Deptford Tales

Bawdy, bloody and dangerous: Deptford's past and present is the inspiration for a live multi-media event performed by the National Youth Theatre and local young talent.

Working with professional practitioners, heritage experts and artists, the area's young people will develop a documentary film, a film drama and three new performances.

These 'Tales' will chart the area's evolution from an Elizabethan bawdy hang out, with a visiting drunken Russian Tsar, to one of the world's most important shipbuilding sites and its current status as one of Britain's most culturally diverse boroughs.

Details of the performances are as follows:

Playwright's Tale
What happens to a brilliant young man who rebelled against God and the teachings of the church; spied for the Queen; fought like a tiger and loved like a Greek?

Killed
In a
Tavern

Maverick
Artistic
Rebellious
Licentious
Occultist
Wit
Egotist

Shipwright's Tale
A hive of industry since Henry VIII's time, Deptford is home to the shipyards where shipwrights laboured to make, from scratch, the enormous vessels that sailed pioneering voyages, sometimes lasting for years rather than months. Local populations, like Deptford's were swelled with members from across the world that became a community.
'Shipwright's Tale' will look at the house which still stands – who lived there?
Why was it ironically dubbed 'the Shipwright's Palace'?
How many families had to wave farewell to their sons, fathers and husbands from the river bank? – Not knowing when or whether they might return.

Tales from the Tide
Evidence of a forgotten past still lives underwater at London's "DeepFord".
Stories spanning centuries wash up at our feet: wheels, pipes, teeth; the voices of buried Pioneers echo, telling of Poverty, Conflict, Invention and Change.
'Tales from the Tide' explores this extraordinary part of London and Britain's heritage: the birthplace of multiculturalism, the Empire, the welfare state...
How do these tales resonate today?
What is given to Deptford?
What is taken away?

'Deptford Tales' live multi-media event takes place at:

The Shipwright's Palace
Watergate Street, Deptford,
London SE8

Friday 2 September
8.00pm
Saturday 3 September
8.00pm
Sunday 4 September
3.00pm

Performance Directors
Lukas Angelini
Patricia Doyle
Christopher Holt
William Kerley
Cathy Owen
Gbolahan Obiesisan

Production Manager
Nick Ferguson

NATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE *presents*

The Deptford Tales

NYT NATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE
Supported by Heritage Lottery Fund
SUPPORTED BY LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY WORKING FOR THE MAYOR OF LONDON
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Lewisham

Now I could be biased, and I probably am, but to my knowledge there is no other project that involves so much young talent in three major exciting mediums – performance, film and print – all with just one objective. Their aim is to bring to life Deptford's past in an imaginative, factual and entertaining way so both local and national audiences can enjoy the stories of this fascinating corner of South East London. From rhubarb to revolution, Deptford is a place of firsts. And because this extraordinary place was a major Shipbuilding Port for over two hundred years, everything about it has a sense of being 'washed up' by the tide – even today.

It's past and present is not to be completely romanticised however, as it has a bloody and dangerous reputation too. So, a perfect place then for a team of young writers, artists and historians to cut their eager teeth, and by putting their own local voices down on paper they will not just be reporting history they will be making it too.

I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled the National Youth Theatre and all its creative partners to come to Deptford and involve over three hundred young people to take part in the Deptford Tales project. Without their support, this newspaper would not exist, and the ambitions of its writers never realised. The National Youth Theatre is Britain's leading youth and arts organisation, and without ambition it too would not exist. I wish all the participants of the project the best of luck and more importantly the beginning of realising their own dreams.

Paul Roseby,
Artistic Director

THE NATIONAL YOUTH THEATRE

The National Youth Theatre (NYT) is among the UK's finest youth arts organisations and its foremost youth theatre. We offer professional calibre courses in acting and technical skills, producing an annual season of shows in London and throughout the country.

We believe in a young person's right to self-expression and encourage this right through the use of a theatrical process that aids personal, social and cultural development. Our Outreach programme takes us into the community and aims to reach young people who would not ordinarily approach us. It breaks down social barriers by showcasing their creativity and engaging the wider community as an audience.

'The Deptord Tales' is a collection of stories drawn from Deptford's rich heritage. We've imagined 'The Tales' as a book, of sorts, containing seven 'chapters' that range from the 16th century to the 20th. From our exploration of the histories of places – the Master Shipwright's Palace, St Nicholas Church, historic Docklands, the long-gone Sayes Court and Garden, wartime Deptford; and further afield in Blackheath – through visits and workshops with historians and writers, we hope these Tales offer a panoramic vision of Deptford through the ages. As a maritime centre, Deptford is England's main point of contact with the wider world. From here, adventures set sails to 'discover' and exploit new countries and continents. Slave traders imported and exported kidnapped black Africans, and set them to work in plantations of Britain's colonies. Exotic produce from those places, frrom fruits to textiles to tobaco and spices, were offloaded first at Deptford Docks. Writers – diarists and playwrights – lived and died here. Today, Deptford is one of multi-cultural London's jewels: a walk along Deptford Church Street illuminates a cultural heritage that, in fact, goes back hundreds of years – for here, black and white people have lived side-by-side since at least the 17th century. And street signs, pub signs, estate names all echo the past – from Czar Street to Marlowe House to Evelyn Street – so that we know, wherever we walk, we tread the same steps as so many great people in history did before us.

Dylan Calder, *Magazine Editor*



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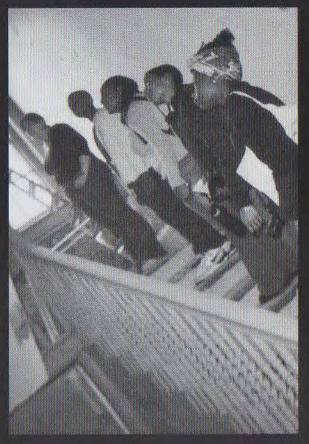
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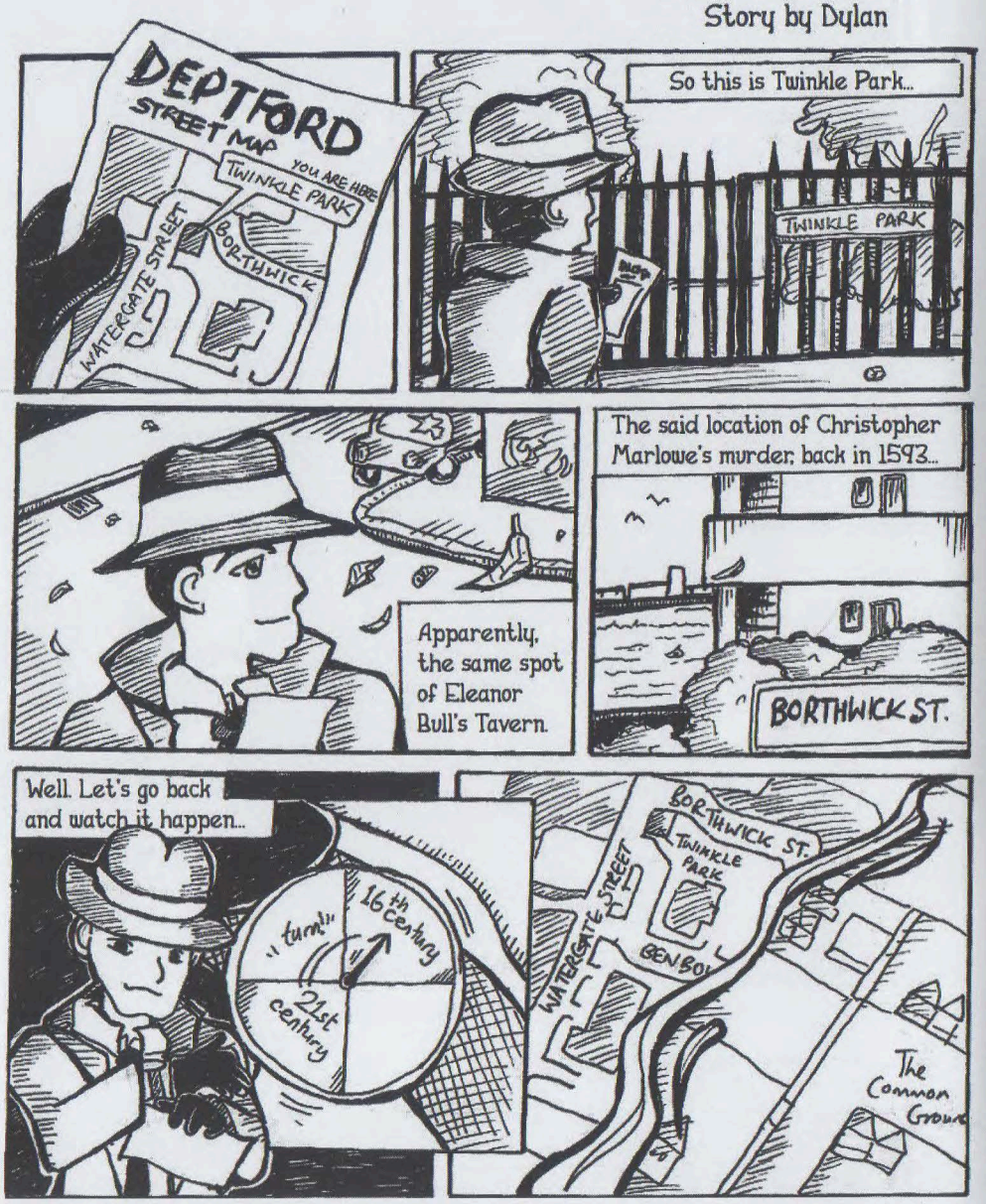


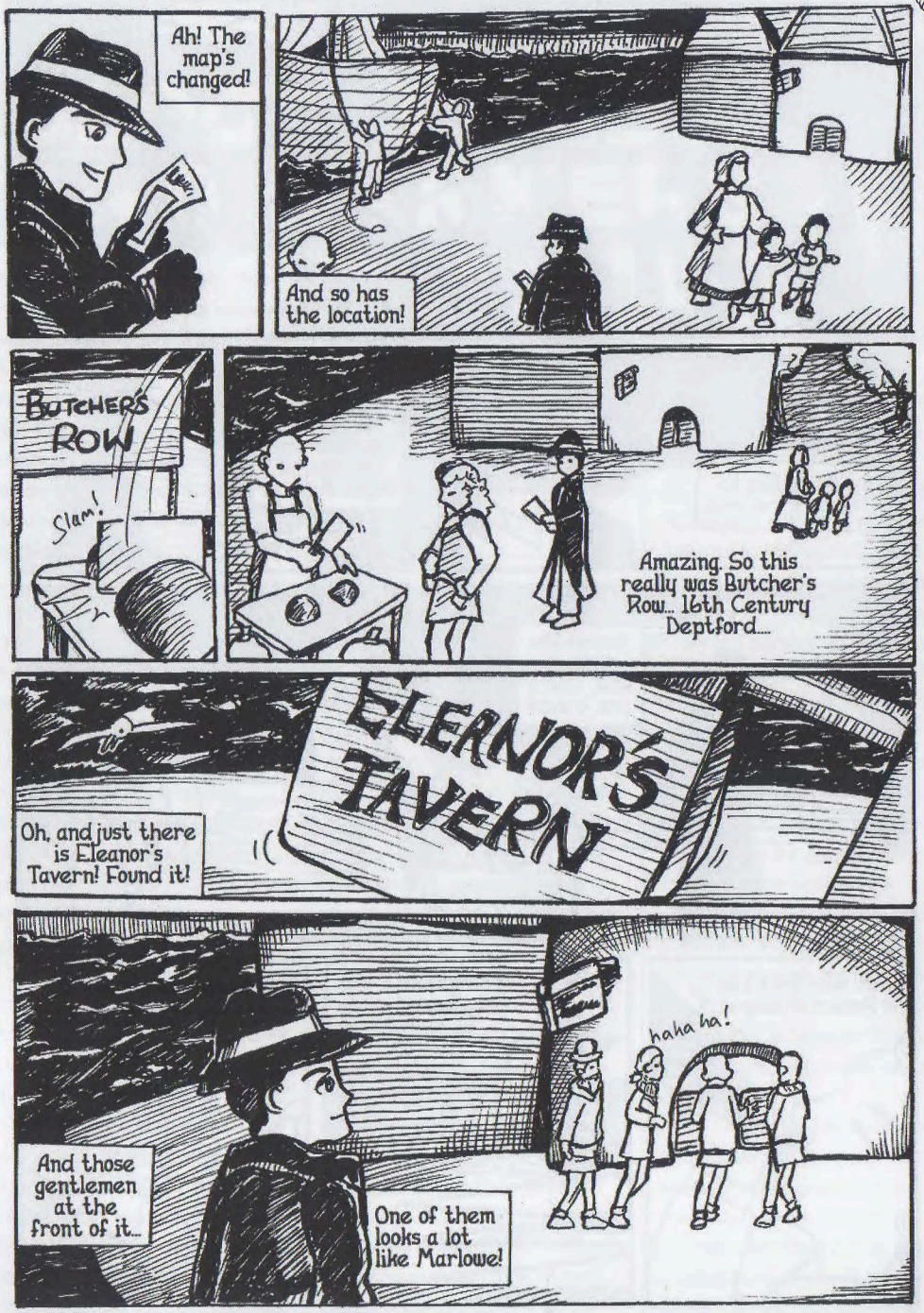
THANK YOU

The magazine team would like to thank Steve Martin (author, researcher and historian); MJ Trow (author of *Who Killed Kit Marlowe?*); Rachel Gibson and Louise Cadrington-Marshall at St Nicholas Church; William at master Shipwright's Palace; Harry at Deptford Action Group for the Elderly; Liz Leek and staff at Lewisham College; Dave Matches, Kevin Day, Gerald Dove and staff at New Technologies Team at Lewisham College; Docklands Museum and Jessie Moore; National Maritime Museum/Portcities.org for use of several images.

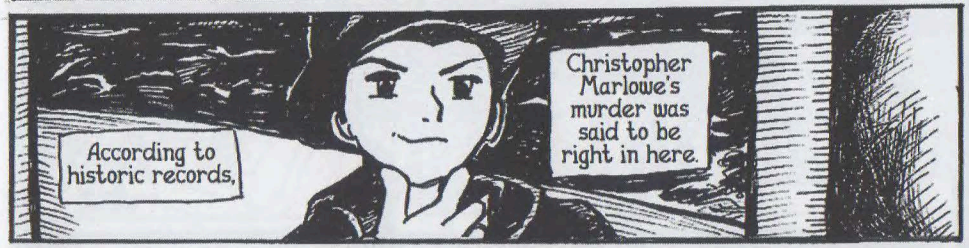
The Playwright's Tale

Art By Rhoda Villegas
Story by Dylan

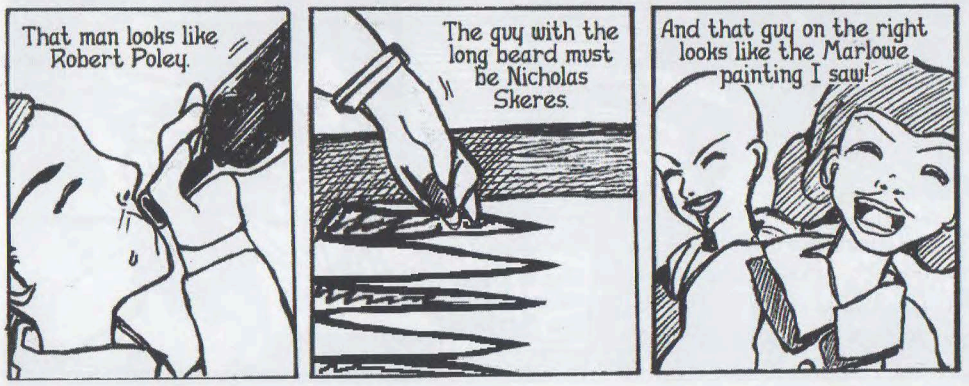












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By Tabitha McGuiness and Jeffrey Angwa

BLOOD, BONDS, AND BANKERS



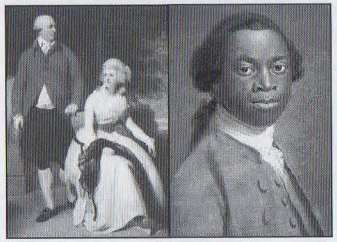
Sir Ambrose Crowley

Would *you* be happy in the knowledge that *your* money was made off the backs of thousands of suffering slaves? Well, our writers at *The Deptford Tales* have discovered the horrific, dark deeds of some of South London society's most favoured moguls.

Our research has led us to an elite golf club – England's first – known as Blackheath Gold Club. In reality, the club was a hub for Freemasons, where the common business of many members concerned the most sinister trade in Britain's past: slavery. Merchants and profiteers like William Innes, a leading West Indian merchant; and the club's founder Francis Abbatt were regular golfers there.

Blackheath is of course close to Deptford Docks, from where slave ships embarked, and at which products (such as sugar) produced by slaves are off-loaded.

It is hard to believe that the fiends in question were all respected, distinguished residents of Blackheath: renowned nobles, celebrated bankers and successful businessmen. As we discovered, their careers were not as prestigious as they appeared. And despite this, many streets and places are named after them!



Duke of Montagu / Olaudhah Equiano

Our first target is the most obvious candidate – Ambrose Crowley. Here is a man who openly rejoiced in the manufacturing of shackles which were used to imprison slaves on their long sea journeys. This man, literally, prospered on the pain and suffering of others, with no shred of guilt.

Less obvious are the banking tycoons. John Julius Angerstein, father of Lloyds Coffee House and Bank, and owner of a famed art collection that would later spawn the National Gallery. Have you ever wondered where his riches came from? His great plantation in Grenada, where thousands of slaves met their end labouring over his crops. In fact, Lloyds – 'the first bank' – was a holding place for his financial gains as well as many others who benefited from the slave trade.

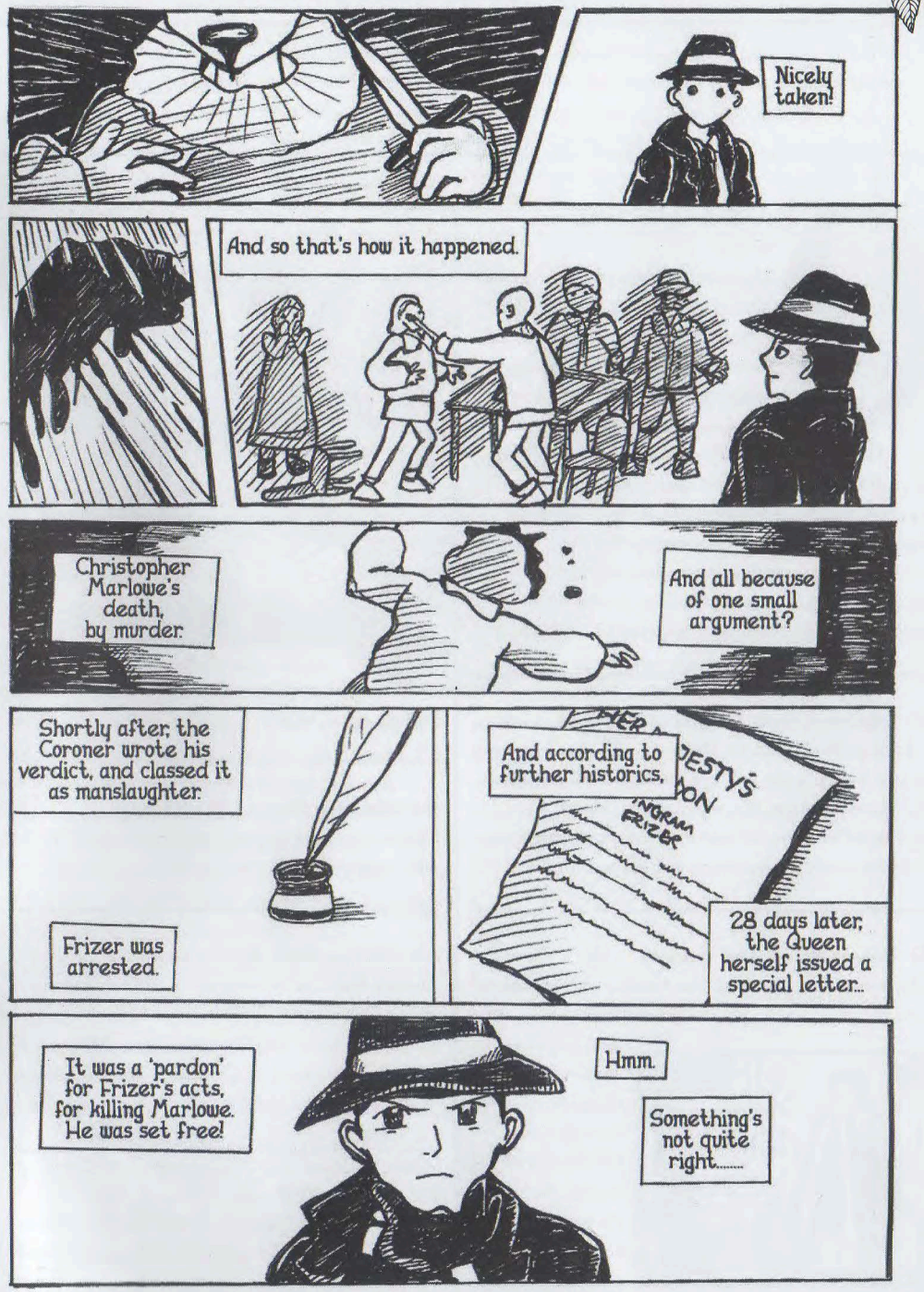
He was not the only resident to put his slaving profits towards founding banks. He is joined by the likes of the Barclay brothers of Barclays Bank; and Francis Thornhill Baring. These men were proud founders of 'blood-money banks'. Indeed, when questioned, Robert Barclay declared: "As long as the trading of Moors is legal, it is obvious that the general public is proud of its thriving impact on trade and the economy".

However, know abolitionist and freed slave, Olaudhah Equiano, strongly disagreed with this statement. He firmly believed that slavery is "against Christianity, and the spirit of goodwill amongst fellow men".

So next time you walk around Blackheath, remember you are treading on ground once owned by slavers. Take a look at our map over the page, to help you locate the many places and names associated with this vile trade.

The Playwright's Tale Part 2, continued from page 6

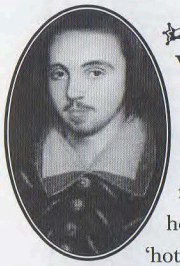




The Playwright's Tale: The Suspects

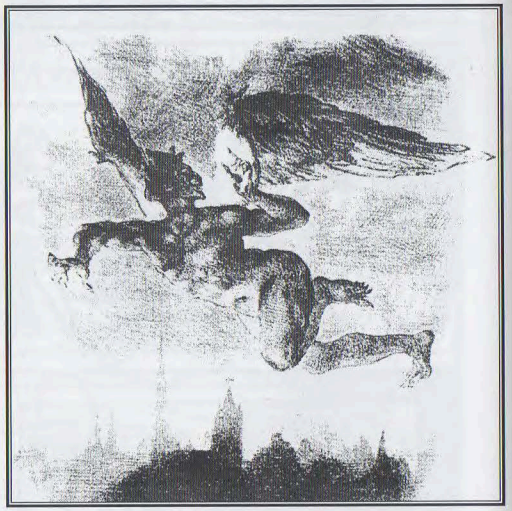
When the playwright Christopher Marlowe was murdered at Eleanor Bull's Tavern on June 1st 1593, it was recorded by the inquest as manslaughter resulting from a brawl over a bill. But was there more than meets the eye? There are hints of a conspiracy going right to the top of the government of the day.

With thanks to MJ Trow, Author of 'Who Killed Kit Marlowe?'



Christopher Marlowe: Victim

The greatest playwright of his time (though, of course, Shakespeare was to outlive him – and be better remembered), Marlowe was also a homosexual. He was a well-known 'hot-head', with a short temper – he had fought several duels. He was also a spy for Queen Elizabeth's government, and his spymaster was Lord Burghley, the Prime Minister. What might Marlowe have known that the government wanted to silence him for? It is surely no co-incidence, that two days prior to his death, Marlowe was arrested for 'heresy – after the arrest and possible torture of his friend Thomas Kydd.



Ingram Frizer: The Murderer

Ingram stabbed Marlowe above the eye, after Marlowe had cut him in a dispute over the tavern bill. He was a well-known conman. Queen Elizabeth herself pardoned Frizer for the murder, 28 days after the event. This was the fastest pardon in her reign. Why?

Robert Poley: The Witness

Poley was also a spy – and, like Marlowe, he worked for Lord Burghley. Oddly, he was present during a previous duel involving Marlowe, in Canterbury, some months before. On the day of the murder, he had in his possession confidential despatches to the Queen, nearby in Greenwich. Poley was not questioned at the inquest. Why?



Nicholas Skeres: The Witness

Skeres was also a conman and rogue – and, like Poley, was not questioned at the inquest.

Eleanor Bull: Tavern Owner

Eleanor Bull's tavern may not have been a random choice for the meeting of the four men: she was, in fact, a cousin of Lord Burghley – the Prime Minister (and also Marlowe's boss, as spymaster). Did she know of Marlowe's fate *before* the event?

The Coroner

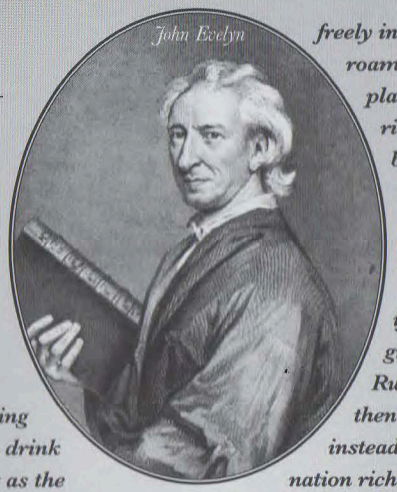
Like two of the other people involved, the coroner was *also* linked to Lord Burghley. He was a good friend of the Prime Minister.

The Emperor's Tale

Imagined by Tabitha McGuinness

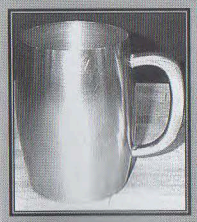
Peter the Great, the Tzar of Russia, stayed at the diarist John Evelyn's house and garden, Sayes Court in Deptford, from February 6th 1697 to April 21st 1697. During those six months he observed the craft of ship building, and took his experience back to Russia, where he created the Russian Navy. He famously rampaged with his friends while there, and trashed both house and garden. Here are his imagined diary entries – in some slightly broken English! – for the period of his historic visit.

February 6th 1697
Sayes Court, Deptford



At last, we have arrived at the great docks of Deptford, where even the King of England feels his ships can be made. To me, it seems a little disappointing. They do not seem to speak the language I spent so long learning, but some kind of grunted yelp. Like Russia, there are many drunken men, staggering in the streets; but the liquid they drink – 'ale' – is not nearly as pleasing as the warm vodka from back home. It has no strength, little taste and cannot make you happy as easy. I found a great surprise in my lodgings, though. They are nothing like the draughty halls where I live. They are warm, with roaring fires, wooden floors and luxury materials. I am sure to like staying here for a while, and maybe I can even get them to bring some vodka.

February 18h 1697
Large Park, in Greenwich



Do not be mistaken by my location, I still can be found to reside at Sayes Court! I thought that I should, perhaps, explore a little in this area, and the King was persistent that I should be allowed to roam freely in his park. It is a fine place, with roaming animals, and plenty of places to sit and take view of the river. That is where else I have been. I spend many long hours at the moment watching ship builders at work on the river, discovering why English ships are so great. I have decided that, if I learn this secret, I too can be great, like the ships, and make Russian ships to trade here. Maybe then the English will drink vodka instead of ale – it could make my nation rich! My comrades are getting restless of my busy life, saying that we no longer have fun, now we are in England. I think tonight we shall drink and partake in games together. This way, they will still know that I am a true Russian!

