

LEEDS CITY COLLEGE WINDRUSH COMMUNITY PROJECT



**NEAR
NEIGHBOURS**
BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER


Ministry of Housing
Communities &
Local Government


LEEDS CITY
COLLEGE

luminare
EDUCATION GROUP

A special thanks to: The Dance Studio, Leeds; The New Testament Church of God; Rose's Caribbean Kitchen; Cllr Ellen Taylor and the Pantasy Steel Band

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project brought together students from the Leeds City College ESOL and Support Engagement Programmes with the Leeds Caribbean community through creative workshops, an intergenerational letter writing campaign and a celebratory event on October 1st, 2021 to mark the start of Black History Month.

This compilation of letters of photos, collected over the course of the project, has been created as a learning resource and a thank you to our contributors for sharing their personal stories of life in Leeds in the Windrush era.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



**4 Foreword: A message from
Councillor Eileen Taylor**



6 Letter from Esmine Hendricks

10 Letter from Hensel

14 Letter from Robert Chrouch



18 Letter from George Crawford

**22 Thank you from Emma Hollings,
Head of Department for Supported
Engagement Programmes**

FOREWORD: A MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR EILEEN TAYLOR

OCTOBER 1, 2021



Good afternoon everyone, what an honour it's to be here with you today, as today we're starting the celebration of Black History month.

My name is Eileen Taylor am one of the Cllrs that represent Chapel Allerton ward, I was also the first black Lord Mayor of Leeds.

Black History month is where we celebrate our culture, October month is a special time of the year for us. We would have love to celebrate black people every single day of the year.

But October has been chosen for us to celebrate and recognize all the things black people have brought to this country.

It's nice to celebrate culture --culture is very important, it's our identity, the minute we lose our identity that's when we lose hope. It's good to maintain our culture. Please don't ever lose it.

However, at the same time we also must respect other cultures. It's good to learn from each other, and the best way to do this is through interaction and communications.

And this way our children will know their own cultural and heritages, and I hope that the younger generations will continue where we left off, and hopefully the world will be a much better place than where we are today.

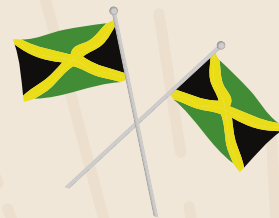
More than a quarter of a century ago, our grandparents were asked to come and help to re-build England. And so they did and because of that they made England their home. But while we are at home we must never forget or lose sight of our past eras.

Today and every moment of October is one of reflection, that's what is important the reflection, all of us here today will have our stories, so we must never forget our identity, the day we do is the day we'll lose all.

Thank you so much for having me here today, I am very pleased to be a part of your celebration. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon.



FROM THE DESK OF



Esmine Hendricks

My name is Esmine Hendricks.

I immigrated from Jamaica 1962 just before my 15th birthday, the third of seven children. I went to school in Sheffield for two year after I arrived.

I travelled to England with my cousin Peggy who was slightly older than I. On arriving in London, my brother in law met us, took us on the train to Sheffield, while on the train, I was admiring the scenery, I said to my brother in law, "what a lot of factories" he smiled and said no! They are not factories, they are houses, all the houses have chimneys. I did not understand until I reached home, there was a fireplace and fire coming from it, using coal to heat the house (very strange).

The food, I did not like, never heard of beans on toast, mashed potatoes, every main meal is potatoes in one form or the other.

Going on a double decker bus was a very strange thing as a child.



1956 AEC Regent V MD2RA



Cowper Street - 1950

The two years I spent at Hurlfield Secondary school for girls was different to say the least (where were the boys?) and another thing, each lesson is a different classroom. My first day after lunch I made my way back to my original class room only to find different faces, different teacher, that was a shock. The girls use to ask me, how do you say "good afternoon teacher" in my language? I said in reply, (same way). What did they do? They told the whole class after lunch when they assemble back in the classroom when the teacher enter the room everybody should stand and greet the teacher with, "SAME WAY Teacher!". I could not stop laughing, it was so funny, but the teacher was not amused.

One evening during the winter months just before class was dismissed, it went very dark, when I looked outside. This thing was coming down, I was told its snow, the girls got really excited, I was curious, when I came outside the thought of stepping in it was strange, this white stuff, when you pick it up it disappears in your hand, when you walk on it your feet sinks in it. I could never get used to the snow, even now in my old age I do not like it.



Hurlfield School for Girls

These images are ones found on the internet for the four houses published in the school's magazine "Gallery", from 1967. Left-Right starting at top we have: Anderson House, Bronte House, Ferrier House, Fonteyn House

My first job after leaving school was working in a warehouse when drill bits large and small was made in the factories downstairs and upstairs in the warehouse where we as young women all worked, our jobs was to clean, polished, sharpen, paint and stamp the right size on them and then pack them in boxes ready for dispatch. Most of the girls I worked with was very friendly, we worked well together but there was a set of twins that thought they owned the place and tried to a be a bully (I do not like bullies).

My experience with this bully whose name was Mary, this particular week, I was working on the packing section, its a sitting down job so obviously I had a stool. Why I said that? There was one stool short (seven girls, six stools). It didn't really matter because the person without the stool can sit on the work bench when it comes to lunch time.

Mary and her sister, with one of the other girls works on the second floor but comes down for lunch with all of us in the warehouse on the first floor. Everyday Mary came down for lunch, she took my stool, she did Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and I did not say anything. Everyday she did it, they say and laugh and think she has gotten away with it. Come Thursday, I waited until she was seated. (By this time I was rather angry).

I went behind her and took the chair by the back legs and she fell on the floor. I did not say anything to her, or any one else, I went straight to the office and reported the incident and that was the end of the bullying. And I'm still here to tell the story (one black girl in the midst of six white girls).

Ms E Hendricks.

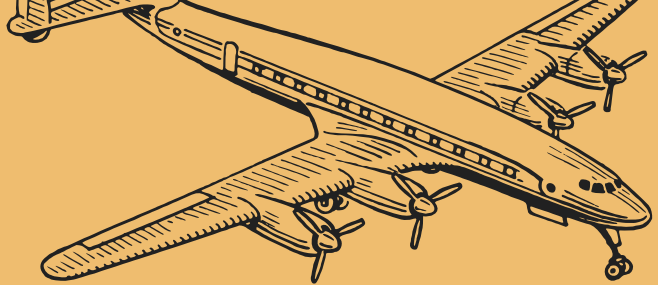




1
 My name is Bernice Windrush 24-2-2024
 I immigrated from Jamaica 1948 just before my 15 birthday + the third of seven children. I went to school in Sheffield for two years after I arrived.
 I travelled to England with my cousin Peggy who was slightly older than I. On arriving in London, my father in-law met us, took us on the train to Sheffield, while on the train, I was admiring the scenery, I said to my mother in law, what a lot of factories he smiled and said no, they are not factories they are houses, all the houses has chimneys, I did not understand until I reached home, there was a fire place and fire coming from it, using coal to heat the house (very strange) the food, I did not like, never heard of beans on toast, meat potato, every night meal is potatoes in one form or the other. Going on a double decker bus was a very strange thing on a school.
 The last year I spent at Woodfield secondary school for girls was different to say the least, (when was the huge?) and another thing, each lesson in a different class room, my first day after lunch I made my way back to my original class room, only to find different faces, different teacher, that was a shock. The girls use to ask me, how do you say, 'good afternoon teacher', in my language? I said in reply...

Letter exchange between students and Windrush generation





FROM THE
DESK OF

Hensel

Dear Friend,

As a nine year old boy, my hopes and dreams was to see my Mother who had immigrated to Britain in 1961. I had no idea what Britain was like but I know that the Queen lived there in a big Palace and how thrilling it would be if I could see that Palace.

My Uncles and my Aunts had immigrated from Jamaica W.I in 1959 and they had already found a terrace house to rent. They encouraged my mother come and join them. I was brought up by my grandmother who care for me until my mother for me in 1962.

Arrangement was made and I was given my own passport. My grandmother and I said our goodbyes and I was taken to the airport where I places in the care of the Pilot and crew of a BOAC plane. The crew treated me very well until the plane landed at Heathrow Airport in London.

At arrival, I was quite anxious - not knowing who had come for me. Eventually I saw the familiar face of my Uncle in the crowd. I was relieved as we greeted each other. He took my suitcase and we went to find transport to the train station.



Leeds West Indian Carnival 1974



Heathrow Airport, Terminal 1 - 1960s

The cold weather was quite shocking. Fortunately, my uncle had brought a thick heavy coat to keep me warm. We took a British Rail train to Leeds into the north of England. I slept for most of that two hundred mile journey with memories of the tropical sunshine I had left behind to keep me warm.

My uncle woke me up as we approached the Leeds train station. I looked out the window and was shocked to see a mountain of snow and thick fog. I have never seen either before. I was full of expectations of seeing my mother - where and how she lived.

We left the train station and caught a bus. Soon we arrived at our destination. The walk from the bus stop was bitterly cold; the fog was thick, visibility poor. The houses were joined together and smoke was coming out their chimneys. How could we survive this?

As the front door opened I was greeted by my aunt and then by my mother. Both were happy to see me after such a long journey for a nine year old to a foreign country.

After a warm evening meal I went to bed. The fumes from the paraffin heater made it difficult to sleep but I survived.

My new life in England was a marked contrast to the life I had left behind; the wonderful sounds of nature; the animals, the colourful birds and warm sunshine; now contrasted by penetrating cold thick fog, deep snow making it difficult to walk. How did we survive the sixties and seventies, God knows.



Leeds West Indian Carnival 1980:

As people of the windrush generation we had a lot more to deal with than climate discomfort. Racism was quite unpleasant. My family found it difficult to get jobs. They were often turned away once they saw the colour of their skin. They were called hateful names and told to go back to Africa.



But they persevered and got jobs and made a life under trying circumstances. This was the period of increasing racial conflict and race riots and the "river of blood" speech by the labour MP, Enoch Powell. But we endured. We contributed, not only to the NHS and the military, the West Indies cricket team and reggae music were great cultural contributions. But we united all communities with our Caribbean Carnival in major cities across Britain for over fifty years.

In 1983 my mother took me to get our citizenship from the home office. Since she passed on.

It was such a tragedy that so many who come to this country by invitation from the British colonies, believing they are British citizens only to be told decades later that they are illegal immigrants through a subsequent law change.

The government should be more appreciative in consideration of the great contributions by the people of the Caribbean.

Yours sincerely,

Hensel.



The Caribbean Cricket Club team





Student workshops to learn about Caribbean art, music, dance, food and celebrations.



FROM THE
DESK OF

Robert Chrouch

My initial impression of England...



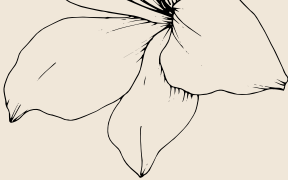
I found the general environment strange, as I experienced ongoing concerns and issues, that I found were entirely due to the colour of my skin. Consequently, accessing services in shops and other services was difficult and challenging. They would say "no service" and this become my everyday experience. Shop owners would go around the back when they saw me coming. Pubs would not serve me or my friends and family, saying "no service", try another pub. Flats for rent would have signs in the window saying "No blacks, No dogs, No Irish!"

I recall one pub landlord saying that they were pleased that we were regularly rejected by a near-by pub as this brought more business to them.

I received an application issued by the British Government, sent to be completed before my arrival to England. The form request that I outline my skills, which was as a cabinet polisher and carpenter.


At the labour exchange in England, I went to register for work, they advised me against attending certain interview, as they had been advised by the company that they were not accepting "coloured's".





My experiences on the busses were that people refused to sit next to me and would get up and move away or move over and sit in the place that I was aiming to sit next to them. There are many, many other negative experiences, too numerous to retell.

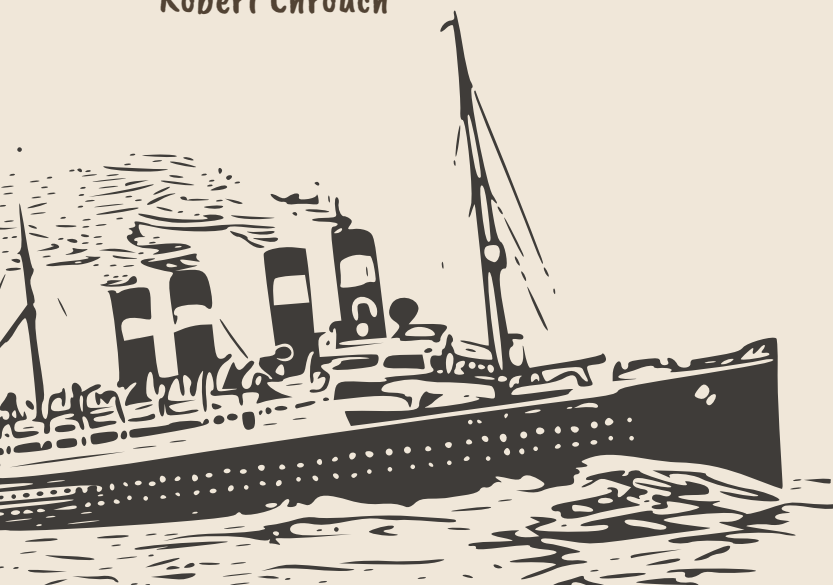
Gradually over the weeks and months, I realised that although I was a British citizen, I was not welcome in England. Nevertheless, I had planned to work in England for a set number of years to support my family, before returning home with increased income and skills. However, life did not pan out that way and through a set of circumstances, I stayed in England, eventually sending for my wife and children to join me.



Windrush...

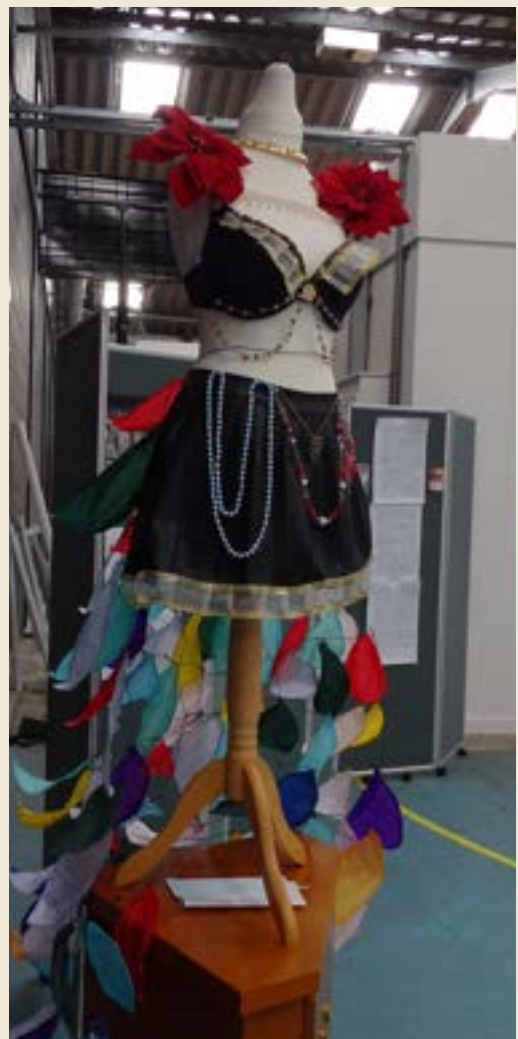
Though I had some personal experience of the Windrush scandal, thankfully, not to the extremes I'd heard about and fortunately, I had no close friends or family facing deportation. In the late 1970's the British Government instructed all black British Caribbean's to reapply for British Citizenship. I already had my British passport that I had entered the country with, so I found the government's request both shocking and confusing. I had entered the country as a British subject and was now being told that I was not. Consequently, both myself and my wife had to pay £50 each to apply for British citizenship and new passports. I received assistance from the Jamaican embassy through the Jamaica Society in Leeds. This provided me with all of the necessary support required to successfully fill out the appropriate forms and consequently, I was issued with new British passports.

Robert Chrouch





Student artwork inspired by Leeds Carnival



Student artwork inspired by Leeds Carnival

FROM THE DESK OF



George
Crawford

My name is George Crawford.

I came to England during the Windrush era, not that I came in the Windrush boat, but I came on another boat in 1957, I cannot remember the name of the ship only that I remember it was a Spanish ship.

I was not directly affected by the Windrush scandal, but I feel if it had carried on a lot of folks like me would have been affected.

The first thing I found strange was the chimneys on the houses, I thought this country had lots of factories and that was why they wanted us to come to England to work in the factories.



Buslingthorpe Lane - (1958)



Chapelton Road nos. 95 - 117 (1949)



I started working out how much money I am going to earn and save and how it will take me to save money and return to Jamaica. Unfortunately it didn't take me long to find out those chimneys were just houses. My next surprise was when I heard white men swearing, I thought that all white folks were so perfect they did not swear or do anything wrong.

Next as young 17-year-old boy grown up in Jamaica I never knew racism until to England which was a big shock to me, as I said I thought white people were the good people, it was so disappointing.

I also found that when we were asked to come to England, we landed off the ship at Southampton and would have to find our way and find a job, no help was ever given. I survived 64 years in this country despite racism and racist comments.

Harold Wilson's government which was a labour government made it unlawful to discriminate as before you could go to a hotel and be turned away because of your skin colour.



Cambridge Row,
Chapel Town (1953)



A friend of mine who was in the British Army once went into a pub and was told we don't serve black in here, so he went home to put his Army uniform on and went back tot he pub in his uniform, the bard tender still told he we don't serve blacks here, so grab hold of the bar tender and said "You see this uniform? This is a British uniform!" Still the barman did not serve him but called the police. The police asked what was the matter. My friend said he came in to ask for drink and pointed to his uniform. The police ordered the barman to serve him, my friend asked for a box matches and went out.

As for me, as a young black man, I was stopped and harassed by police without a cause. I have never been aggressive or rude to any authority. I take everything as an experience.

This is why at this moment I find it difficult to recall things that were racist because we took it like water off a duck's back. At that time there was no one to complain to. We thought if there was a dispute with us and white folk the black would get the blame, at your work place and on the streets.

George Crawford



Aerial View over Chapeltown and Harehills 1983

LEEDS CITY COLLEGE WINDRUSH COMMUNITY PROJECT

JOIN US
FRIDAY OCT 1ST, 2021
TO CELEBRATE THE LEEDS CITY COLLEGE WINDRUSH
COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH AN AFTERNOON OF FOOD, MUSIC
AND CONVERSATION!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

- Caribbean food cooked by our catering students
- Steel Drum performance
- Key notes speeches
- Showcase of student artwork
- Exhibition of personalised life story books, documenting the experiences of the Windrush Generation

WHEN: OCTOBER 1ST, 2021 1PM-3PM
**WHERE: SOMERVILLE HOUSE, VOC BLOCK,
LEATHLEY ROAD, LS10 1BG**

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PROJECT PARTNERS AT ROSCOE CHURCH AND THE NEW
TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

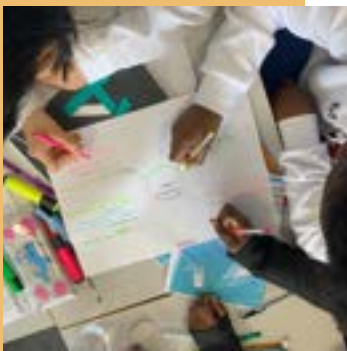
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FUNDED THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEAR NEIGHBOURS.



Community Celebration Event at Somerville House, 1, October 2021



THANK YOU FROM EMMA HOLLINGS, HEAD OF DEPARTMENT FOR SUPPORTED ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMES



Learning about the histories and contributions of the Windrush generation in Leeds has been an enriching and rewarding experience. We are so grateful to the participants of this collection of stories who have shared their histories with us as part of our letter writing project. The Windrush project culminated in a celebration event of dance, music and food. We would like to thank our partners at The Dance Studio, Leeds; The New Testament Church of God; Rose's Caribbean Kitchen; Cllr Eillen Taylor and the Pantasy Steel Band. Through a series of workshops Somerville students were able to experience a taste of Caribbean culture and could reflect on the influence descendants of Windrush still have in the city. This experience has both developed our students' understanding of the history of Leeds and provided all with an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be British today.

Luminate

EDUCATION GROUP



**LEEDS CITY
COLLEGE**

Leeds City College Project Campuses

Sommerville House

Leathley Road,
Leeds,
LS10 1BG

North Street Centre

223 North Street,
Sheepscar,
Leeds,
LS7 2AA

With support from

Innovation & Development Team

Park Lane,
Leeds,
LS3 1AA

This project has been funded by:



Ministry of Housing
Communities &
Local Government

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