

WALKING TOUR:

# COVENT GARDEN TO WESTMINSTER



The Warriors of AniKituhwa recreate the Abbey Road EP cover, 2019.

Members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Warriors came to London in 2019 to walk in the Lord Mayor's New Years Day Parade and to retrace the footsteps of their ancestors who came to London in 1762 to reinforce treaty relationships with the British. Image credit: Beyond the Spectacle and the AHRC

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BASED ON PROF. COLL THRUSH'S INDIGENOUS LONDON: NATIVE TRAVELERS AT THE HEART OF EMPIRE (YALE UP, 2016), WITH THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION.

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**WE BEGIN THIS 2 HOUR TOUR AT COVENT GARDEN TUBE STATION. FIND LONG ACRE ON YOUR LEFT AND TURN RIGHT INTO IT. FOLLOW IT UNTIL BOW STREET, AND TURN RIGHT. CONTINUE UNTIL YOU SEE THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE ON THE RIGHT.**

1. Here we are in the heart of the old theatre district; the Royal Opera House has existed here since 1732. Many Indigenous visitors attended plays at places like the Royal; here, for example, Woollarawarre Bennelong, an Eora man from Australia, came to see a performance of Faust in 1793. Given British audiences' predilection for spectacle, Bennelong was probably as much of a show as Faustus was. Bennelong was captured by the British at Sydney Cove in 1789 with the intention that he would teach the colonists the language and customs of the Eora, who kept their distance from the settlement. Although he escaped, he did learn English, and travelled with his compatriot, Yemmerrawanne, to London in 1792. They lived at fashionable Grosvenor Square until Yemmerrawanne became sick, at which point they moved to Elham and were tended by the Sydney Colony Governor, Arthur Phillips, and his wife. Yemmerrawanne died in Elham and was buried there, but the exact location is no longer known. Bennelong also fell ill, but was tended by the surgeon George Bass on the return voyage to Australia. He recovered and taught the surgeon enough Dharuk to enable communication between the British and the Eora. It is likely that Bennelong was brought over with the hope of a Royal presentation—a means by which colonists could demonstrate their success—but it is not believed that any such presentation occurred. He did, however, tour many of the major tourist sites in London.

**CONTINUE ON BOW STREET UNTIL YOU REACH RUSSELL STREET, AND NOTICE THE THEATRE ROYAL OFF TO YOUR LEFT.**

2. The Theatre Royal in Drury Lane is one of the oldest theatres in London, and like many of the other major entertainment venues in this neighborhood, it saw Indigenous audience members. The Theatre Royal is where a near-riot broke out during the visit of the Four Iroquois (or Haudenosaunee) Kings in 1710—one of several theatres vying for their attendance during their stay, since their presence brought crowds keen to observe them. The “Kings” (they were young men, chosen either by the clan mothers or the British colonists) were not in fact all Haudenosaunee. Three of them—Onioheriago, Tejonihkarawa, and . Sagayenkwaraton, the grandfather of military leader Thayendanagea (Joseph Brant)—were Mohawk. The fourth, Etowaucum, was Mahican, an Algonquian speaking people allied to the Haudenosaunee in 1675.

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Travelling to London as a diplomatic delegation, they sought Queen Anne's assistance against French encroachment on their lands, just recompense for the vital (and often fatal) role their men had played defending British settlers in Canada. The British, in their turn, sought both to impress the Haudenosaunee with their might and power and present the image of a political alliance that legitimized their colonial claims against the French (hence calling them Kings). The Haudenosaunee were no strangers to diplomacy, having managed relationships with newcomers through the Covenant Chain, a diplomatic sequence that linked them to other peoples through the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace. In this portrait of Tejonihokarawa by Jan Verelst, you can see the foremost symbol of that covenant chain, a wampum belt, draped over his arm. It is believed that this is an exact representation of one of the belts the men presented Queen Anne, but the original's whereabouts are unknown



Theyanoguin, painted by Jan Verelst, 1710. <https://npg.si.edu/blog/closing-exhibition-four-indian-kings>

## **TURN RIGHT INTO RUSSELL STREET AND CONTINUE INTO COVENT GARDEN**

3. Two years after the Four Kings left London, there was an outbreak of gang violence in the area around Covent Garden Market. Men were assaulted, women were attacked, noses were cut, and people were put into barrels and rolled down streets. The most feared of these gangs allegedly called themselves the Mohocks, illustrating eighteenth-century ideas about savagery. That said, there is some evidence these gangs didn't exist, but were actually devices developed by satirists such as Jonathan Swift to critique certain elements of London society.

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Nevertheless, as late as the 1870s, vandalism and violence perpetrated by wealthy young men in places like Oxford was being reported in the local press as the action of “Mohawks,” so embedded did this image become. As has so often been the case, the spectacle of the Four Kings’ visit became a vehicle for Londoners to tell stories about themselves and their city.

**CROSS THROUGH COVENT GARDEN MARKET AND LEAVE VIA KING STREET AT THE OPPOSITE END ON THE RIGHT. MIDWAY DOWN KING STREET ON THE RIGHT, ABOVE THE SHOPS, NOTICE A SMALL BLUE PLAQUE.**

4. Thomas Arne, the writer of the lyrics to 'Rule Britannia!'—a virtual theme song for the Seven Years' War—lived here as an adult. As a very young child, he lived elsewhere with his upholsterer father, who hosted the Four Kings in their home. One wonders about the connection between Arne's childhood memories and his visions of empire.

**CONTINUE ON AS KING STREET BECOMES NEW ROW, NOTICING THE SCALE OF THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STREET. AT ST. MARTIN'S LANE, TURN LEFT AND PROCEED DOWN IT TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE, WHERE YOU WILL ARRIVE AT ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS.**

5. After lying in state at the Adelphi, the coffins of Liholiho and Kamamalu, King and Queen of Hawai'i, were placed in the Crypt here. The pair had travelled to Britain in 1824 to visit King George IV, where they attended many of the places we've already seen. Their meeting with the King had to be postponed as Kamamalu and then Liholiho became ill with measles. They died less than two months after their arrival, and within a week of one another. Their bodies were stored here until August 1824, when they were put on board the HMS Blonde and transported back to Hawai'i for a proper funeral and burial.

**ACROSS FROM ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, NOTICE THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND LOOK FOR THE STATUE OF A MAN ON A HORSE.**

6. The figure on the horse represents George IV. The massive columns at the front of the Gallery were scavenged from his home, the palatial Pall Mall residence built when he was still the Prince of Wales. At Carlton House, the notorious royal entertained the Mohawk warrior and leader Thayendenagea (Joseph Brant), whom we might imagine walking between the columns. Thayendenagea, you may remember, was the grandson of one of the Four Kings.



Thayendenagea/Joseph Brant, painted by George Romney, 1776

Leader of loyalist Mohawk warriors who allied with Britain during the American Revolutionary War, Thayendenagea would visit Britain twice, first in 1775 in hopes of persuading George III to address Mohawk land claims in return for their loyalty. He returned in 1785, this time to ask for assistance in defending the Haudenosaunee Confederacy from attack by the Americans. Despite supporting him, the British did not give these assurances, and earlier promises around land claims had also gone unresolved. Thayendenagea relocated his people to lands set aside for them in what is now southern Ontario, in 1784.

**LOOK FOR THE BUILDING WITH THE CANADIAN FLAGS ON THE SIDE OF THE SQUARE OPPOSITE ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS.**

7. This is the Canadian High Commission. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, officials have consistently worked against the efforts of Indigenous Canadian activists who travelled to London in search of, for example, land rights. As such, the High Commission has been—and remains—a contested space. Look for interesting temporary exhibitions here, often having to do with Indigenous arts—in 2019, for instance, they exhibited Kwakwaka'wakw artist Sonny Assu and Mohawk artist Skawennati. Many Indigenous servicemen and women worked here during World War II, as well, celebrating VE Day in Trafalgar Square.



"East Coast Salish" by Sonny Assu. Image credit, Vancouver 125 - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vancouver125/5927683933>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=77101611>

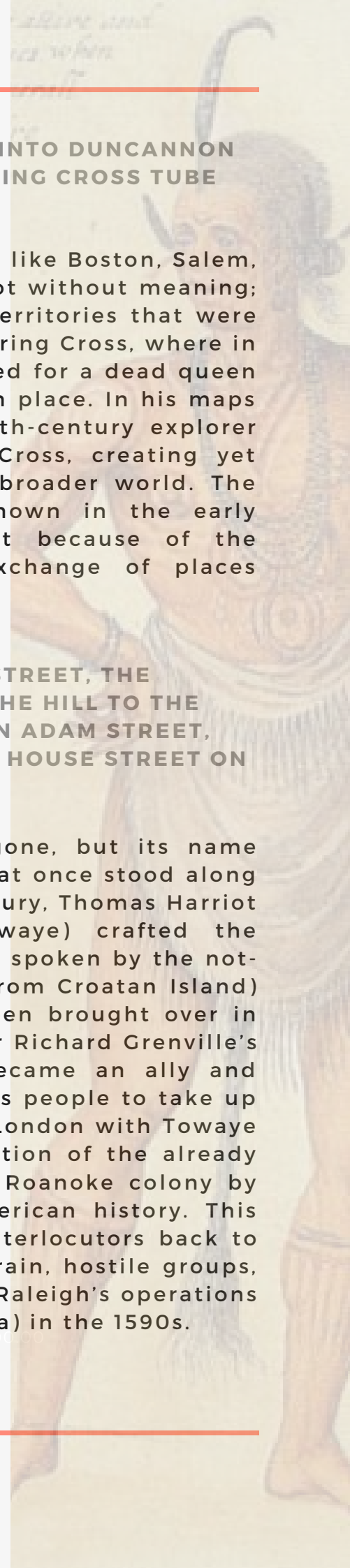
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**GO BACK TO ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS AND TURN INTO DUNCANNON STREET. WALK UNTIL YOU ARE ACROSS FROM CHARING CROSS TUBE STATION.**

8. Empire has everything to do with naming. Names like Boston, Salem, New York, Nova Scotia, and countless others are not without meaning; they are the transposition of British places onto territories that were imagined deserving of colonial transformation. Charing Cross, where in the thirteenth century a memorial cross was erected for a dead queen (Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I), was one such place. In his maps of the far north of what is now Canada, sixteenth-century explorer Martin Frobisher named one headland Charing Cross, creating yet another entanglement between London and the broader world. The area around Charing Cross, meanwhile, was known in the early seventeenth century as the Bermudas, in part because of the prevalence of tobacco houses here—another exchange of places between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ worlds.

**CARRY ON, CROSSING THE STRAND INTO VILLIERS STREET, THE (MOSTLY) PEDESTRIANIZED STREET GOING DOWN THE HILL TO THE LEFT OF CHARING CROSS (TRAIN) STATION. AT JOHN ADAM STREET, TURN LEFT AND WALK TO THE CORNER OF DURHAM HOUSE STREET ON THE LEFT.**

9. Sir Walter Raleigh's Durham House is long gone, but its name remains, along with those of other great houses that once stood along the Strand. This is where, in the late sixteenth century, Thomas Harriot and Manteo (and possible Wanchese and Towaye) crafted the Ossomocomuck orthography, the key to a language spoken by the not-entirely-willing hosts of a failed colony. Manteo (from Croatan Island) and Wanchese (from Roanoke Island) had first been brought over in 1584 and returned home to Ossomocomuck with Sir Richard Grenville's expedition to settle a colony. There, Manteo became an ally and interpreter to the colonists, while Wanchese led his people to take up arms against the English. Manteo would return to London with Towaye in 1586 to further aid in planning for the restoration of the already ailing colony. The eventual disappearance of the Roanoke colony by 1590 is one of the great mysteries of North American history. This relatively early instance of coercing Indigenous interlocutors back to England in order to secure their knowledge of terrain, hostile groups, and resources such as gold, became a mainstay of Raleigh's operations among the Miskito in Guiana (present day Venezuela) in the 1590s.



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**RETRACE YOUR STEPS TO VILLIERS STREET AND TURN LEFT. PARTWAY DOWN THE HILL, ENTER THE ARCHES SHOPPING ARCADE ON THE RIGHT AND WALK THROUGH THE ARCADE UNTIL YOU EMERGE INTO CRAVEN STREET.**

10. Craven Street is where an unnamed eleven-year-old Odawa boy attacked his captor and host upon discovering his kin's remains among a collection of human scalps. General George Townshend led the British troops during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in the Seven Years' War—just outside Quebec City. Townshend brought the eleven-year old back from the war as a captive in 1761, holding him in his Craven Street home (a few doors down from the London home of Benjamin Franklin), where he used him to entertain guests, one of whom, the elegist Thomas Gray, provides the only account of his presence there.

**TAKE CRAVEN STREET TO THE LEFT TO NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE. CROSS THE AVENUE AND ENTER WHITEHALL GARDENS, CONTINUING ON THE LENGTH OF THE GARDENS UNTIL HORSE GUARDS AVENUE, WHERE YOU SHOULD TURN RIGHT.**

11. Walking up this hill, it is impossible to miss the fact that we are passing through a landscape of raw power; for centuries, Whitehall has been the centre of British sovereignty. No. 10 Downing Street is nearby, and the edifices around us are simply the latest in a long line of buildings that housed the machinations of empire. From here until the end of the tour, we are at the true heart of English and British colonialism.

James Cook's  
landing at  
Botany Bay.  
Unknown artist,  
c. 1872



**AT THE TOP OF HORSE GUARDS AVENUE, CROSS THE STREET AND GO THROUGH THE GATE BETWEEN THE GUARD STATIONS, THEN UNDER THE ARCHWAY INTO THE PARADE GROUND.**



12. To the right, you can see the masts and rigging of the Admiralty on top of the building. The Admiralty is the entity that oversaw the explorations of Captain James Cook. From this place emanated scientific discovery, imperial competition, and doctrines such as terra nullius, which denied Indigenous presence on and title to the land. At the same time, Cook's experiences on his voyages were just as diverse as the people he encountered, ranging from diffidence to threat to peaceful trade to all-out violence, including his death at Kealakekua Bay in 1779. During his third exploratory voyage in the Pacific, Cook was killed when trying to detain Kalani'ōpu'u-a-Kaiamamao, the ruling chief of Hawai'i.

**CONTINUE ACROSS THE HORSE GUARDS PARADE GROUND TO HORSE GUARDS ROAD, AND TURN LEFT. TURN LEFT INTO GREAT GEORGE STREET AND CARRY ON INTO PARLIAMENT SQUARE. WESTMINSTER ABBEY IS TO YOUR RIGHT.**

13. Westminster Abbey was a common destination for many Indigenous travellers, who each had their own distinct responses to the imposing space full of the dead. Liholiho and Kamamalu chose not to enter it, for example, since the dead there were strangers. Bill Mai'oho, curator of the Royal Mausoleum of Hawaii, has noted that Liholiho would have considered it a desecration of the burial place of Kings to whom he had no blood connection, had he entered the Abbey. For S7aplek and his Salish counterparts in 1906, the abbey was of great interest—in particular the Stone of Scone and the shrine of Edward the Confessor. S7aplek, a Squamish leader, was one of a group of four Salish people who arrived in London in 1906. They met and befriended Tekahionwake, or E. Pauline Johnson, a Mohawk poet, who greeted them in the Chinook jargon. The group included Ispaymilt (Cowichan Nation), Basil David (Secwepmc), and Simon Pierre (Stó:lō). Wearing regalia that denoted his right to speak for the Indigenous people of British Columbia (a bright sash from the



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upper Fraser, buckskin and fox fur from the northern interior, and his own mountain-goat wool blanket), S7aplek led the delegation to meet with the Crown, thus circumventing provincial and federal authorities. Their petition—highlighting the fact that Indigenous title to most of BC had never been extinguished—was greatly embarrassing to the colonial authorities. While the King received them warmly, Canadian officials intent on undermining their trip limited the visit to only fifteen minutes; nevertheless, the men left feeling hopeful. Returning to the Abbey, for people for whom stones could be ancestors and sources of spiritual and political authority, the stone beneath the Coronation Chair would have made immediate sense and, since ancestral names could carry power across generations, the distance between Edward the Confessor and Edward VII would have seemed short indeed. Elsewhere in the Abbey, you can find the Townshend monument, its two atlantes modelled on the Odawa boy brought back in 1761 (stop 10).

**ON THE OTHER SIDE OF ABINGDON STREET, TO THE RIGHT OF BIG BEN, LOOK FOR WESTMINSTER PALACE.**

14. Westminster Palace, one of the oldest structures in London, is also the site of Indigenous London's beginnings; it is where three men, likely Inuit (although also claimed variously as Beothuk or Mik'maw), appeared in 1501 or 1502. Brought back possibly as early as 1497 and probably by Bristol merchants, two of these men were observed two or so years later, dressed as English gentlemen and conversing together in the corridors of power. While this image—and this story—is entirely arresting, it is also indicative of the fragmentary nature of the archive, as this is all we really know about them, making getting “beyond the spectacle” for some of these visitors very difficult indeed.



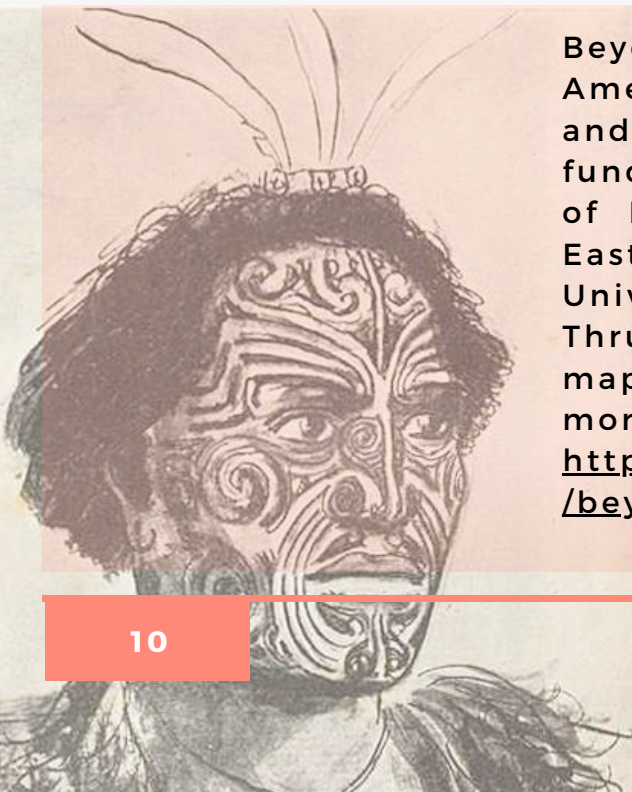
Arnaq and her baby Nutaaq, who were brought to England by Martin Frobisher in 1577  
Painted by John White, c. 1589.

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**GO PAST BIG BEN, ON YOUR RIGHT, AND PROCEED TO WESTMINSTER BRIDGE FOR A VIEW OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.**

15. The Houses of Parliament were a common destination for Indigenous visitors, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of the most notable visits included that of Hongi Hika and Waikato, which inspired something of a melee among the MPs straining to get a close look at them. Hongi Hika was an Ngāpuhi ariki, or Māori chief, who travelled to England with his nephew, Waikato, aboard the *New Zealander* in 1820. Seeking advantage over surrounding Māori communities, the two men hoped to entice miners, blacksmiths, agriculturalists, blacksmiths, and soldiers to their homeland. Like so many before them, they rubbed shoulders with aristocrats, politicians, and clergy; toured the sights; had their portraits painted; and met with George IV. Everywhere they went, including the House of Commons, their Tā moko drew considerable interest, particularly as they dressed in fashionable 19th century outfits, creating a striking contrast with the images their facial tattoos would have cast for their British onlookers. On their return home they sold gifts they had been given in order to purchase up to four hundred muskets. Exerting their power through a destabilizing series of conflicts known as the Musket Wars, the Ngāpuhi deepened their hegemony over large stretches of the North Island, but thousands of Māori died in the process. Revenge for an earlier battle in 1795, in which the Ngāpuhi had suffered heavy losses to the Ngāti Pāoa, Imperial entanglement and the trip to the heart of Empire represented an opportunity for Hongi Hika—but it was to inter-iwi affairs that he turned his attention, reminding us that while London played a clear role in Indigenous networks, it was the periphery rather than the centre.

Hongi Hika (1772–1828), S. Percy Smith, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



**Beyond the Spectacle: Native North American Presence in Britain** is an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project between the University of Kent (David Stirrup), University of East Anglia (Jacqueline Fear-Segal), and University of British Columbia (Coll Thrush). For more information, including maps, museums database, blogs, and more, visit:

<https://research.kent.ac.uk/beyondthespectacle/>

