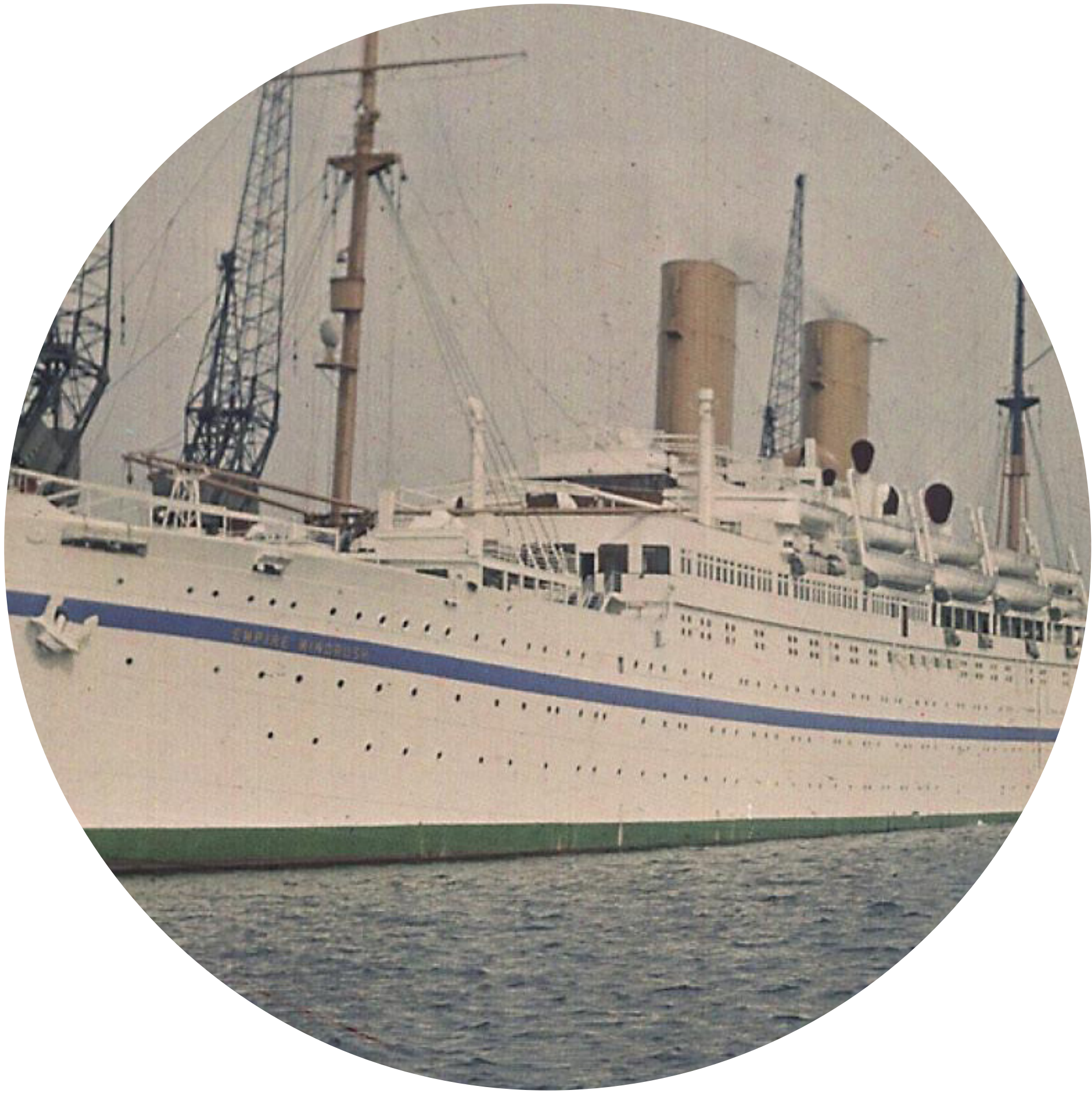


LEICESTER'S WINDRUSH

Trailblazing Elders



Leicester's Windrush Panels celebrate the arrival of the passengers on board the S.S. Empire Windrush and the many other ships and planes that brought people from their homes in the Caribbean Islands to make a life in Britain. Many also stayed following their war service, to help rebuild the country after World War 2. Together, they became known as the Windrush Generation.

“ There was a very small community in 1955. In town if you saw a black person you stopped and talked...There was hardly any social life. Christmas could be particularly difficult ”.



Earl Robinson MBE

Earl Robinson was born in Kingston Jamaica. He arrived in Leicester in 1958 and originally lived on Saxby Street in Highfields. After coming to Leicester, he still worked for the Gleaner Newspaper in Jamaica and later at the Leicester Mercury. He created Caribbean Lifestyle Magazine which ran for 15 years. Earl worked at the County Council's Education and Youth Education department as a Community Officer and was also the Community Cultural Archivist in the 1970's.



Laurel Aitken

Lorenzo "Laurel" Aitken was born in 1927 to Cuban and Jamaican parents. He started performing as a musician in Jamaica in the 1940s and made his first recording for Jamaican Mento tunes in the 1950s. Laurel emigrated to England in 1960 and made his home in Leicester in 1970. Known as "the godfather of ska", his music was celebrated by the West Indian community, mods, skinheads, and other ska fans.



Bena Balunda Aka George Carter

Bena Balunda was born in Jamaica and migrated to England at the age of 19. In the 1970's Bena helped found the Black Power Liberation Movement on Laurel Road, the Foundation Hostel and Raddle bookshop. He went on to advise young people on setting up the newly acquired Highfields Workshop (later the African Caribbean Centre)



Joseph Allen MBE

Joe Allen MBE became Leicester's first black councillor in 1987, serving until 1993. Born in Montserrat, Joe moved to England in 1959. He was made Alderman in 2015.



Eric Hudson MBE

Eric Hudson MBE came to Leicester as one of the first Caribbean RAF airmen. He recalled, "There was a very small community in 1955. In town if you saw a black person you stopped and talked. There was hardly any social life. Christmas could be particularly difficult". He led the Imperial Typewriter Strike in 1974 and went on to become Director of Age UK Leicester in 1991. Eric became Director of the Leicester Carnival and The Race Equality Centre. He also founded the West Indian Senior Citizen Project (WISCP) and Leicester Caribbean Credit Union.



WINDRUSH DAY

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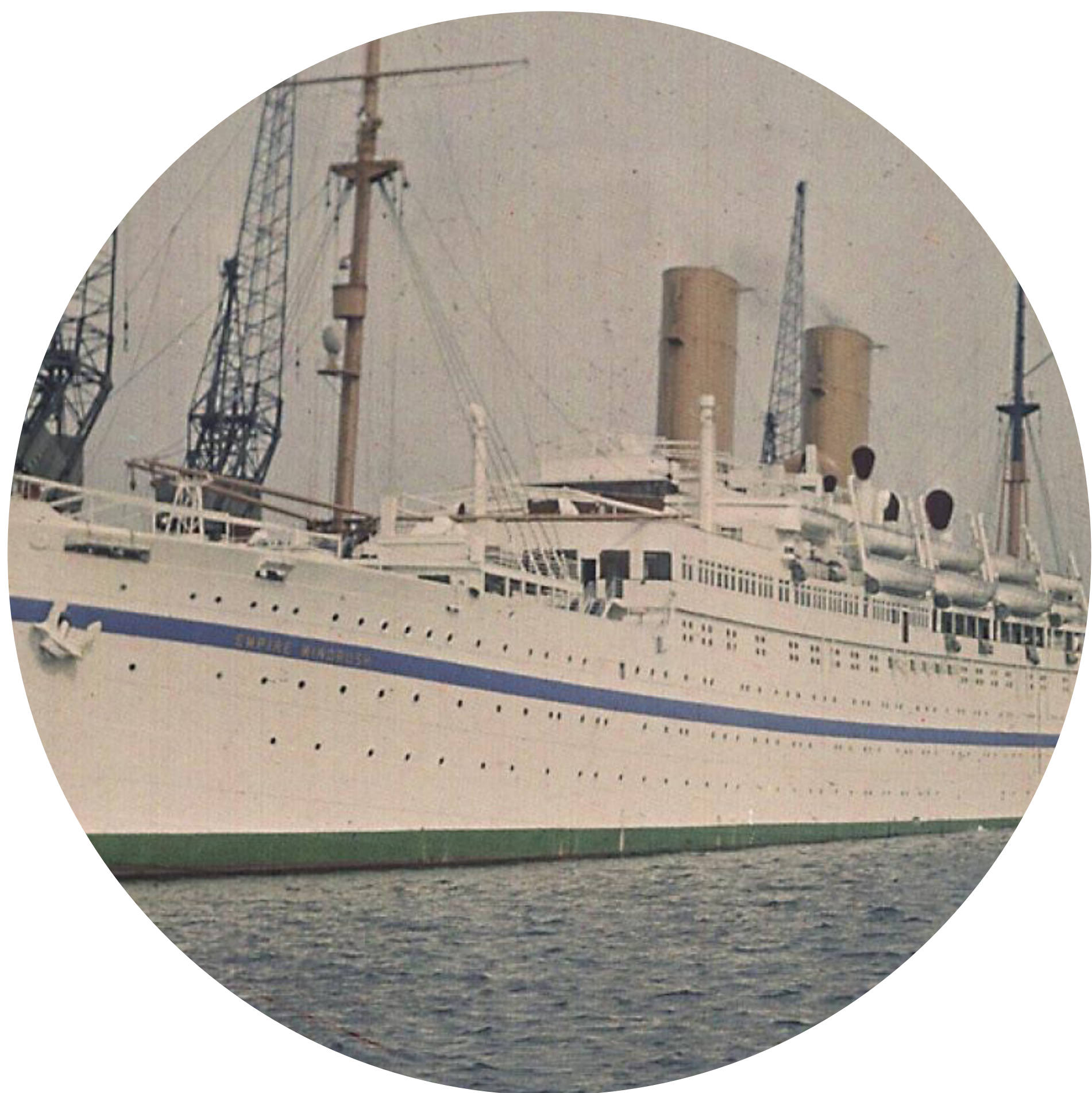
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Clifton Robinson MBE

Clifton Robinson MBE was born in Jamaica in 1926. He migrated to the UK in 1944 to join the RAF and obtained a degree as an Educational Psychologist at Birmingham University. In 1970 Clifton became the first black Head Teacher in Leicester at the newly built Uplands Junior School. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace to Leicester Magistrates Bench in 1973 and Deputy Chairman at the Commission for Racial Equality in 1977.



Pam Campbell Morris

Pam Campbell was Born in the UK in 1958 but moved to St Catherine Parish, Jamaica as a child. She returned to the UK to pursue a career in nursing and settled in Leicester when she was 20 years old. Pam embraced Leicester's Caribbean community, founding its leading Carnival Troupe, 'Bumpa Crew', in the early 1990's before joining the board of directors at Leicester Caribbean Carnival.

Through the Domino Talk Prostate campaign, Pam's tireless work raising awareness of prostate cancer within the African Caribbean community earned her the 'Outstanding BAME Female Leader 2020' at the East Midlands Women's Awards.



Wolde Selassie

Wolde Selassie was born in Dominica and Migrated to the UK in 1960, he was a renowned poet and community activist. In the late 1970's he co-founded Raddle bookshop in Highfields, a place for the community to access educational material on black culture and experience, from cookbooks, children's books to academic articles and biographies. The bookshop was often used as a meeting place for debate and discussion on many topics. Wolde was also the founder of Leicester's African Caribbean Arts Forum, LACAF, which ran from 2006 until 2011, and during this time he became chairman of Leicester's Black History Season consortium.



Persefene Thomas

Persefene Thomas was born in Antigua and moved to Leicester when she was 13 years old. From the early 1970s Persefene led many community projects. She founded local initiatives including the Talking Blues programme and the Grassroots Dance Group. She also founded the Caribbean Women Circle and the Women and Jobs Employment initiative. Persefene developed the Black Female Prisoner Support Scheme and was Chair of the African Caribbean Support Group.

Her wish for the African Caribbean Community in Leicester was "Black women embrace your sons; Black sons embrace your mothers for there is none mightier than she".

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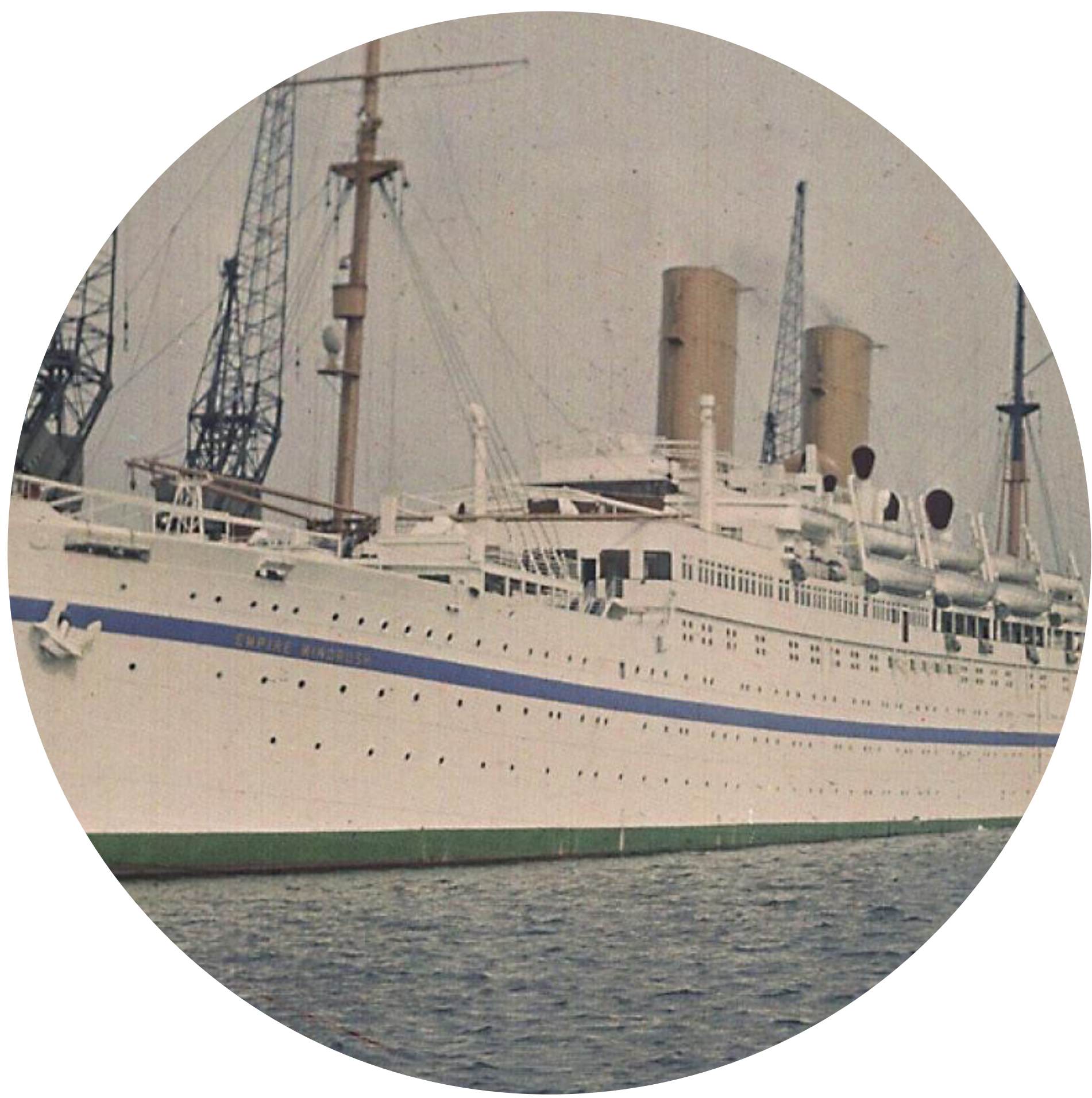
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LEICESTER'S WINDRUSH

Pioneers



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Mr & Mrs Wint

Mr Vincent Oliver Wint was born in Manchester Parish of Jamaica in 1919 where, in 1946, he met and married his life partner Nerissa. Vincent was a farmer by trade but also worked on the Panama Canal with the US army and in Cuba where he learned Spanish.



Building the M1 motorway

In 1956 Vincent and Nerissa moved to England with their four children. Once settled, Vincent worked as a machine operator constructing the M1 motorway and would often remind people of this in later years.



Working Life

After his time working on the M1, Vincent would go on to work on another major British infrastructure project, the railways. Nerissa's first job in England was in hosiery as a machinist.

She later worked at John Bull, a rubber factory in Evington Valley Road, where, though the work regime was arduous, she remained until she retired.



Youth Foundation

In the early 1970s their daughter Hajar and her then husband Tyrone Zampaladus were founder members of the Youth Foundation, a youth hostel that supported young black people across

Leicester. Youth Foundation went on to become Foundation Housing Association.

“if it wasn't for men like him the M1 wouldn't even exist”.



The Family

Both Vincent and Nerissa grew up in large families. He was the eldest of eleven siblings and Nerissa the eldest of twelve.

Together they went on to have eight children, thirty-nine grandchildren, seventy-one great grandchildren, and seventeen great-great-grandchildren.

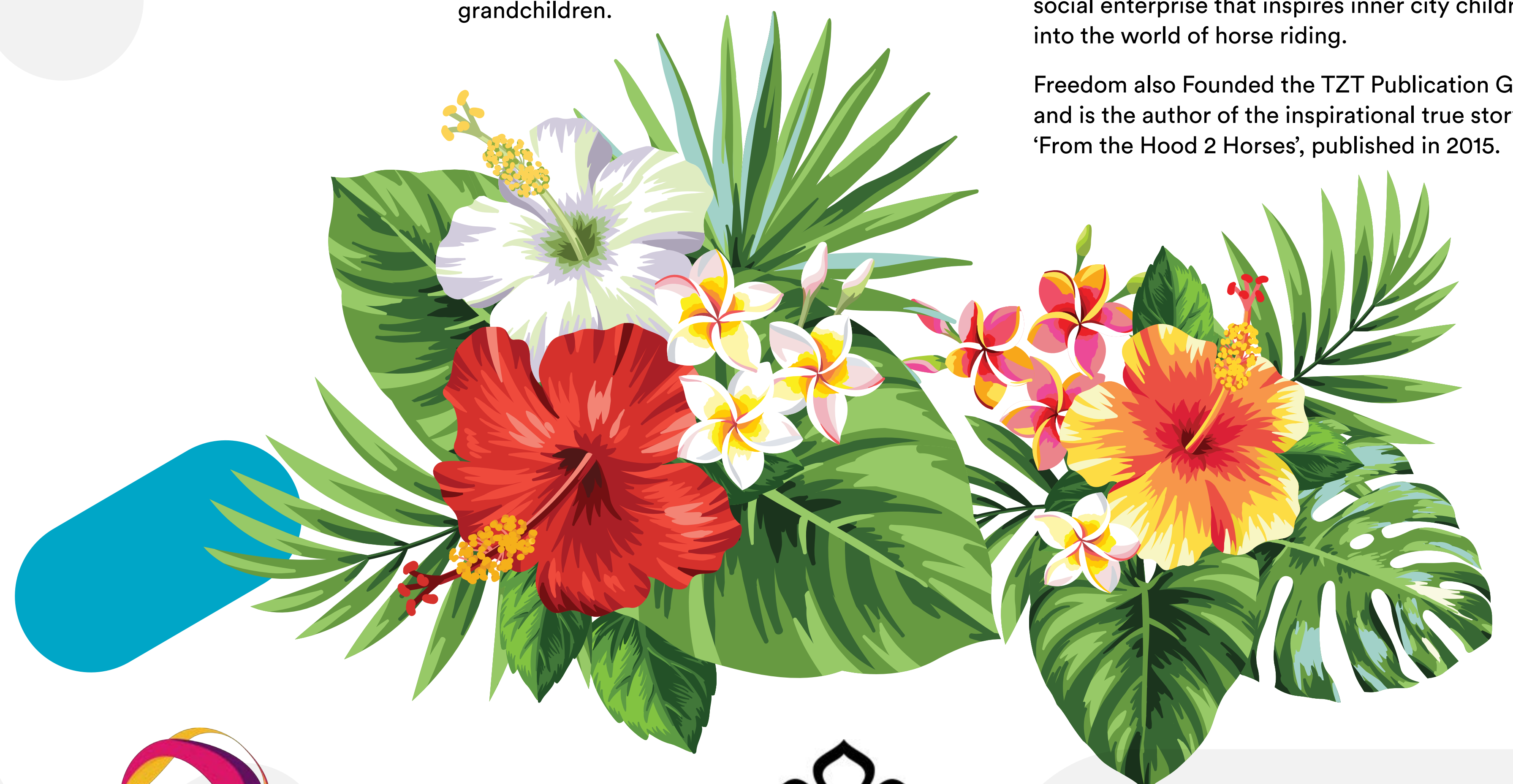


Urban Equestrian

Freedom Zampaladus, grandson of Mr and Mrs Wint, moved from England to Antigua at the age of 14 where he was introduced to the Equestrian world.

4 years later he moved back to England with a professional race horse trainer license and went on to found the Urban Equestrian Academy, a social enterprise that inspires inner city children into the world of horse riding.

Freedom also Founded the TZT Publication Group and is the author of the inspirational true story 'From the Hood 2 Horses', published in 2015.



WINDRUSH DAY

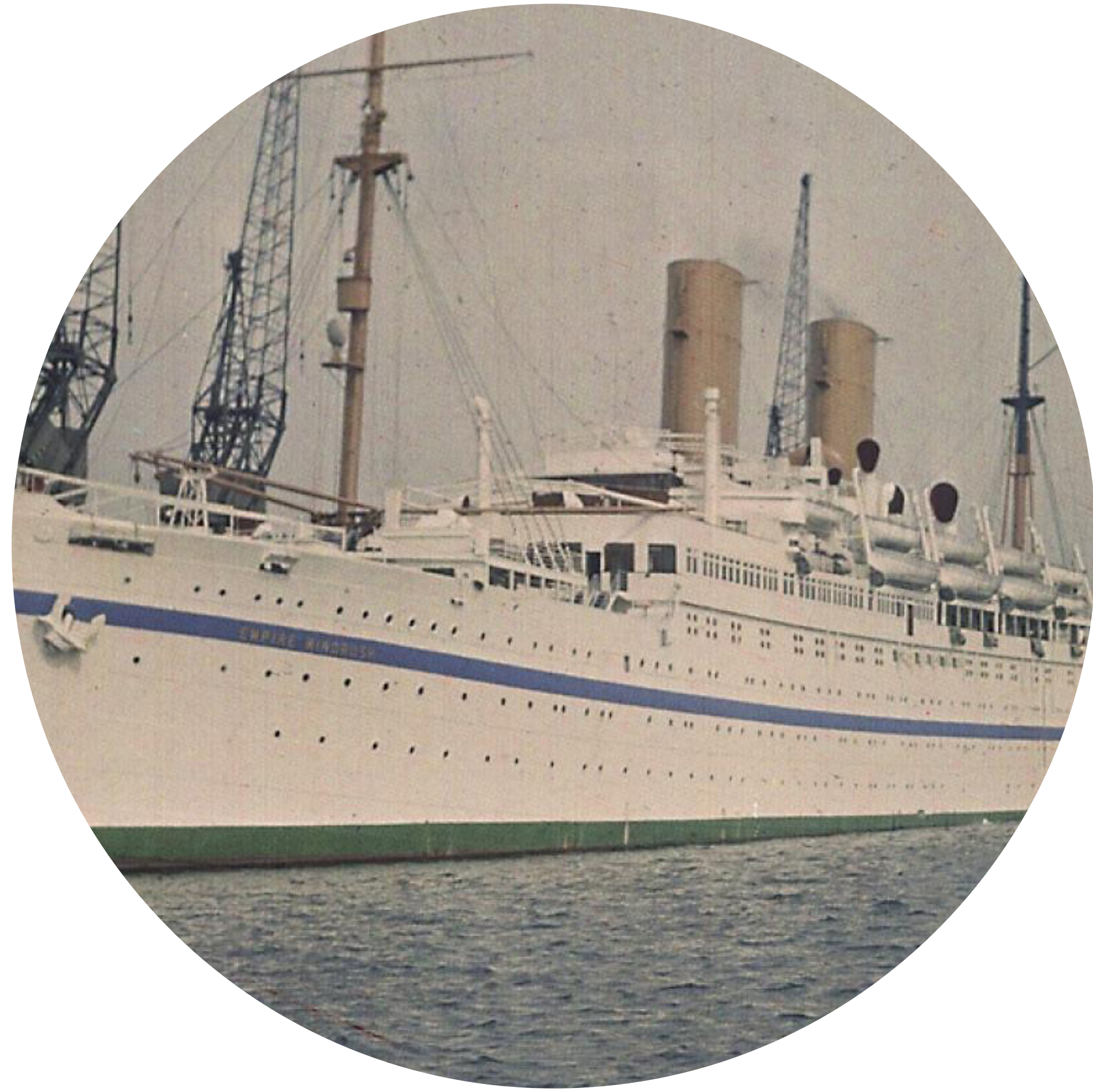
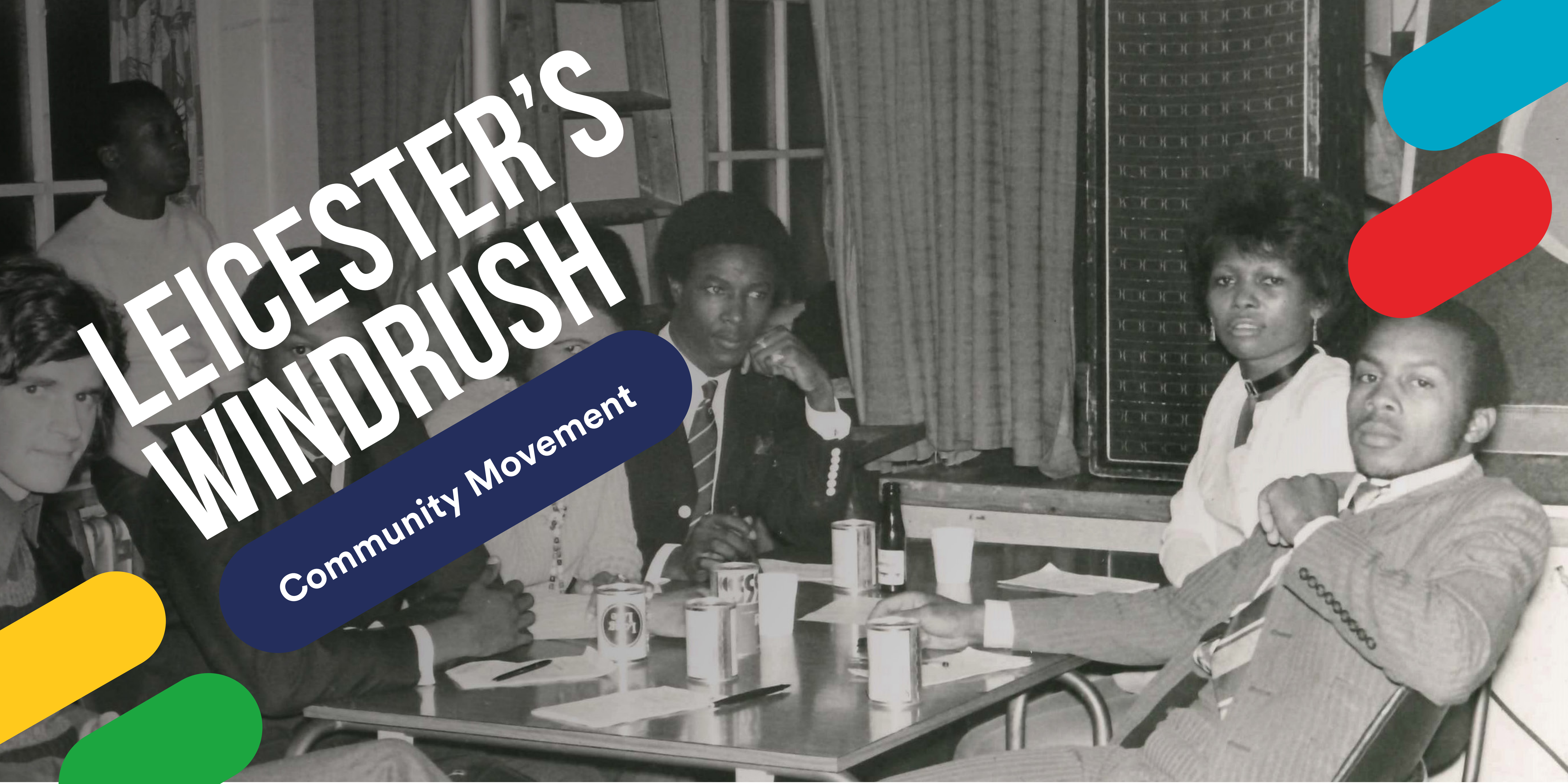
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Highfields Workshop - African Caribbean Centre
 Leicester's African Caribbean Community did not have a permanent community building until, in 1981, a group of youths staged a sit in at the derelict Working Men's Club on Maidstone Road. Discussions with the Council followed and resulted in the building being handed over to the Caribbean community.



Black Liberation Association
 The Black Liberation Association was started by a group of young people in the late 1960s. The Association went on to develop the 'Foundation Hostel' which later became the 'Foundation Housing Association'. They also supported local young people in the development of Highfields Workshop and Raddle bookshop.



Leicester Caribbean Cricket Club
 Caribbean cricketers began playing for factory teams in Leicester but, as the Caribbean community grew, new teams sprang up. Cricket kept Caribbean people together and teams went as far as London to play. In 1955 the West Indies Cricket Team came to the UK where there was an opportunity for local people and players to meet with a world class team. The club was established in 1954 and they played on Victoria Park for the first 24 years until the playing fields opened in Evington in 1981. It's still going today, 64 years later.



Highfield Rangers
 Although young people were not used to playing football in the Caribbean, Leicester young people would meet up to play on Spinney Hill park. Highfield Rangers was set up in the early 1970s and is still thriving. Highfield Rangers Football Academy has since developed many young men from the community to play within the professional league across the country.



LUCA
 Leicester United Caribbean Association was the umbrella organisation for the Caribbean projects in Leicester. LUCA worked closely with the Council and provided space for community activities and social events. The LUCA building was demolished in the early 1990s to make way for Curve Theatre.



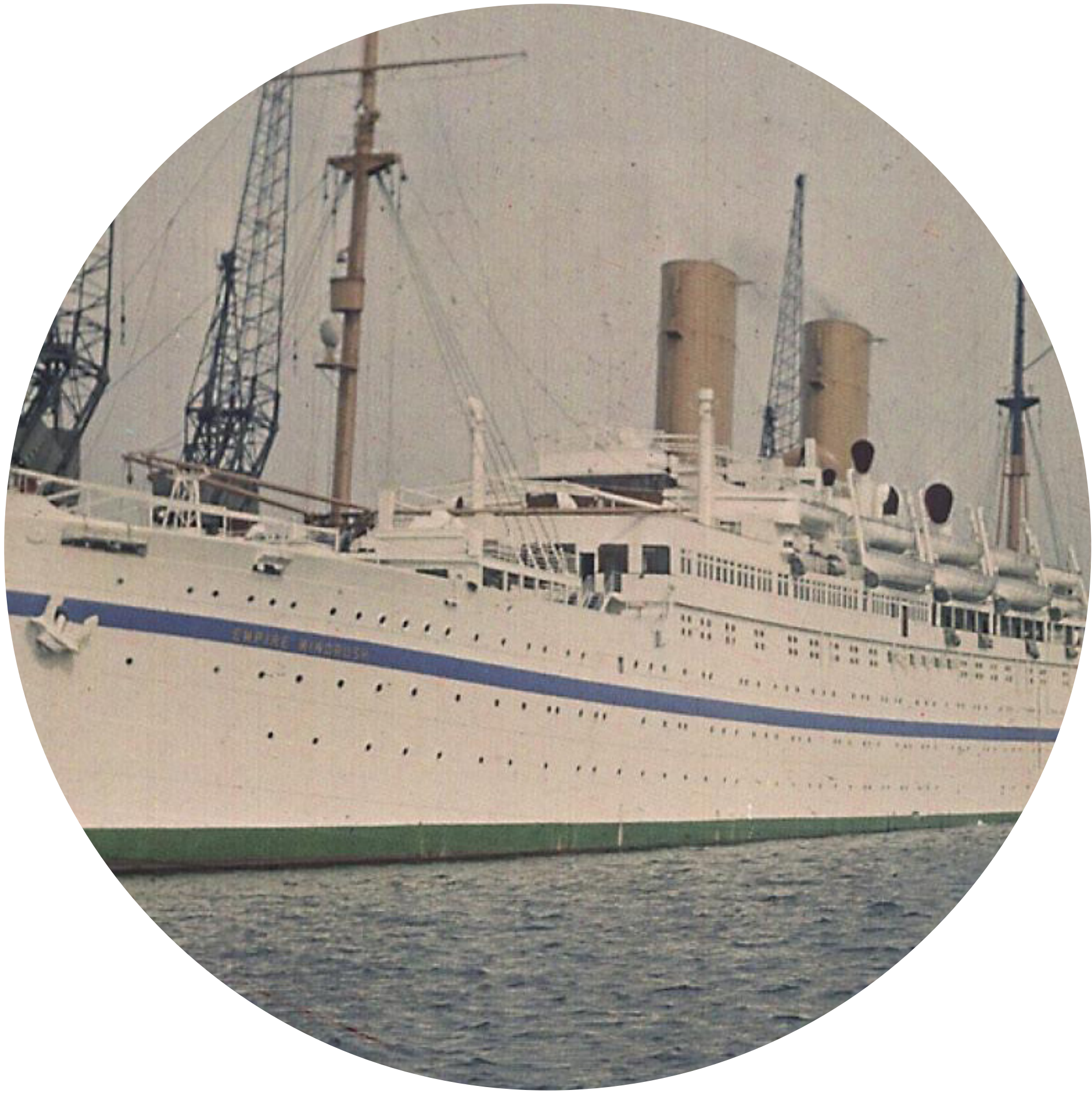
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LEICESTER'S WINDRUSH

Celebrations



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Traditional festival

The traditional Caribbean Carnival has developed over the years and is now celebrated in many countries throughout the world.

The date of the carnival is significant because the Caribbean Carnival is a celebration to commemorate the Emancipation of Slavery on the 1st of August 1834.



Birth of the Carnival spirit

Following racial tensions in Leicester and other English cities in the early 1980s, Elvy Morton, with a small group of Caribbean people from the Highfields area, founded the Leicester Caribbean Carnival. The aim was to promote togetherness and integration and to inspire artistic expression and cultural understanding for all the people of Leicester.



Carnival starts in Leicester

The first Caribbean Carnival held in Leicester was on the 1st August 1985 and for many years was the largest UK Caribbean Carnival outside of London.



Future of the Carnival

Dennis "Sugar" Christopher took on the role of Chair after Elvy Morton retired and has continued to organise the annual Leicester Caribbean Carnival on Victoria Park.



Art of the Carnival

Peter Minshall, Magician of the Carnival, turns thousands of people into works of art. Peter says, "I don't make costumes, I create ways to express human energy". Graduate of the London College of Art and Design, he detests Las Vegas style skimpy feather and glitter. When his masked parades pass by, luxuriant flowing fabrics and colourful flags fill the streets.

“ I don't make costumes, I create ways to express human energy”.

Peter Minshall,
Magician of the Carnival



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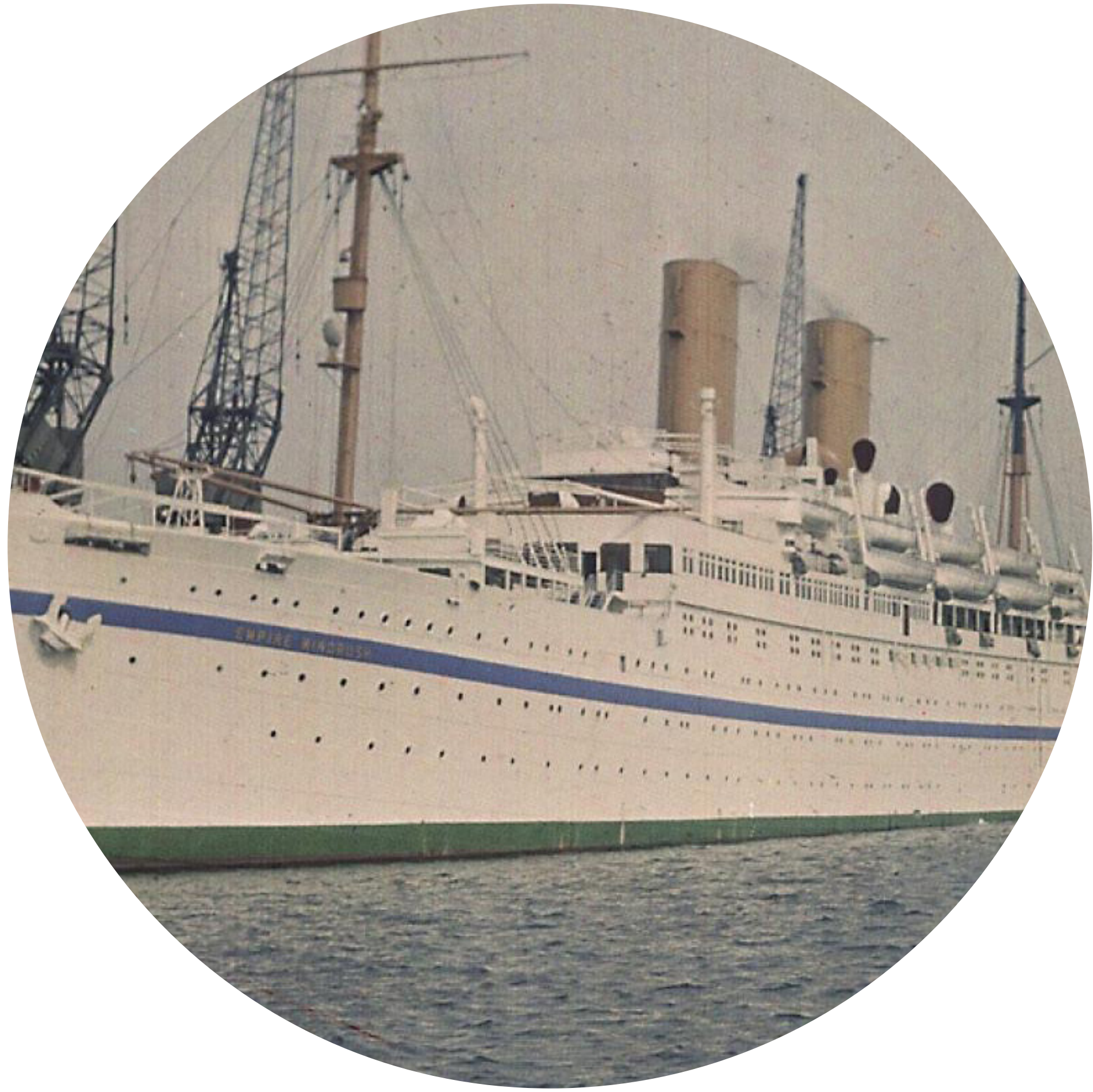
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LEICESTER'S WINDRUSH

Young People & Education



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Youth trips

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s young people born to the Windrush generation embarked on a number of youth exchange trips to Jamaica and Europe. The trips were organised by Earl Robinson MBE, the Council's Youth and Community Officer. During the exchanges, young people from Leicester stayed with families from Jamaica and had an opportunity to experience life and culture in a different country.



Commonwealth Institute

Earl Robinson organised regular trips to London for Leicester young people to visit the Commonwealth Institute in the 1970s. They learnt about Commonwealth countries and the people who had travelled to Britain. Many visitors recall the original walkway to the entrance known as "the bridge", which is how it would have seemed to the children passing over it.



Dance Groups

Through the exchange programme the Grassroots Dance Group, a Leicester based dance group for young women, was able to team up with performing arts groups in Jamaica. In 1996 this led to the Jamaican dance group Ashe visiting Leicester where they held dance workshops. Leicester young people were very excited to learn authentic Jamaican dances at their local African Caribbean Centre.



Still Dancing

The Grassroots Dance Group still rehearses at the African Caribbean Centre although it is now called the Kizzy Dance Group.



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