



A SHIP THAT BROUGHT A CULTURAL CHANGE TO BRITAIN

Clayton Goodwin
Gleaner Writer

THE EMPIRE Windrush, which sailed into Tilbury Dock carrying 1,027 passengers and two stowaways in June 1948, 75 years ago, has come to symbolise the birth, and even the existence, of the Jamaican/West Indian community in the UK.

It wasn't exactly like that, of course. Much has become myth. West Indians had been here already for many a long year, and the arrival did not make any great impression at the time. By coincidence, I happened to be at Tilbury Dock that same month. My recently retired grandfather, a former decorator/painter there, had taken me with him

when he returned to see his former work colleagues. Everybody was talking excitedly about the arrival of the Australian cricketers led by Don Bradman (the legendary Invincibles), but they did not remark on that of the Windrush.

Even so, the impact of the Windrush's coming has been seismic. Although West Indians, Africans and Asians had settled here previously in considerable numbers as individuals, this was the first serious attempt towards engaging as a community.

The UK needed help to restore the war damage, and many West Indian servicemen, who had been given a warm wel-

come when they were here during that conflict,

looked forward to renewing that happy experience. They were in for a surprise. Attitudes had become soured through the experience of racial segregation shown by the American forces stationed here, as well as by the natural wartime wariness of treating all people who were not local as outsiders.

PREMATURE SENTIMENT

These pioneer immigrants, most, though not all, of whom were Jamaicans, did not expect to stay for long. Much like their immediate forebears at the construction of the Panama Canal and the workers in the Cuban canefields, they would return "home" when the job was done. It didn't work out that way. Oswald Denniston, a street trader who settled in Brixton, south London, was among those passengers. He symbolised the entry into a New World by taking the trade name Columbus, the "discoverer", when he sold his wares in London and the towns around about. Then a schoolboy, I can remember him working his pitch at Rochester Market. Denniston later reflected to the BBC, "Many of us thought we would come here to get a better education and stay for about five years, but then some of us have ended staying for 50 years."

It is well recorded how those new arrivals who had not made independent arrangements were put in deep shelter at Clapham South underground station. Because the nearest employment office was at Cold Harbour Lane, Brixton, a distinctive Jamaican community grew up in that neighbourhood,

where the island's influence still remains strong.

Friends and relatives soon joined them, as well as others who had been influenced by the premature sentiment of Calypsonian Lord Kitchener, another of the Windrush passengers, singing "London is the place for me". That performance was captured on news films, an indication that the coming of the Windrush was also the first time that the British media had recognised the West Indians in their midst as being a distinctive community.

It took 10 years for the realisation to sink in that most of these immigrants would not return to the islands/territories of their birth and the UK would be their new "home". Racism and antipathies manifest in the riots of 1958 made clear that not everybody in this country welcomed their presence. A new social structure was needed, both positive and protective. The West Indian Standing Conference, and similar community associations, were formed, West Indian businesses established (hairdressers/stylists, food and travel leading the way), media and communications grounded, and a new spirit of arts and entertainment created. Although Jamaica remained "back home", here was the place they were to live and bring up families.

A demographic shake-up occurred in the decade from the early-1960s. More people flowed in from the erstwhile colonies to join friends and families, and to take up new opportunities, before the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 squeezed the door shut, if not quite closed. There was also emigration from the UK as some pioneers thought they might be better off socially and economically with colleagues, compatriots and relatives in North America.

CULTURAL "NO-MAN'S LAND"

A former Jamaican high commissioner, Derick Heaven, pointed out that

urban Jamaicans tended to emigrate to the USA and Canada while those from the countryside came to the UK. For a while UK Jamaicans seemed to be caught in a cultural "no-man's land". In fact, though, they had many cultural roots which took the experience of years and struggle to fuse.

A definite UK Jamaican/West Indian identity was projected almost as soon as unrestricted entry to the country was cut off.

These few years were indeed the hopeful Season of Camelot. Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago achieved Independence in 1962, which was a source of pride to their people wherever they were living; the West Indies cricket team of 1963 led by Frank Worrell in the most sporting and harmonious series of matches in the history of the game enhanced a feeling of West Indian togetherness and the sensation of success; the emergence of Millie Small (**My Boy Lollipop**) in 1964 as the first international entertainment star from the UK-based community boosted confidence; and together with the establishment of Dyke & Dryden Ltd ("they made a million") as a profitable commercial enterprise in 1965 constituted a succession of landmarks testifying to the talents of the Windrush passengers, those who came before/after, and their children/grandchildren.

The passengers aboard the Windrush could not have imagined what their arrival had started. Immigrants, from the Caribbean, as much as elsewhere, had come and gone before; these people, though, were here to stay. The docking of one ship, hardly noticed at the time, was a small event in itself. Yet, the impact of its coming has been immeasurable. It is more than a myth; it has provided a focal point for a people's experience, and shaped the society in which we share today.

We have scarcely begun to appreciate the effect.

Contributed

West Indians arriving for a new life in Britain in the years after the Empire Windrush first set sail.



The Empire Windrush ship brought the first wave of West Indian migrants to Britain in 1948.

Patrick Vernon
Contributor

The wrongs of the Windrush scandal still need to be corrected

AS WE approach the 75th anniversary of the Empire Windrush docking at Tilbury in 1948, this gives us time to reflect on the history and the struggles of the Windrush generation to Britain.

As we now know, there's long been a black presence in Britain going back over 2,000 years. But it was after the Second World War that the British Nationality Act of 1948 created the opportunity for people from the Caribbean and other parts of the colonies, from Africa, South-East Asia, to come to Britain, that have shaped the country over the past 75 years.

However, within that contribution the Windrush generation has played a key role with contributions to the NHS, manufacturing, transport, retail, sports, art, entertainment, politics, higher education, and all aspects of public life. Despite this hostility, 'no blacks, no dogs, no Irish' mantra as part of the colour bar and later the structural racism, the Windrush generation has fought, strived and been resilient in many ways.

But it has come with consequences.

The impact on those who were classed as education sub-normal, those who lost their homes with compulsory purchase of land by councils as they did the redevelopments, the ongoing history of relationship with the police with stop and search, the over-representation in the mental health and psychiatric system and the list goes on.

It is now five years since the 'Windrush scandal' when British citizens, mostly from the Caribbean, were wrongly detained by the Home Office, deported or threatened with deportation despite having the right to live in the UK. Many lost their homes and jobs and were denied access to healthcare and benefits as a result.

The African and Caribbean community have received a lot of promises and warm words. The assurances first came from then Prime Minister Theresa May, whose policies helped create the issue in the first place. Then, former Home Secretary Priti Patel and now Suella Braverman have stated in every speech, a commitment to righting these wrongs.

Now, after years of insisting otherwise, the Home Office is slowly washing its hands of the issue, and now dropping some of the key recommendations outlined in Wendy Williams's Windrush Lessons Learned review.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The expression, "righting the wrongs", has been used a lot over the centuries, but the version that sticks in my mind came in the late 19th century, when journalist, educator and early civil rights activist Ida B. Wells wrote, in response to the lynchings of African Americans in the South during the 1890s, "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them."

The concept and notion of "righting the wrongs" is based on the principle of restorative justice where the

perpetrator admits guilt and works with the victim to co-produce solutions to resolve the injustice. Some means of "righting the wrongs", particularly in the last 50 years, have manifested in the form of "corporate social responsibility", affirmative action policies, and wider equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Race equality and further development of restorative justice had largely been off the political agenda from the late 1990s until 2018, when the Home Office launched a series of policy changes in April 2018, in an attempt to "right the wrongs" of the Windrush scandal. Since then, Theresa May, as prime minister, and the last three home secretaries have publicly apologised on several occasions for the historic treatment of the Windrush generation and other Commonwealth communities by previous governments over the past 50 years.

The Home Office has established the Windrush Taskforce, Windrush compensation scheme, temporarily suspended deportation flights, funded a national Windrush memorial statute, adopted a national Windrush Day with funding, and of course launched the Lessons Learned Review in an attempt to resolve the scandal.

The failure of the delivery of the Windrush compensation scheme was already bad. Now it's even clearer that the smoke screen of "righting the wrongs" has been used to gaslight the Windrush generation.

RECOGNISE INJUSTICES

So, we need to remove the compensation scheme from the Home Office and have an independent agency with a revamped scheme which is fair and meets all the financial and emotional needs of the Windrush generation. In addition, we need an immediate health and well-being action plan with resources



Contributed

Patrick Vernon OBE (left) is pictured with Michael Braithwaite, Glenda Caesar, Natalie Barnes and Anthony Bryan at the unveiling of a memorial plaque in honour of Windrush campaigner, Paulette Wilson.

for Windrush survivors and family members to access therapeutic services which are culturally appropriate, plus regular health checks.

The Windrush Task force

needs to immediately (create) citizenship statues rather than prolonging the agony where the burden of proof is still on Windrush first to third generation to prove

they are British. We need to review all those deportation cases and bring those from the Caribbean back to the UK with their loved ones. These are some examples of how aspects of righting the wrongs could be resolved.

It's important that these injustices are recognised; that we still fight for anti-racism and particularly anti-blackness as we approach the 75th anniversary of Windrush. But we also have to recognise the history, the legacy, as well as the contributions. We got a national Windrush Day, through the campaigning work I've done for the last, particularly several years, but also as a result of the Windrush scandal. We have to recognise that the



Some of the 482 Jamaicans emigrating to the United Kingdom read a newspaper on board the Empire Windrush, which arrived at Tilbury, UK, in 1948.



Guests leave after the service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey, London to mark the 70th anniversary of the Empire Windrush's arrival.



File Photos

Passengers on the The 'Empire Windrush' which berthed at Tilbury.

injustices are still intertwined with Windrush Day.

But more importantly, it's about recognising the wider Windrush generation community whose contributions have still not been properly recognised and annotated as part of British history. Yes, we need to make sure the national curriculum (and) media reflect the arts and culture. But more importantly, it's recognising and effectively implementing the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Let's face it, the Windrush generation played a key role in shaping anti-racist legislation from the Bristol Boycott led by Paul Stephenson and Roy Hackett; establishment of a Campaign Against Racism Discrimination (CARD); Runnymede Trust; and West Indian Standing Conference; Mangrove Nine, Race Today Collective, and Black Power movement.

The 1965, 1968, 1976 Acts of Parliament leading to the 2000 Race Relations Amendment Act, which came about as a result of the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

So, let's remind ourselves when we approach the Windrush Day and the 75th anniversary year, of the contribution, but more importantly the ongoing history of anti-racism and the struggle for social justice.

Professor Patrick Vernon OBE, Windrush campaigner, convenor of Windrush 75 network and co-author of 100 Great Black Britons.

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It's time to bring the Windrush story into the classroom

Steve Ballinger
Contributor

I SPENT an extraordinary day in Bradford recently with children and teachers at three different schools who were learning about Windrush. The big difference for these children – primary, secondary and sixth-formers – was that they were getting this history firsthand from the people who had lived it.

In partnership with educational charity The Linking Network and Windrush Generations Bradford, we'd arranged for a group of Windrush generation elders to come and share their stories in the classroom. The students were really engaged, asking lots of questions. As one of the sixth-formers said, "Seeing people who actually went through it, it puts a face to what you're learning about. It makes it real, and it makes it important to you."

I was particularly struck by what two women told us about this history. The first was a wonderful lady called Sadie, who came to the UK from Jamaica in 1955. She recalled how excited she was to hear that she would be joining her mother in England:

"I remember when my aunt

got the letter from my mum...I was so excited... bearing in mind [that as] children at school, we were never taught Caribbean history at all. We were taught British history. And we were taught 'England is the Mother Country.'"

Sitting right next to her as she said this was Kate, her adult granddaughter. I asked her how it felt hearing her grandmother's stories of coming to England. "I found it quite emotional hearing about the journey, and some of it was quite difficult to hear," she told me.

"History was one of my favourite subjects at school, but the curriculum could have been enhanced by hearing more of the stories about Windrush and people coming from the Caribbean to Britain. It would have been a really important part of connecting with my heritage."

Two women, more than half a century apart: one speaking about her schooling in the Caribbean, the other about hers in West Yorkshire. Neither of them learning about their own history and heritage.

REAL PUBLIC APPETITE

This year, 2023, is the time to change that. The 75th anniversary of **Windrush**



Lorna James, a Windrush generation elder who came to Britain from Jamaica and worked in the NHS for 45 years, shares her story with children at a Bradford primary school.

arriving in the UK is a major moment in Britain's history and will be marked with events up and down the country. It should also prompt schools all over the UK to start teaching the Windrush story to children. Inviting Windrush generation elders into the classroom is the perfect way to do it.

There is a real public

appetite for this. New research by Focaldata for British Future finds that three-quarters (74 per cent) of the British public think that children should learn about Windrush and how post-war migration shaped today's society. Those from an ethnic minority background feel this more strongly, with eight in 10 (79 per cent)

wanting the Windrush story taught in class.

The black Caribbean community feels this most strongly, with 89 per cent saying that it is important for children to learn about the Windrush. In our discussion groups around the UK researching attitudes to the Windrush anniversary, older black Caribbean participants told me that they were worried about the next generation becoming distanced from the Windrush story and not recognising its relevance to their lives today.

But children do want to learn about this at school. A separate poll by Votes for Schools asked over 35,000 children what they think about teaching Windrush. Some 76 per cent of primary-school children voted yes to the question: 'Should we celebrate the Windrush generation more?' while 78 per cent of secondary-school children voted yes to the question: 'Should we learn about the Windrush generation at school?'

HISTORY OF MIGRATION

Learning about Windrush, and the migration to Britain from across the Commonwealth over the following decades, isn't just important to children from a black Caribbean background. It should matter to everyone. Understanding this history of migration helps children to understand why the multi-ethnic society that they are joining looks as it does today.

As Azam Ali of the Linking Network says: "Teaching Windrush and other stories of migration and belonging in schools is powerful, recognising that our shared history transcends national borders. It also reminds us that many of us share stories of migration, hope, reinvention, and new beginnings, regardless of our backgrounds."

Charles Dacres of Windrush Generations Bradford, a Windrush descendent himself, agrees: "By exposing children to the stories and experiences of Caribbean migrants to the UK, we can help to break down stereotypes, promote empathy, and create a more just and equitable society."

The Linking Network has created a whole series of teaching resources for the 75th anniversary of Windrush, helping teachers to discuss this history in class, with guidance for those who invite Windrush generation elders to their school. It's available from their website, www.thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/teaching-resources/windrush/.

Ensuring that all of our children know this history would be a fitting legacy for the 75th anniversary celebrations of Windrush this year.

- Steve Ballinger is director of communications for *British Future*, a think tank and charity that helps convene the Windrush 75 network.

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Windrush 75 film, art show at Tilbury

EVEWRIGHT ARTS Foundation (EAF) will host a special four-day exhibition, film and performance show titled 'Belongings: Windrush 75' at Tilbury Port, Essex, from June 22 to 25 as part of Windrush 75 anniversary celebrations.

Belongings: Windrush 75 commemorates and celebrates the peoples of the Windrush generation and the talents of descendants who have contributed to British society over the past 75 years. It aims to be a sound-and-vision experience that offers a unique opportunity to deepen the discussion on how the presence of the Windrush generation and their descendants has shaped the recent history of Britain.

The art installation is based on the themes of migration, identity and settlement, conveyed through interviews with elders, reflections, sound, song, and visual projections. The project is made possible through a National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant.

Tilbury Port is an iconic location which has an historic significance to the black community in Britain. This artwork is a unique statement memorialising the lives of those people who came from the Caribbean who carried their British passports proudly as British citizens with hope and expectation.

They passed through this location as one of the original walkways where *SS Empire Windrush* passengers arrived in 1948. Although many arrived before 1948, those who arrived here were the



'Here I stand' at Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories.

first large post-war wave of British colonial citizens to disembark the passenger ship at Tilbury Cruise Terminal.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

On Windrush Day, June 22, EAF will lead public guided tours of Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories, an immersive visual art installation adorning one of the bridges across which passengers of the *Empire Windrush* first walked as they entered Britain in 1948. The artwork is the first site-specific art and sound created by artist EVEWRIGHT and dedicated to people of the Windrush generation. Tilbury Port will also host a range of

community activities, from live performance to workshops.

On Windrush weekend, June 24 and 25, EAF will present a curated programme of films screened in the original Grade II-listed ticket hall. The programme will include two new film works directed by artist EVEWRIGHT, including *Motherless Child* and *Here I Stand*, both exploring the resilience, identity, and determination of a generation, along with *The Movement of the People*, a dance film by Phoenix Theatre; selected films from local artists; as well as a new film created by young people from GLC schools in Tilbury and a live performance.

The presentation of film works will also include photographs, sound and words, along with images of the *Empire Windrush* original passenger list for an immersive experience with headphones throughout the weekend. A DJ set featuring the influence of music over the 75 years will be played during the Saturday evening segment.

Artist EVEWRIGHT said: "We are delighted to be hosting this important event during Windrush 75th anniversary year, as we value the importance of our community telling their stories in their own voices."

The curated programme, on both days, will run from 12 p.m. through to 6 p.m. and entry is free to all. To find out more information on travel and nearest train station, visit: www.eve-wrightarts.org.

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‘Windrush 75: The Lewisham Story’ on at Broadway Theatre

LEWISHAM COUNCIL in south London is paying tribute to the Windrush generation and their descendants, who have contributed to every aspect of life in the borough and beyond, with a series of events and activities taking place throughout June.

June 22 marks 75 years since nearly 500 passengers from the Caribbean arrived at Tilbury Docks on the **HMT Empire Windrush**. They were the first of many invited to relocate to Britain by successive governments to address labour shortages between 1948 and 1971. Many made their home in Lewisham, which today, has one of the largest Caribbean communities in the UK.

On Windrush Day, Thursday, June 22, the Council joins forces with the Windrush Foundation and the award-winning theatre group Nouveau Riche to present **‘Windrush 75: The Lewisham Story’**. This one-off inter-generational

event will take place at the Broadway Theatre in Catford and promises to be a fantastic evening of live performances featuring music, spoken word, dance, and the NHS Choir. It will be hosted by popular comedians Robbie Gee and Eddie Nestor. Show time is 7.00 p.m.

Lewisham Council has also funded a commemorative community-led programme through its Windrush 75 micro-grant scheme. This ensures that local community groups, cultural organisations, and educational institutions can deliver a range of events and activities across the borough to showcase the very best in African Caribbean music, food, art, and history.

Among the ten community events is a radio show, an inter-generational dance performance, a play reading, an outdoor library, and a day-long festival at the Migration Museum in the Lewisham Shopping Centre. All are free for residents to attend

unless otherwise noted. Full details may be found on the Lewisham Council website: www.lewisham.gov.uk/Windrush75.

A release from the Council said the Windrush 75 programme is part of Lewisham Council's year-round commitment to supporting black communities and understanding black lived experiences through its Black History Lewisham 365 programme. Further events are planned this year, details of which may be found on the Council's website.

INTER-GENERATIONAL THEME

Councillor Brenda Dacres, deputy mayor of Lewisham, is very proud of the special bond between the Windrush generation and the Council.

She said: “It’s a great honour that so many from the Windrush generation chose to settle in our borough. Their incredible contributions, as well as those of their

descendants, can be felt in every aspect of local life but also right across the country. It’s absolutely right that we acknowledge that each year on Windrush Day, and even more so this year with it being the 75th anniversary.

“My parents arrived in the UK from Jamaica in 1959 and 1961. Like many others, they responded to the call of the Motherland but were not always made to feel welcome. When I think of what that generation achieved in spite of the prejudice, it’s awe-inspiring. We don’t want their stories to be lost to the annals of time. It’s one of the reasons there’s a strong inter-generational theme to our commemorations.

“It’s important to note this is British history not just black history, so I would encourage all residents to join us in commemorating. Visit our website to find out what events and activities are taking place. There’s something for all ages.”

Bridgit Sam-Bailey, mayor-ess of Lewisham, said: “I’m part of the Windrush Generation having come to the UK from Guyana in the early 1960s. While training as a teacher, I experienced many challenges firsthand. But we were a resilient bunch. We rose above adversity, racism, and discrimination and poor living conditions to buy houses, build businesses, and build communities. We found happiness and we found joy.

“I am proud of what we achieved and feel sure that the Council’s Windrush 75 programme will ensure our legacy lives on for many more generations in Lewisham.”

Arthur Torrington, director of the Windrush Foundation, and one of the driving forces in the campaign to get recognition for the Windrush pioneers, said: “It’s important to carry on sharing the authentic stories



Arthur Torrington, director of the Windrush Foundation.



Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor of Lewisham.

and experiences of those who arrived on the **Empire Windrush** - not just in this milestone year but for future generations to come.

“We are excited to be co-producing the event at the Broadway Theatre and look forward to welcoming residents young and old to mark this special anniversary with us.”

Hosts for the evening will be the popular comic duo Robbie Gee and Eddie Nestor, who have been entertaining audiences for over two decades.

Robbie Gee said: “It’s imperative that we acknowledge those who answered the invitation from the ‘mother country’ and came to help rebuild an empire. Seventy-five years later, I’m still astonished by what they forfeited ... and the pride they showed while doing so.”

Eddie Nestor noted: “It is a huge privilege to be part of what we know will be a wonderful celebration of the immense contribution made by what has come to be known as the Windrush generation. Seventy-five years on, we plan to pay tribute and show gratitude.”

The ‘Windrush 75: The Lewisham Story’ will be on June 22 at the Broadway Theatre, Catford, London SE6 4RU, featuring performances from the NHS Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust choir, live music, spoken word, dance, and much more. Show time is 7.00 p.m.



Thank you

On the 75th anniversary of HMT Empire Windrush’s arrival to the UK, the London Borough of Lewisham wants to say a heartfelt thank you to the Windrush Generation, and to all those who came before and after from the Caribbean community, that have made Lewisham their home. Your immeasurable contributions to the borough’s prosperity, vibrancy and culture have helped make it the special place we all know and love today.

From

Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham; Cllr Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor of Lewisham; Bridgit Sam-Bailey, Mayoress of Lewisham; Lewisham’s elected representatives and its residents



Contributed
Eddie Nestor (left) and Robbie G, hosts of the ‘Windrush 75: The Lewisham Story’ at the Broadway Theatre.

Max Holloway
Contributor

YOU'VE PROBABLY seen the photograph many times. Joyous pioneers arriving on the ship *Empire Windrush*. It is one of the most instantly recognisable and iconic images of our age. A ubiquitous go-to visual for news channels, media companies and social commentators, capturing a pivotal moment in British history which determined the future destiny of our multicultural nation. But the picture holds a broader narrative, often overlooked.

Central in this image is an anchor, a small yet essential piece of maritime kit which has been a universally accepted symbol of hope for well over 2,000 years. Read any dictionary definition and you will find explicit references to 'strength', 'stability',

Windrush Anchor project is a 'touchstone for a nation'

'resilience' and 'belonging'. How many times have you heard someone say, "You are my rock"? Well, it's no coincidence that the first anchors were simple rock - something to be relied on, dependable and providing a firm basis or foundation.

Today, people adorn themselves with anchor tattoos and jewellery, in affirmation of their own spiritual journey. Personal association with anchors is clearly one of symbolic potency and huge positivity.

This provocative and powerful metaphor clearly mirrors aspirations held by

the pioneers disembarking at Tilbury Docks, and this demonstrable connectivity has prompted campaigners to seek the recovery of the world's most famous anchor. If anything tangible can define the momentous event which heralded post-World War II British multiculturalism, surely there's nothing more deeply poignant or relevant than the stern anchor of *Empire Windrush* to bring symbolic reference and invite contemporary reflection of national conscience.

This ambitious private venture, independent of government funding, is fronted by Patrick Vernon OBE, social commentator and equalities advocate. Vernon's fellow lead campaigner is renowned shipwreck hunter David Mearns. Mearns' expertise has already proved indispensable in the search for the ship which slipped beneath the waves of the Mediterranean Sea in 1954.

Empire Windrush was at that time under British ownership and certain assurances have therefore been requested by the Department of Transport. The exciting news is that *provisos* regarding operational permission could be approved in this anniversary year of Windrush75!



Ian Allen/Photographer

Rudi Page (left) CEO, Making Connections Work, and Dorothy Blaine Price-Maitland, community organiser and host and organiser of WindRush 75 Five Communities Anchor Festival in August Town, show off the community sign and Anchor during the Festival on Labour Day.

Agreement at ministerial level will then enable the charitable trust to investigate revenue streams and move forward with public consultation regarding the anchor installation in a permanent national heritage memorial.

PUBLIC MONUMENT

The national campaign has recently been boosted by the work of Rudi Page, MCW. Page is taking a life-size cardboard replica of the anchor out to local communities in the Caribbean

as part of his 'Windrush Anchor Heritage Education Programme', which champions hope, resilience and progression. It beautifully echoes core principles at the heart of the main proposal for a public monument.

Historically, monuments are erected to establish or reaffirm pre-existing and institutional agenda, but they can deliver important messages far beyond approval of achievement or individual excellence. Monuments cannot magically solve social injustice, but they speak

truth to our past, educate future generations, and are essential for the articulation of knowledge, identity and formulation of core values relating to civilisation well beyond cultural history and national conscience. The unique stern anchor of *Empire Windrush* would definitely be a notable reference point or 'beacon' for those seeking consequential social legacy.

Rarely do you find a unique item of heritage proposed as a 'touchstone' for a public monument, and it is this which truly differentiates Windrush Anchor from all other 'art-interpreted' representations. Creativity stimulates interest, invites curiosity and nurtures meaning-making; but with heritage objects, the abstract becomes solid and the remote becomes relevant...transmitting clear universal messages to inform our humanity and greater contextualise our own human experience.

The Windrush pioneers stood behind that anchor with hope and dreams. Perhaps future generations will one day also stand behind the very same anchor, in acknowledgement of their arrival and celebration of shared citizenship. So many memories just waiting to be captured and countless stories to update beyond that seminal image from 1948. A tangible piece of Windrush has never been so close, and please remember, 'you can get it if you really want'.



Contributed

The 'Empire Windrush' arriving in Tilbury in 1948 with its anchor prominent in the photograph.



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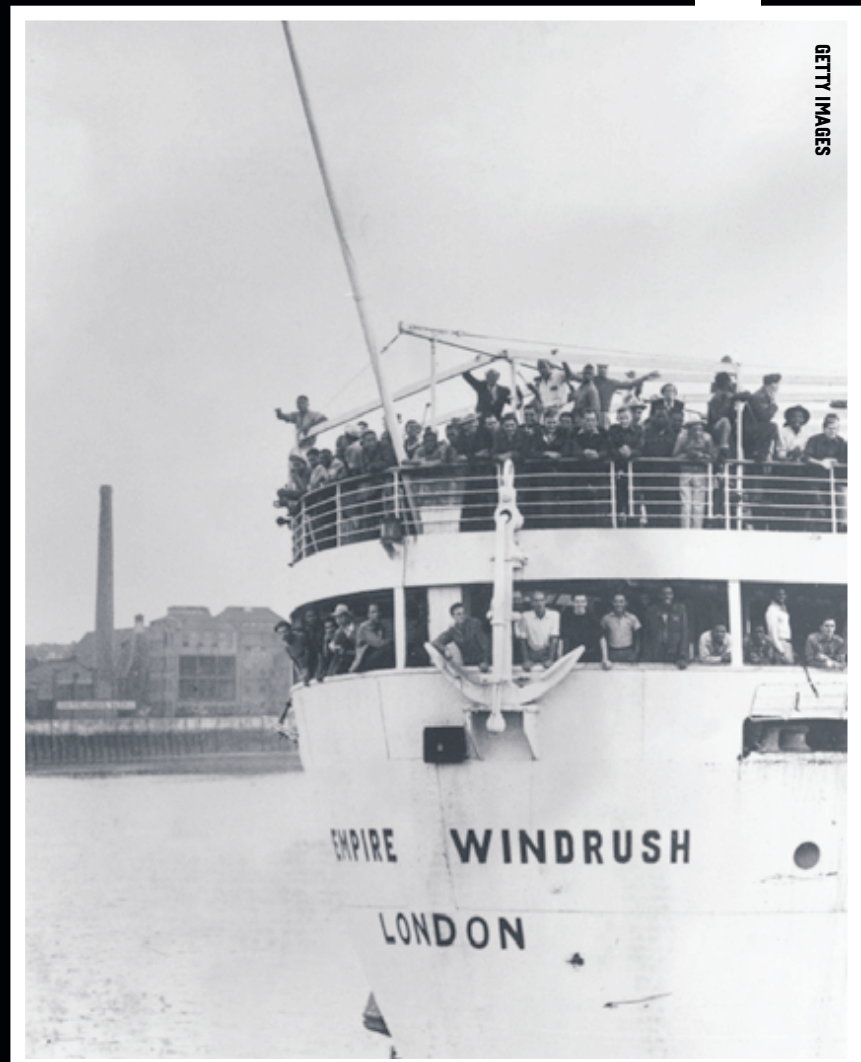
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AFRO SUPA HERO JON DANIEL



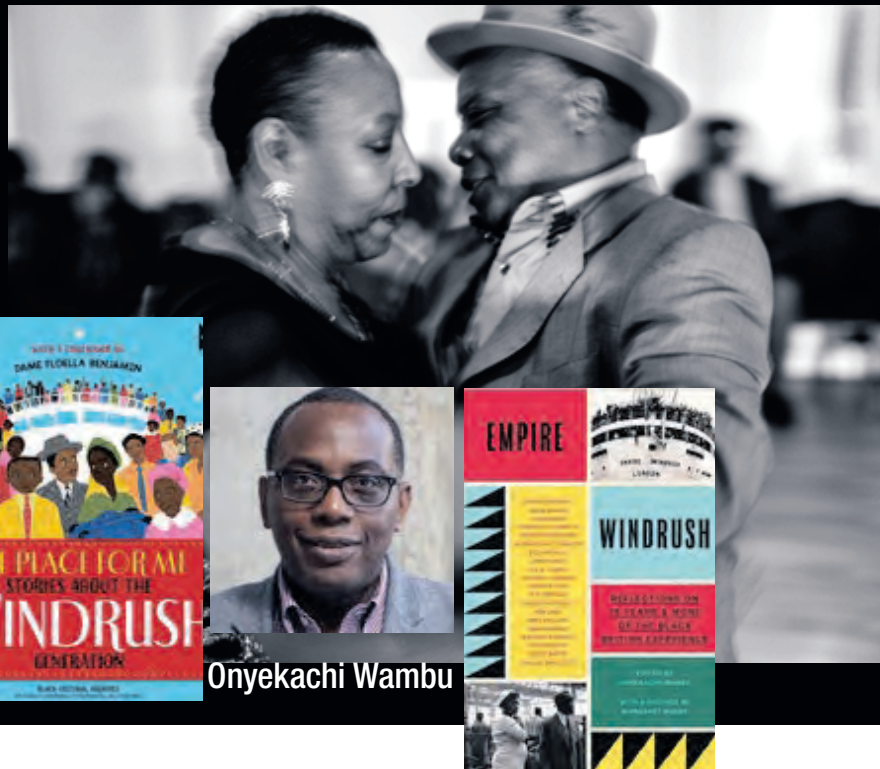
GETTY IMAGES

WINDRUSH 75



Windrush 75: Library programme 2023

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of the docking of the HMT Empire Windrush, arriving in Britain on 22 June 1948. To celebrate the lives of this generation that contributed so much, Lambeth Libraries will be celebrating throughout our libraries with a programme of events and activities for all the family.



Windrush Wriggle and Rhyme

Lambeth Libraries brings you Windrush Wriggle and Rhyme at the library! Join our librarians for songs, stories and rhymes for the under 5s. All with a Windrush theme.

Windrush Stories with authors Tony Fairweather and Alexis Keir

Wednesday 21 June, 6.30pm. Brixton Library, SW2 1JQ

Booking via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/601344125467>

After WW2 England was on its knees, so the call went out to the British Empire for volunteers to rebuild the “Mother Country”. Young men and women from different Caribbean islands were quick to respond. In this 75th Anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush and its passengers, join Tony and Alexis to discuss the importance of Windrush. Event in partnership with Spread The Word.

A celebration of the Windrush Generation with Drums and Dance

Saturday 24 June, 10.30am. Brixton Library, SW2 1JQ

Tony B will present the story of Windrush through drum and dance for all the family to join in and have fun.

The Place for Me: Stories About the Windrush Generation with the Black Cultural Archives

Monday 26 June, 10.30am. Brixton Library, SW2 1JQ

Schools Booking: Contact Caroline for more details at CGraham@lambeth.gov.uk

The Black Cultural Archive gives an interactive storytime for local schoolchildren based around the book: *The Place for Me: Stories About the Windrush Generation*.

Empire Windrush: Reflections on 75 Years & More of the Black British Experience with Onyekachi Wambu

Tuesday 27 June, 6.30pm. Brixton Library, SW2 1JQ

Booking via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/633254851307>

Onyekachi Wambu wrote one of the first books on the Windrush Generation – here he returns to the book he first published and discusses what has changed and what remains.

Jim Grover Windrush photographic Exhibition

Launching 22 June 2023. Clapham Library, SW4 7DB

Award winning photographer Jim Grover has photographed the Windrush Generation over decades and presents an exhibition of his work at Clapham Library.

How the Windrush settlers made south London their home

Arthur Torrington

Contributor

WINDRUSH DAY will be celebrated on June 22, a day on which people of Caribbean heritage commemorate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of MV Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks in Essex.

It was on this day in 1948 when 500 Caribbean men and women who had travelled on the Empire Windrush settled in the United Kingdom. They were not all Jamaicans, but from the many other British Caribbean colonies like Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados, Bermuda and others. There were also 66 Polish migrants (WWII refugees) and people of other ethnic groups on board.

Many of the migrants who landed on June 22, 1948, had nowhere to live and so the Colonial Office was there to help through Baron Baker, a WWII RAF serviceman from Jamaica. He took on the responsibility of arranging accommodation at the Clapham South Deep Shelter, London.

He said to Major Keith, of the Colonial Office, "The Air Raid Shelter had been used to house Italians and



Contributed Photos

Windrush arrivals are served food in the canteen at the Clapham South Deep Shelter in London.

German prisoners of war, and even myself, when I came to London sometimes and could not find accommodation. So why not open it for the people on the Windrush? However, he told me to get in touch with Joan Vicars (later Dame Joan Vicars), and I also got in touch with Fenner

Brockway and Marcus Lipton (MP for Brixton) at the time. "We had a long discussion about the situation. Finally I told Major Keith on June 22 1948, that I was going on board the Windrush that night. I added that if a telegram were not sent to me to say the shelter was open, then I would tell the

passengers on the ship that none of them should disembark until I got assurance.

"I went on board that night, and about an hour afterwards I received the telegram. So it was not until the last moment that a decision was made to open the shelter. That night, the shelter housed 236 Windrush settlers. The decision to open it was important in the making of Brixton as a multi-racial community. The shelter was about a mile from the centre of Brixton and most of the settlers found lodgings in the Borough. Some of them also settled in Wandsworth, Southwark and Lewisham."

Baron was asked how he felt about contributing to this: "It is a nice feeling, because when I came you could travel (all) over London and there was no black person to be seen. To find one I had to go to Aldgate East. But today, every corner I go to, I can see four and five black people. It makes me feel that what I've done in the past, and am now doing, has not been a waste of time," (40

Winters On, published by **The Voice/Lambeth Council: 1988).**

Baron Baker played an important role in helping to make the south London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham a multicultural enclave in which to live.

ICONIC SYMBOL

But this was not the first time that people of African heritage were migrating to this country. For example, about 250 years ago, a young man, known then as Gustavus Vassa, decided to make Britain his home. In 1766 he had bought his freedom from enslaver Robert King on the island of Montserrat for £40. Vassa was his slave name which was given to him by a Royal Navy captain, Michael Henry Pascal.

With Captain Pascal, Vassa served Britain in the Seven Years' War against France (1756-1763). Vassa served on the same ship that took General James Wolfe and his men in battle against French troops in Quebec in 1759. Later, under his African name, Olaudah Equiano, Vassa wrote a bestselling book called **The Interesting Narrative**, which was first published in 1789 and which went into eight other editions until 1794. He became an explorer, businessman, and an abolitionist.

His book, **The Interesting Narrative**, was published in three other European languages: Dutch (1790), German (1792) and Russian (1794), and there was also a New York (USA) edition



African abolitionist Olaudah Equiano.

(1791). The book is about his life and times in Africa, the Caribbean, North America and Britain.

Olaudah Equiano was a contemporary of Ignatius Sancho, an African, who lived as a boy in Greenwich from the 1730s and later became a butler of the Duke and Duchess of Montagu. He later became a shopkeeper and lived with his family in a property just where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is located in Whitehall, London.

He composed music, and was friend to many figures on the literature and arts scene, including the actor David Garrick. He was said to have been among the first Africans in Britain to have voted in a British election during the 1770s. He also wrote a large number of letters which were collected and published in 1782, two years after his death. Thomas Gainsborough's portrait of Sancho was done in 1768 while Montagu family members were in Bath.

Both the stories of Equiano and Sancho are included in AQA and OCR textbooks for history GCSE level (national curriculum) from 2018.

Those are just two of the thousands of African people who lived and worked in Britain hundreds of years ago, and whose contributions to the country made it a better place in which to live. Windrush Day, June 22, commemorates the lives and contributions of a new post-war generation of Caribbean people who, like Equiano and Sancho, arrived and made the UK their home.

The inclusion of the arrival of the Empire Windrush in the 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony cemented Windrush as arguably the most iconic symbol of migration and highlighting the dawn of multicultural Britain to date. Also, Windrush stories are included in AQA and OCR textbooks for history GCSE level (national curriculum) from 2018.



Windrush passengers who arrived in 1948 share accommodation at the Clapham South Deep Shelter in London.



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UK’s first prominent ‘Barrel Children’ exhibition launched for Windrush 75

LONDON: **S**TORIES of Caribbean families who were separated during the Windrush migration will be uncovered through a landmark exhibition in London.

The Black Cultural Archives (BCA) and award-winning journalist Nadine White are co-curating this artistic public exhibition that will open on Friday, June 23, in Brixton, south London, in tribute to Windrush youngsters.

Over A Barrel: Windrush Children, Tragedy and Triumph will explore the tensions and traumas of separation and reunion, isolation and belonging, as well as the cultural and social adjustments these children had to make in order to thrive in a hostile environment.

The term ‘barrel children’ refers to children who were waiting to be reunited with their Britain-bound migrant parents – either by travelling to the UK or remaining in the Caribbean.

“The Windrush story has come into painfully sharp focus in recent years, and the trailblazing pioneers who left the Caribbean are rightly lauded for their contributions to British life,” White, who works at The Independent as Britain’s first Race Correspondent, said.

“However, the stark impact of serial migration upon these families is often missing from mainstream conversations.

“This public service exhibition amplifies Windrush children’s stories of reconciliation and rediscovery within new realities while simultaneously promoting education, cultural awareness, and community cohesion.”

Archival materials from the BCA plus a compilation of five years of research into barrel children by White underpin this new multimedia exhibition.

Over A Barrel will feature archival photography, ephemera material, multimedia collages, and film. Through these materials, the exhibition will explore the various experiences, lives, and journeys of barrel children from the 1950s up until the present day. This exhibition serves as a reminder that many people who are a part of the Windrush generation came to the UK as children and experienced hostilities from their youth until adulthood.

HIDDEN ASPECT

From educationally subnormal schools to the Windrush Scandal, **Over A Barrel** reflects on the complex history of barrel children – the tragedies and the triumphs.

“Never before has the ‘Barrel Children’ phenomenon been extensively highlighted through a prominent exhibition in England,” White added.

“Members of the public will



A scene from ‘The Barrel Children: The Families Windrush Left Behind’, the new feature length-documentary by Nadine White.

benefit from learning about this hidden aspect of Windrush migration through a truly immersive, informative, and intricate experience.” Windrush is typically synonymous with adults, who are in search of new opportunities and a ‘better life.’ Often overlooked are the stories of Windrush generation children, who were taught to be seen and not heard as this is a prevalent rhetoric across the Caribbean diaspora.

The exhibition will speak to the experiences of both ‘Barrel Children, a term coined by

Jamaican academic Dr Claudette Crawford-Brown, whose only connection with their parents was through remittances from abroad, and children born in Britain to Windrush parents.

These children have suffered in the past, particularly in Britain’s education system and are continuously suffering now as adults through the injustices of the Windrush Scandal.

The exhibition aims to amplify their voices, highlight their experiences and ensure their continued struggles for dignity and civil

rights are recognised while uplifting their achievements.

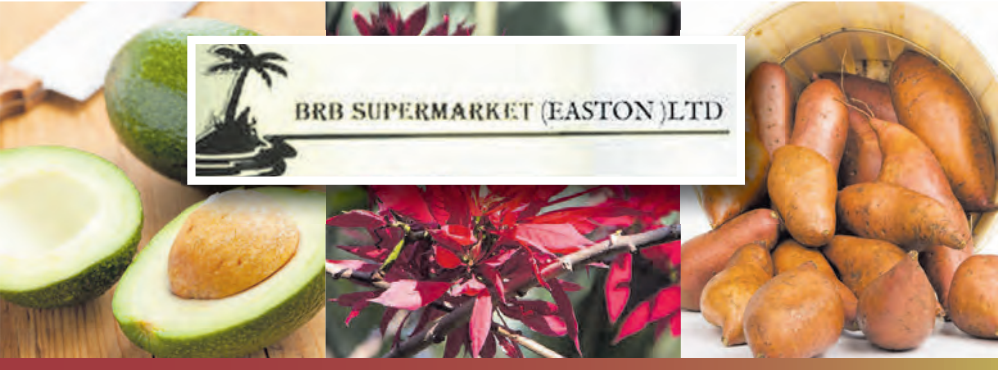
Exploring the broad chronological narrative of migration and community-building, this exhibition will also highlight the development of grass-roots action against racism in education, notably the Black Parents Movement and the African and Caribbean Education Resource, which were both key to improved outcomes for black children in state education.

As part of the exhibition programme, there will be a series of events and in-conversations, including a special screening of the new feature-length documentary **The Barrel Children: The Families Windrush Left Behind** by White.

The screening will be held at The Ritzy Cinema in Brixton on Saturday, June 24, sponsored by a roster of Caribbean-aligned brands including VP Records, Greensleeves Records, B’s Balloons, Windrush Bay, The Black, African, Asian Therapy Network, and Meme Designs.

Widely regarded as Britain’s ‘home of Black British history, the Black Cultural Archives is a black-led independent charity rooted in 40 years of educational activism.

Its mission is to collect, preserve, and celebrate the histories of people of African and Caribbean descent in the UK.



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How the BME Housing Associations gave the community its strength

One of the most enduring legacies of the Windrush years since 1948 has been the establishment of Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations in the UK which have provided high quality accommodation and support for elders from the Black and Asian communities.

Many of these housing associations were established in the 1960s because of an immediate need to provide social housing for the growing BME community in England and Wales and they have gone on to own and manage thousands of properties with a portfolio which includes general needs homes, flats and houses.

The Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership commemorates the Windrush 75 with this sponsored advertorial feature to celebrate the achievements of several the BME Housing Associations like Ujima HA, Black Roof, Crystal Housing Forum, Greater Manchester Housing, Elim Housing in Bristol, Black Churches HA along with other current BME HAs across the UK that have provided over 75,000 homes for the wider community when they were unable to get on the social housing ladder.

IMPACT

Author Elaine Bowes has kindly given Elim Housing permission to share an extract from her book 'The evolution of Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations' in which she explores the roots of Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations in the UK and their lasting impact for communities.

"In this society, Black people have to think and act with consciousness and lift themselves. I wanted to win every opportunity for Black people to have experience of decision-making and power in this society... to take our place equally alongside others at the top table. Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations gave Black people that opportunity." – Wilfred Wood in interview with the author in 2003.

In many minority communities, perhaps the most resilient and widespread community organisations have been religious bodies – churches, mosques,

synagogues, temples and gurdwaras. Some communities define their ethnicity by their religion, and therefore religion plays a vitally important role in the respective communities of Hindus, Orthodox Jews and Sikhs.

The organisation around these faiths, including regular meetings at designated places, provide not only spiritual succour but also welfare and other kinds of mutual support and assistance.

CHURCHES

"It was never simply about being separatist... but about empowerment and independence... it was important for the community to have a resource that they could call their own... to be able to provide for themselves".

In the Caribbean community, the Black-led churches have provided spiritual as well as material support for their members, families and the wider Caribbean community. Unlike other communities, however, the Black-led churches have in the main refrained from active participation in, or even general comment on political matters.

Other than the faith groups, perhaps the most successful and enduring example of organisation around particular needs are Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations.

Some of these housing asso-



A Windrush Empire ship mural in Bristol

tween criminality and homelessness) – alienated homeless black youth.

Others organised around more hidden (in that they were

originated from the local black-led Church of God of Prophecy.

The development of Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations is a landmark in the progress towards racial equality for housing associations. The earliest black associations developed as a response to unmet needs in their communities, needs that had been ignored by the statutory agencies.

NETWORKS

In the 1950s and early 1960s, "immigrants were not welcome in the public sector or in the private rent market", as Black Housing Magazine reported in 2001. It was not uncommon to see "no dogs, no Blacks, no Irish" signs in the windows of houses advertising rooms for let.

"Immigrants were not welcome in the public sector or in the private rent market."

The new arrivals, mainly from the Caribbean at that time, used their community networks to find accommodation and, because loans and mortgages were not readily available to them,

they further developed their community finance and banking systems to provide funds to their members to purchase their homes. However, these properties were frequently in very poor condition and overcrowding was prevalent. These conditions were not dissimilar to those that were experienced by others who were renting privately.

Two early examples of Black-led associations were The Coloured People's Housing Association and Trinity Housing Association, both of which operated fairly successfully until the 1974 Housing Associations Act introduced a policy of rationalisation by limiting housing association activity to particular areas or 'zones'. Zoning effectively starved small associations (including those Black associations) of funds, forcing them to remain small or disappear altogether. Conversely, zoning worked to the benefit of the larger associations, who expand and became more powerful.

Some Black associations did not survive this new regime; the Coloured Peoples Housing

Association merged into Metropolitan Housing Trust, and Trinity into East London Housing Association.

Other small and fledgling groups, including Black-led associations trying to start up and develop autonomously at this time were not encouraged to do so. They were persuaded instead to enter in to partnerships with larger established associations, which would control the technical, development aspects of housing, leaving the small association to manage the properties once they had been developed.

ASSOCIATIONS

Needless to say, such arrangements were unsatisfactory, and these associations were repeatedly denied the opportunity of developing independently of their 'partners'. As a result, only one or two Black associations were able to start up and expand autonomously during this period – Ujima Housing Association was one of them.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, "immigrants were not welcome in the public sector or in the private rent market", as Black Housing Magazine reported in 2001. It was not uncommon to see "no dogs, no Blacks, no Irish" signs in the windows of houses advertising rooms for let. "Immigrants were not welcome in the public sector or in the private rent market."

cations originated from political mobilisation and indeed one or two, such as Ujima in London and Handsworth Single Homeless in Birmingham (before their demise) and Odu Dua in London, began by aiming to meet a highly politicised need at the time (with respect to the link be-

less controversial) needs, which were chiefly cultural in nature, such as older people and large family housing. Many faith-based organisations also took on the housing needs of their communities as a major objective – Nehemiah Housing Association in Birmingham for example



The fallout from the Brixton riots of 1981 started a housing revolution as the community started to rebuild.

Social unrest led to the birth of black housing associations

Ujima Housing Association

Some of the founding members of the Black associations that developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s were highly politicised individuals who had a history of involvement in community politics.

This was a highly volatile period for Black people in Britain, and many activists were campaigning, protesting and organising to empower their communities.

Young Black men were being harassed by the police and the 'Sus' laws (which enabled the police to stop and search young men simply on suspicion that

they had committed a crime) in particular, were unjustly criminalising them.

INJUSTICES

When they came out of jail, they frequently had no jobs and no homes, as some of them had parents whose attitudes were pro-establishment, leading them to doubt that their sons had in fact suffered gross injustices. This simply exacerbated generational conflict.

The Ujima Housing Association in west London developed initially to respond to the needs of these young men. The association originated out of the work of a Black voluntary organisation called Headstart, which was committed to community development, education and empowerment for black communities. Headstart opened Black bookshops, published newsletters and organised supplementary

education for Black children.

Headstart had long identified housing as a serious issue for young Black people, and had a housing project called 'Ujima', a Swahili term meaning 'working together'. In 1978, a small

temporary and permanent housing provision for single persons and couples without children mainly of New Commonwealth origin who are homeless or in housing difficulties". Tony Soares became the co-ordinator

CBPTA turned its attentions to youth homelessness and attempted to establish a housing association to address what it considered to be a crisis

group of community workers took over its management from Headstart, and Ujima Housing Association was born.

THOUSAND HOMES

Ujima began by providing housing advice from a drop-in centre in Harrow Road, west London. Its declared aims were "to create

– later director – and with a team of voluntary workers, set about providing temporary accommodation through short-life housing and hostel accommodation.

Ujima grew to become one of the largest and most successful Black and minority ethnic housing associations in the country, with in excess of four thousand homes in its property portfolio. However, in 2008, Ujima fell

into insolvency – reportedly the first housing association ever to do so – and its properties were taken over by L&Q.

Odu Dua

Odu Dua had similar origins to Ujima. In 1978, a group of Black women in Camden began to organise to respond to the discrimination and exclusion being faced by Black women and their families. Camden Black Sisters was a political campaigning organisation, and became well respected within and outside its community for its achievements.

In 1985, Camden Black Sisters established the Camden Black Parent and Teachers Association (CBPTA), where the late John Oke (who later became a founding member and Odu Dua's first director) played an active role.

CBPTA was concerned about the rising number of African Caribbean children who were

being categorised as 'educationally subnormal', and provided advice and support to their parents and schools. It soon became aware of the link that this had to Black single homelessness.

SELF-DEFENCE

These children would often leave school after being stigmatised, have no jobs and were at greater risk of being exposed to the 'Sus' operations of the police. Because their parents did not know how to cope with this situation, they would often end up homeless. So CBPTA turned its attentions to youth homelessness and attempted to establish a housing association to address what it considered to be a crisis.

Mr Oke was employed by Ujima, which at the time was letting short-life property to single Black homeless people, and providing training and subsequent employment in construction.

SELF-DEFENCE

This provided the blueprint for the CBPTA. The association met with Camden Council, which was supportive and provided a few short-life properties to renovate and let. However, the council was loath to provide any further support until CBPTA was able to provide evidence that there was a homelessness crisis amongst Black youth in Camden.

According to Mr Oke, the team had to carry out research to prove something that everybody knew was occurring. However, on the strength of this evidence, Camden provided the group with a small office in Marsden Street, the Greater London Council gave a grant of £6,000, and it entered into an arrangement with Paddington Churches Housing Association, which provided properties for it to manage. Odu Dua Housing Association came into existence and the battle for registration with the Housing Corporation began.

The corporation wanted Odu Dua to work through Ujima, as the regulator considered that Ujima was already providing for that type of need. However, with the support of the local authority and the advent of the corporation's first Black housing association, Odu Dua achieved registration.





Members of the Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership celebrate an afternoon at the Weekly Gleaner Honour Awards last October. Among those pictures are chairman Simeon Grossett (second right), Graham Fieldhouse (right), director of Safety & Fire; Jay Patel (third left), head of Committee Development Programme, Donna Nelson (third right) senior Development Partnership Director, Patrice Boddington (second left) development online community programme, Hubert James, head of Legal service (sixth left) and Shelley Clarke (fourth left) working on the Windrush Housing Village in Jamaica.

RACISM

They identified one case where as many as 14 people shared a two-bedroom home, and this was not atypical. Pakistani and Bangladeshi families did not live in council accommodation – subsequent research commissioned by the BYO showed that they were hostile to the idea of council housing and fearful of racism and racial attacks.

According to Anil Singh (founder member and Manningham's second director), "our concerns were about family needs. There was trust on the board, trust from the community, and (eventually) the politicians and statutory agencies trusted us."

FAMILIES

At the time, Mr Ahmed was a young radical and "saw conspiracy in everything... I believed they wanted to break up our communities so we had to get good accommodation in the locality to keep our families together. I had housing problems myself at the time, I was living in overcrowded housing, but there was the politics and racism in council estates to overcome... it was bad... the worst ever".

In 1985, the BYO received a grant of £1,500 from Bradford City Council and commissioned Mr Singh to conduct research into the housing needs of Bangladeshi and Pakistani families in Bradford. The research uncovered that Bangladeshi and Pakistani families still wanted to live together in large extended family arrangements. It uncovered evidence of gross overcrowding – 772 families were living in 102 terraced two and three-bedroom homes, and 89% of those surveyed were homeowners.

SUCCESS

The results of the housing needs research was published in 1986, at the same time that the Housing Corporation announced its plans for the promotion and registration of Black-led housing organisations, and Manningham Housing Association was registered.

Mr Ahmed recalls a number of ingredients that enabled its success. "The community trusted us, if they hadn't it would never have happened," he recalls.

"They knew us and we knew all the people who we were housing. We were not partial and we convinced the community that we were fair. We built up a huge reputation for integrity. There was trust on the board, trust from the community, and (eventually) the politicians and statutory agencies trusted us."

Trust from the community made Manningham HA a success

Manningham Housing Association evolved in the late 1980s from the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation (BYO) in Bradford. This was a highly politicised group, which had organised initially to campaign for justice for the 'Bradford 12'.

The Bradford 12, as they came to be known, were 12 members of the United Black Youth League (UBYL), an anti-fascist and anti-racist self-defense organisation from Bradford, primarily made up of South Asian and Caribbean young people.

SELF-DEFENCE

In 1981, 12 of its members were "charged following allegations that they had manufactured explosives in anticipation of a large-scale attack by fascist groups". They were acquitted in June 1982 when the court decided they had acted in self-defence.

According to Shaukat Ahmed, chair of the BYO and first chair of Manningham Housing Association, "The NF [fascist political party National Front] used

to march down Manningham Lane chanting... we didn't hide our face fighting the NF or the BNP."

BYO's campaign extended to addressing the "racist rantings" of Ray Honeyford, the headmaster of Drummond middle school who had published some articles deriding multiculturalism in schools.

The BYO soon turned its attentions to the pressing and obvious needs in its local community. Bangladeshi and Pakistani families in Bradford had extreme housing needs.

They were living in small terraced houses – that were frequently in poor condition and lacking amenities – with large families.

Graham Fieldhouse, director of Safety and Fire with the awards presented to the Weekly Gleaner newspaper and Diane Abbott last October.



From riots to better housing

Race riots in Notting Hill in west London in 1958 had highlighted the poor housing endured by black families, many of whom were housed by notorious slum landlord Peter Rachman.

As local historian Eddie Adams explains, Rachman exploited the infamous "no coloureds, no Irish, no dogs" policy of many other property owners to provide run-down housing to black people at exorbitant rents. The Rachman scandal, which ended with his death in 1962, inspired the birth of housing organisations like Shelter and the Notting Hill Housing Trust.

But it was not until further race riots hit

places like Brixton, Handsworth and Toxteth in the 1980s that targeted funding was pumped into so many specifically black-led housing providers.

For those who worked in the flourishing sector in those boom years, it was an exciting time. Around 40 BME associations were set up in just a few years in the late 1980s and 1990s as development funding was made available to promote their growth.

Steve Douglas, who was chief executive of two BME associations in London before going on to head up the former housing regulator, the Housing Corpora-

tion, says: "We came out of things like Brixton and Toxteth and there was a clear demand to be in control of our own destinies. There was a real energy there – there were people who had been disadvantaged, who were young and bright and were dissatisfied with the status quo and who had ideas actually articulating those, having them listened to and being given some level of authority."

By the mid-1990s, BME housing associations had sprung up across England, catering for the needs of diverse communities including African-Caribbean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Asian.



Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership chairman Simeon Grossett meets Jamaica's Foreign Minister Mrs Kamina Johnson Smith when she hosted a community meeting in London at the Jamaica High Commission earlier this year.

The Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership (WHADP) has not only coordinated with other housing associations to provide high quality accommodation and support for persons looking for social housing, but also those who are facing homelessness.

The WHADP had previously focused on rough sleepers in a small way because the government had several initiatives to tackle rough sleeping. However, during the past 15 months, government priorities have changed, particularly in London where there have been an increasing number of rough sleepers amongst single parents.

There are over 5000 families sleeping rough each month in London. Most of these survive by moving from one accommodation to the next or sofa surfing. This presents a major issue for the children's well-being as well as the single parent.

REVIEW

The reasons why there are so many single parent families sleeping rough has been documented for years. In particular the rules have changed which forces local authorities to pay more attention on reducing emergency accommodation which has now increased by 39% in costs.

Following an intense review of the Roof programme, Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership will be transferring their rough sleeper units over to focus on temporary accommodation that can replace emergency accommodation for small families e.g. single parents and up to two children. The units would be on average 37 sq metres as opposed to 26 sq metres, the size required for rough sleepers. This allows for the costs to remain similar to that of the orig-

inal Roof project.

WHADP are planning to rename the programme "Small Family Roof", replacing emergency accommodation across London.

The London Council Review found an increased shortage of two bedrooomed units which meant that more small families had little or no option but to be placed in emergency accommodation. Seventeen local authorities have now committed themselves to work with Capital Letters, a not for profit organisation providing housing options on behalf of the London Councils.

The objective is to provide an annual increase of accommodation for families both small and large. The project will only focus on single parents and children below 16 as there is a statutory duty in law to support the well-being of children and housing. The outlined proposal will be readjusted to better fit the needs of the smaller single family units, which will save the London Councils an estimated £100m for accommodation costs over the next three years.

Many community organisations who wish to reduce homelessness amongst the community such as Homeless Link and Shelter who have a mandate to stop homelessness in the next five years, have been faced with major problems and find themselves without sufficient funds or resources. It is for these reasons why WHADP chairman Simeon Grossett and his team have undertaken a two-year outreach programme to understand what can be achieved through partnership working. The proposal will bring together a number of partners who have the commitment and the resources to substantially reduce rough sleeping and homelessness across Britain over the next five years.

Tackling homelessness through partnership



A rough sleeper on the streets in London



One of the many business trophies won by the Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership over the years.

option to be on the street with their children or asking other people for favours asking them to put up them and their children for short periods of time. Families who are rough sleeping often find themselves moving from one area to another just to get shelter and a roof over their head.

Many people in society will understand why it is important to have shelter, however few people from the working community find themselves without a roof over their head and therefore WHADP have decided to call this programme "From Rough to Roof" which highlights the num-

WHADP have decided to call this programme "From Rough to Roof" which highlights the number of single parents having to sleep rough with their children, which is unacceptable.

Windrush Housing Association and the BME housing forum are known for their ground breaking work in assisting vulnerable adults and children to access homes and housing according to their needs. They have developed a series of programmes linked to supported housing and assisted living. Most of these individuals and families accessing Windrush support have been rough sleepers in the past. The reasons for their circumstances vary substantially, from having family breakdowns, being evicted by their landlord and unfortunately, in many cases, due to mental stress/illness, which leaves them isolated.

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Maslow's Law of Hierarchy highlights several areas that have to be satisfied for humans to feel safe and comfortable. It is clearly a survival need to have a roof where you can feel safe and warm. Windrush's partnerships will bring together key organisations from both large and small housing associations that can provide accommodation. They will also work with the private sector that can assist in providing the materials and expertise to transform suitable buildings into usable accommodation that can provide a roof for 1000s of single parent families and children.

Windrush Housing Association Development Partnership, are proposing 'Family Roof', a programme which enables collective partnership action that tackles rough sleeping and homelessness by providing temporary accommodation to 2000 people over the project period 2023/25. The programme does not seek to provide long term or permanent housing as there is a clear pathway currently available through existing avenues with local authorities and housing associations at the forefront.

TRAGEDIES

The purpose behind this programme is to facilitate and tackle a gap in the marketplace which means tens of thousands of individuals who become homeless for a variety of reasons find themselves permanent rough sleepers, moving from place to place to gain shelter and a roof over their head to support their children and themselves, something which was very evident during the Covid 19 pandemic. The Mayors of London and Manchester cited rough sleeping as one of the great tragedies facing society which has left thousands of adults and children without a permanent home.

Throughout the past 20 years over 200 organisations involved in housing have raised the issue as to why the numbers of BMEs and working class families have found themselves facing higher than average homelessness across Britain and why this trend continued at a rate not seen before.

The Black Londoners Forum which was established with support from the GLA over 20 years ago had some responsibility to

monitor difficulties faced by the BME community, this included housing and homelessness amongst single parent families. BLF were able to organise several networks and groups to come together at the GLA in 2007 to build a stronger collaboration to tackle homelessness amongst the BME communities and work closely with a number of Local Authorities and Housing Associations including Build London Partnership, a BME housing project sponsored by the Mayor of London in London.

The work was funded in part by BLF, minority contractors and the London Development Agency which enabled a pilot programme to target under used properties owned by BME Landlords to be brought back into use for the purpose of reducing homelessness in the greater London region. There were a number of noted successes which gave real housing options for those people outside of the then housing provision.

Simeon Grossett and his committee members were responsible for coordinating the workshops over an eight month period and presented a template application which both groups have used drawing from joint research and shared information in order to tackle two of the major target groups – these were younger families and single parents in the Greater London region.

The projects that have been put forward have used data and evidence obtained from GLA and the London Council over the past three years and the current application is to encourage more groups to provide temporary housing to small families, to be made available through a partnership arrangement.