed to bringing to the charity over 50 regional, national and international prizes for the quality of everything that the Trust delivers. See later pages for a list of prizes awarded.

## Relevance

Feel part of the story, and understand the importance of the past for the present and the future. As a contemporary charity and museum with a clear educational role and purpose the Trust strives to bring the stories it tells into a modern context. It uses the past to illuminate the future, and it uses the legacy of Brunel and his circle to inspire people of all ages in the present and future of science and engineering.

## Surprise

There's always something new to delight and inspire. Our job is often to bring out hidden and unexpected stories from the archives and records that survive in the Brunel Institute. It is always a joy to find new stories of new people that we can bring into the light of day for every visitor to examine and enjoy. The Global Stories database is available online at all times, and is continually receiving new names and stories about the hugely diverse and interesting characters that made up the passengers and crew of the ship. **So far we know of 48 different nationalities on board among some 30,000 passengers and crew.**

The **Uncovering Hidden Histories** programme is delving further into the archives to reveal the names and stories of people that may have dropped out of sight for some reason. Without fear or favour we continue to search in order to elucidate and educate. Our research is also developing our understanding of the wide network of people, particularly in Bristol and London, that worked for or collaborated with the Brunel family in the creation of their many engineering projects.

### 3. Is the *SS Great Britain* a Slave Ship?

No, she is not. The *SS Great Britain* was built specifically to carry paying passengers between Bristol and New York only, and she was created in 1843, some 30 years after the slave trade was abolished. However, she did play a major part in the colonisation of the continents of Australia and North America, not only bringing new ideas, new people, and innovations to those lands, but also inherently enabling the demeaning or deadly exploitation and oppression inherent in 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism and globalised trade.

Bristol's own history is entwined with the terrible transatlantic slave trade, and its legacy remains with us today. Many buildings and developments in Bristol were funded from the fortunes made by the owners and traders in slaves. While the *SS Great Britain*, and the Brunel family too, did not have a connection to slavery of any kind, the same is not true for some of the people who invested in the shipbuilding work for the *Great Western* and the *Great Britain* in Bristol. Some of the investors in the Great Western Steamship Company are known to have owned slaves on plantations in the West Indies, and to have been involved in human exploitation elsewhere, or at least to have benefitted financially from the government compensation paid to former slave owners on abolition. Gibbs & Bright went on to purchase and operate the *SS Great Britain* after her refit and sale in 1850. These are the people thus connected to the *SS Great Britain*, *Great Western*, and *Great Eastern* that the Trust has so far identified in its research:

#### Shareholders:

Robert Bright >[UCL record](#)

Henry Bush >[UCL record](#)

James Cunningham >[UCL record](#)

George Gibbs >[UCL record](#)

Thomas Kington >[UCL record](#)

Peter Maze the Elder >[UCL record](#)

#### Other associates:

Philip John Miles, of Miles & Harford Bank, Bristol Bank of Great Western Steamship Co. >[UCL record](#)

Jeremiah Osborne, Osborne & Ward, Bristol solicitors of Great Western Steamship Co. >[UCL record](#)

William Claxton (William was legal trustee of the GWSSCo. at its first inception) >[UCL record](#)

Robert Claxton - father of William Claxton >[UCL record](#)

William Claxton – son of Robert, a master of the Society of Merchant Venturers

Capt. Christopher Claxton RN – son of Robert. A friend and colleague of I.K. Brunel when in Bristol, and a vocal supporter of West India merchants in 1831. He was agent to James Evan Baillie (q.v.) in the 1830 'slavery election' in Bristol and circulated a petition defending the institution of slavery. Christopher was in direct conflict with Edward Protheroe Jnr q.v. standing as the anti-slavery Whig candidate.

James Evan Baillie >[UCL record](#)

#### Possible, but very little detail:

William Adair >[UCL record](#)

The Trust has recently become responsible for the **Albion Dock, a former part of the Hill/Hilhouse shipyard built in 1820**, but using investment from the shipbuilding Hilhouse family who built many ships in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for Bristol merchants trading with the East and West Indies.

### **Frederick Douglass and an insight into racial inequality and attitudes on the Great Western and the Cunard Lines**

The following is an extract from *The First Atlantic Liner: Brunel's Great Western Steamship* by Dr Helen Doe, 2017

‘The master’s role involved considerable diplomacy in a ship with passengers from different countries and those from the same country with different opinions. In Britain, the slave trade was outlawed in 1807 and slavery itself was abolished across the British Empire in 1833. In the northern states in America slavery was abolished although segregation remained.

*It was in 1841 or 1842 when the following incident occurred. Just before starting in the Great Western from Liverpool, when the agent Mr Bright was leaving the ship, I observed a black man among the passengers, and I asked Mr Bright what I should do with him, he shrugged his shoulders and turning away said ‘the best you can’.*

*The next morning early as I took my usual walk on deck, a gentleman joined me and complained about his fellow occupant. Each cabin was arranged for the accommodation of two passengers. I told him that the black man had paid the first class fare and was entitled to the full privileges. But I found another berth for the complainant and the other had the cabin to himself. The latter behaved very well and gave no cause of offence and the others soon left off annoying him. He afterwards wrote me a letter of thanks for what he was pleased to consider my courtesy.’[8]*

An alternative view was taken by a Cunard agent. In 1845 the Cunard office in Boston refused a first class cabin for the black American abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, who was forced to travel steerage. Douglass was told that other American passengers would object to his presence. Two years later the Liverpool agent took his fare but gave him a cabin by himself on the understanding that he was not to mingle with saloon passengers. The British newspapers went to town in high dudgeon and fulminated over the ‘intrusion of peculiar American racial mores on a Royal mail ship.’ Samuel Cunard responded with his personal regrets about, ‘the unpleasant circumstances respecting Mr. Douglass’ passage, but I can assure you that nothing of the kind will again take place in the steam ships with which I am connected.’[9]

#### 4. 'Accessible for All' – Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

The Trust stands in solidarity with all who support the fight against racism, injustice and inequality across the world. The Trust has an important role to play as a museum in describing and supporting an inclusive and equal society, and helping learn the lessons of the past. The Trust is an equal opportunities employer, and is committed to listen and learn from our diverse communities and cultural partners, in order to bring positive change in the workplace, in the city and especially through its global connections as a maritime museum linked with all continents by the ocean.

The Trust is committed to achieving equal access for all its visitors and staff by breaking down barriers.

- a) The SS Great Britain Trust welcomes everyone to the *SS Great Britain* and the Great Western Dockyard and is committed to remove all barriers to inclusive and full access wherever possible.
- b) In accordance with the Equality Act (2010), the SS Great Britain Trust does not discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, gender reassignment, marital status, age, religion, disability, pregnancy or sexual orientation in all areas of its work. In addition, we will work to break down barriers faced by people based on their socio-economic background.
- c) All staff will be provided with appropriate training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in fulfilling this policy.
- d) The SS Great Britain Trust will continually review and where practicable modify its access provision, both actual and planned, in respect of current statutory guidelines and models of best practice published by relevant bodies and authorities.

This equal access policy has been written with reference to The Equality Act (2010).

We believe that all decisions about people at work should be based on the individual's abilities, skills, experience, performance and behaviour and our business requirements.

- a) The Trust will always seek to employ the best person for the job. No job applicant or employee should receive less favourable treatment on any grounds not relevant to good employment practice. The Trust ensures all applications for employment are anonymised, and it applies the Rooney Rule in order to ensure that at least one person from a background that is currently underrepresented on the Trust's workforce is present on every interview shortlist.
- b) Recruitment will be conducted consistently, and in all cases will follow the Trust's recruitment procedure.
- c) The Trust is aware of its obligations with reference to the following legislation and this policy has been written in accordance with these: the Equality Act (2010), the Employment Equality Regulations and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

## 5. Prizes and Awards for the SS Great Britain Trust 2006-2019

	<b>Award or Prize</b>	<b>Awarding organisation</b>	<b>Classification</b>
2019	Permanent Exhibition of the Year (Being Brunel)	Museums + Heritage Awards for Excellence	Winner
	Portimao Museum Prize - Most Welcoming Museum in Europe	European Museum of the Year Awards	Winner
	Tourism and Leisure Award (Being Brunel)	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Awards, South West	Winner
	Best Public Service Building (Being Brunel)	Bristol CC Local Authority Building Control Awards	Winner
	Civic Development Award (Being Brunel)	Bristol Property Awards	Winner
	Great Exhibitions Prize (Being Brunel)	British Society for the History of Science	Runner Up
2018	Tourism Innovation and New Business Award (Being Brunel)	Bristol, Bath & Somerset Tourism Awards	Gold
	Large Attraction of the Year	Bristol, Bath & Somerset Tourism Awards	Silver
	Best UK & Ireland Tourism Project	British Guild of Travel Writers Awards	Winner
2016	Best LGBT Friendly Visitor Attraction	Bristol Pride Awards	Winner
2015	Large Visitor Attraction of the Year	VisitEngland Excellence Awards	Silver
2014	Tourism Activity, Sport & Experience of the Year	South West Tourism Excellence Awards	Gold
	Travellers' Choice - UK - Best Museum	TripAdvisor	9th Place
	Digital Media - Media Effectiveness (Full Steam Ahead)	Royal Television Society West of England	Winner
	Educational Initiative (Future Brunels)	Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence	Highly commended
2013	Best Game with a Purpose (Full Steam Ahead – with Aardman)	TIGA Games Industry Awards	Winner
2012	Large Visitor Attraction of the Year	South West Tourism Excellence Awards	Silver
2011	Bristol Business of the Year	Evening Post Business Awards	Winner
	Outstanding Contribution to Bristol Tourism and Hospitality	Bristol Tourism And Hospitality Awards	Winner
	Team of the Year	Bristol Tourism And Hospitality Awards	Winner
	Environmental Award (for the Brunel Institute)	Bristol Civic Society	Winner
	Marketing Campaign	Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence	Winner
	Four-Star All-category Overall Grade	Loo of the Year	Silver
	National Category Winner - Heritage	Loo of the Year	Winner

2010	Winstan Bond Trophy for Entrepreneurial Museum of the Year	Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence	Winner
	Business Tourism	EnjoyEngland Excellence Awards	Silver
	Best Heritage Venue	Rough Guide to Accessible Britain Awards	Winner
	Volunteers for Museum Learning	British Museum and Marsh Christian Trust	Regional winner
	PRide Award for Best Use of Media Relations	Chartered Institute of Public Relations (west of England)	Finalist
	PRide Award for Not-For-Profit	Chartered Institute of Public Relations (west of England)	Finalist
	Industry category – Hotels/Leisure & Travel	Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) Marketing Excellence Awards	Finalist
2009	Business Tourism (venue hire)	South West Tourism Excellence Awards	Winner
	Access for All	South West Tourism Excellence Awards	Silver
	Best Theme Park/ Visitor Attraction	British Travel Awards	Silver
	Outstanding Customer Service (Bob Evans)	EnjoyEngland Excellence Awards	Winner
2008	Outstanding Customer Service (Bob Evans)	South West Tourism Excellence Award	Winner
	Winner of Winners	South West Tourism Excellence Award	Winner
	Sandford Award	Heritage Education Trust	Winner
	Crown Estate Conservation Award (Alec French Architects)	RIBA	Winner
	Dibner Award for outstanding museum work	US Society of Technology	Winner
2007	Micheletti Prize for Best European Industrial/Technological Museum	European Museum of the Year Awards	Winner
	Large Visitor Attraction of the Year	EnjoyEngland Excellence Awards	Winner
2006	Interpret Britain & Ireland Special Commendation (inclusivity)	The Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI)	Winner
	Interpret Britain & Ireland Award	The Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI)	Winner
	Best UK Tourism Project	British Guild of Travel Writers	Highly commended
	Excellence in Access	ADAPT Trust Award	Winner
	Award for Architecture (special commendation for its access systems)	Bristol Civic Society Environmental Awards	Winner
	Large Visitor Attraction of the Year	South West Tourism Excellence Awards	Winner
	Permanent Exhibition	Museum and Heritage Awards for Excellence	Winner
	Restoration/Conservation	Museum and Heritage Awards for Excellence	Winner
UK Museum/Art Gallery of the Year	The Gulbenkian Prize (since re-named the Art Fund Prize)	Winner	