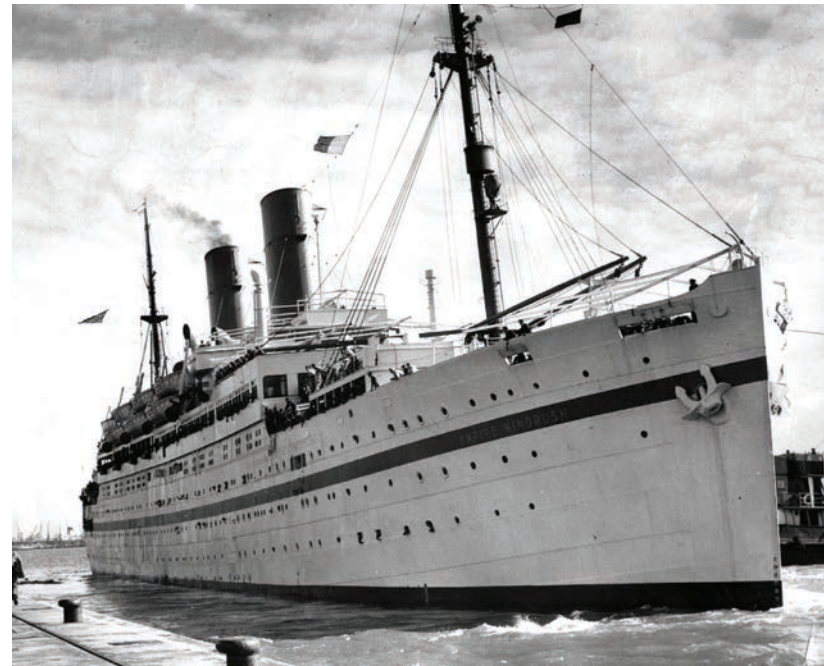


Uncovering Black British History

The Windrush and Afterwards

History KS2



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History

Key Stage 2

Learning aims

- To examine the period after the end of World War Two, when Black people from the British Commonwealth started moving to Britain in large numbers to fill job vacancies
- To find out about their contribution to Britain's economic recovery after World War Two
- To look at historical sources that tell us about the treatment of Black people and their contribution to British culture in the 20th and 21st centuries

Curriculum links

- To understand the connections between national, international, and social history
- To understand the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups

The lessons within Uncovering Black British History, are most suitable for KS2, with some for upper KS2. Please adapt these to your class and pupils.

Keywords

The Commonwealth – The Commonwealth of Nations is the name for the group of countries linked to Britain, most of which are former territories of the British Empire

Displaced persons – people who have been forced from their homes during an armed conflict, sometimes finding themselves in another country

European Volunteer Workers – people from Europe (mostly countries in the east) who took part in a scheme to attract people to fill vacancies in low-paid and unskilled work in Britain after the end of World War Two

British subject – people who lived in the colonies of the British Empire were citizens of the empire and were British subjects

The Empire Windrush – was the name of the ship that in 1948 brought nearly 500 people from the Caribbean, looking to fill some of the job vacancies in Britain after the end of World War Two

Colour bar – a set of rules within an organisation designed to prevent people of colour joining and/or being promoted to leadership roles within that organisation



Boycott – a boycott happens when a group of people agree to stop giving their custom, and therefore their money, to a person, institution, or company. It is a form of protest against something about the way that person, institution or company operates, intended to force that practice to change

Racial discrimination – the unjust treatment of a person or group of persons, based on the grounds of their race. It can include withholding goods and services from them and excluding them from social, physical and economic contexts.

‘sus’ laws – were laws that allowed police to stop, search and even arrest a person in a public place if they suspected that the person intended to commit an offence

Stephen Lawrence – was stabbed to death in a racially motivated attack in Eltham South London in 1993, at the age of 18.

MacPherson Report – the report of the official inquiry launched into the failure of the police to investigate his murder and prosecute the perpetrators. The report declared the failure to be the result of Institutional Racism. These can also be found at the end of this PDF and can be placed on a learning wall as they are discussed during the presentation.

PowerPoint presentation

The accompanying PowerPoint presentation has 42 slides with the following learning points:

- Slides 1 and 2 establish the lesson focus: looking at Black British history during the post-World War Two period. This includes the arrival of the Windrush in 1948 and the contribution of Black people to the post-war economic recovery and to society.
- Slides 3 and 4 explain the Post-War Worker Shortage: and how rather than welcoming the arrival of Black people from Commonwealth countries (many of whom had just fought for Britain in World War Two), the British government favoured trying to address the worker shortage with white workers from Europe and Ireland.

Activity 1 (slides 5 and 6)

- Slides 5 and 6. Ask the children to look at the worksheet within this PDF entitled ‘European Volunteer Workers’, to examine some newspaper articles about the arrival of the European Volunteer Workers. What do they notice about the tone of the articles and the welcome the new arrivals are being given?
- Slide 7 looks at the 1948 British Nationality Act: explaining that this act gave people from the British Empire, the right to come and live and work in Britain. The British government expected white people from countries like



Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to take advantage of this right, not Black people from other Commonwealth countries.

- Slide 8 introduces the arrival of The Empire Windrush: 492 people were onboard the Windrush, which arrived at Tilbury Docks in Essex, in June 1948. Slides 9 to 11 explain that the government response was one of confusion, and attempts were made to divert the ship despite ongoing worker shortages. The government wanted to attract white workers from outside the Commonwealth to Britain instead.

Activity 2 (slide 14)

- Slides 12 to 14 examine how the arrival of the Windrush was reported in the press. We include a report from the Shields Daily News and another from the Aberdeen Press and Journal. Ask the children: What impressions does each story give about the new Windrush arrivals? What messages are given about how welcome they are? How does this compare to the ways in which the arrival of European Volunteer Workers was reported? You can use the template provided within this PDF for the children to record their answers.

Activity 3 (slide 17)

- Slides 15 to 17 look who was on board the Empire Windrush and establishes that many of the men and women aboard, had recently served in the British forces during World War Two. It also notes that some articles were written about white British women who had married Black West Indian men, and were returning with their husbands and children on the Windrush. Using the activity sheet provided in this PDF entitled 'Eileen Johnson onboard the Empire Windrush', ask the children to read the text of a newspaper story from the Daily Mirror on 17th June 1948. It provides details of one of the white passengers onboard the Empire Windrush and her family. What do we learn about the motivations of the Windrush passengers and about their experiences of Britain?
- Slides 18 to 21 focus on after the Windrush: discussing the experiences of the 125,000 British subjects from the West Indies, who came to live and work in Britain in the decade following the arrival of the Windrush. It notes that whilst they found employment, it was often low-skilled (or lower skilled than their qualifications). Black people filled important medical and support roles in the NHS. They also experienced racial discrimination in the workplace and when trying to find somewhere to live.
- Slides 22 and 23 tell us the story of the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963: when Black and Asian people came together to organise a boycott of a local bus company, that had a colour bar to prevent Black and Asian people from working for them. The boycott was widely reported and grew as other people joined in. Eventually they triumphed and the company removed its colour bar and employed Black and Asian drivers and conductors.



- Slides 24 to 29 look at race relations, the 1960s and the Rivers of Blood speech: describing the hostility faced by Black people in the 1950s, including the 'riots' of 1958 in Nottingham and Notting Hill. We explain that the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrant Act, turned Black British subjects from the Commonwealth, from British Subjects to immigrants. It also restricted the numbers of people allowed to come to Britain. We then look at the 1965 and 1968 Race Relations Acts. Slides 28 and 29 discuss Enoch Powell's Rives of Blood speech and the racially motivated violence against Black people that it triggered.
- Slides 30 to 32 detail the end of the 20th Century: including the New Cross fire, race riots and 'sus' laws of the 1980s. It also explains the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and how that led to the MacPherson Report of 1999.
- Slides 33 to 37 focus on Black and British in the 21st Century: discussing the 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony, which featured the Windrush. Plus, the Windrush scandal of 2018 and the toppling of the Colston statue in Bristol in 2020.
- Slides 38 to 42 conclude with Black British history: emphasising that Black British history began long before the arrival of the Windrush and we are constantly learning more about that history. Useful links are provided on slide 41 for further information.



European Volunteer Workers

Have a look at the following newspaper articles about the arrival the European Volunteer Workers.

RESURGAM: A Day at the European Volunteer Workers' Camp in Wiltshire

ALL stories that are worth the telling must have a beginning, an exposition and an ending. It would seem, therefore, that the story of Crabtree E.V.W. Hostel, near Warminster, in Wiltshire, began in the late April of this year. It was then that a small group of men (all of them displaced persons) began, under the supervision of Mr. A. Hughes, to clear the debris and to arrest the decay of the deserted camp. The site was one of many hidden in the Longleat Woods, where, during the war, many thousands of men and women of the R.A.F. lived and worked. It was here that preparations for the reception of European volunteer workers to be employed under the Wiltshire Agricultural Executive Committee on farming works were commenced. To this camp came the wardens, Mr. and Mrs. John Golland, and on May 3, 1948, the first draft of 150 men arrived.

So the story of Crabtree Hostel may be said to begin. But, in fact, its origins go back over the long years of desolation, and the threads of the fabric that is now Crabtree Hostel go out in a multitude of directions over the whole Continent of Europe.

The lorries that discharged their human cargo brought more than arms to work on English fields. They brought a fractional part of the wrack and misery and ruin that follows on war.

A heavy burden of mental stress, of potential despair and hopelessness came to Wiltshire with that ragged band of men. Lives that lay in ruin lay behind them; memories and perplexities were about them, and anxiety for families and friends was ever-present.

Thus the threads were brought together and the weaving began. From these men—Pole, Ukrainian, Serb, Latvian, Estonian, Croat and Hungarian, with six languages to divide them—some unity was to be sought. With one Englishwoman and two Englishmen in direction a common life and purpose was to be found—if all went well.

A few days later another body of men came in the same way as the first, and so brought the agricultural personnel of the camp to 250. The original arrivals were by that time out at work and the new men followed to the fields within two days.

The bare and dreary hutments were now full of men. The recreation rooms echoed in emptiness, but, already, attempts at gardening and tidyness were to be seen around the wooden homes.

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 6th October 1948



CORSHAM HOSTEL

For Wives and Families of European Volunteer Workers

The Ministry of Labour and National Service Hostels Corporation have opened at Westwells, Corsham, the first hostel in the country for the accommodation of the wives and families of European Voluntary Workers – “displaced persons” from the Continent who volunteer to work in England. The first party of about 100 mothers and young babies has arrived, and it is expected that the numbers will rise to about 500.

Nationalities represented include Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians and Ukrainians. The husbands are already working in various parts of England, and it is in accordance with a pledge given to them at the time when they volunteered for British industry that the women and children have been brought over. Some of the men have been in England for a year or longer. As they obtain housing accommodation in the localities where they are working their families will join them. In the meantime arrangements are being made for them to spend week-ends at the hostel together.

Each mother, with her children, is accommodated in a separate cubicle, for the cleaning of which she is responsible. There is a communal kitchen, where meals are provided by the staff, and a common dining-room, and recreation room. An interesting feature is the children’s kitchen, under the supervision of the Medical Officer, where the babies’ bottles and other food is prepared, again by the staff, all that the mother has to do being to feed the infant. Very few of the women speak English, and interpreters are included on the staff, which includes English and Europeans. Mrs. Ford is in charge of the hostel.

Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser, 29th November 1947

A new language for a new home



A class of children of European volunteer workers having a lesson in English at Hessle County Primary School. An interpreter, Mr. H. Malec, is sitting with the children, ready to explain in their native tongue the more difficult points. (A “Yorkshire Post” picture.)

Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 10th January 1948



What do you notice about the tone of the articles and the welcome the new arrivals are being given?

Windrush arrivals

Read these newspaper reports from the Shields Daily News and the Aberdeen Press and Journal.

492 Confident Jamaicans

Most of the 492 West Indians who arrived at Tilbury yesterday aboard the liner Empire Windrush will start to look for work to-day- and they are confident of finding jobs, although the Colonial Office has warned them that only skilled men are needed in Britain.

Nearly forty of the West Indians have volunteered for the mines, and a further fifty-two have volunteered for the Forces.

Three stowaways on board included Miss Evelyn Wauchope, a Kingston dressmaker.

Aberdeen Press and Journal, 23rd June 1948

200 Jobless Jamaicans Come To Britain

When the ex-troopship Empire Windrush slid alongside the landing stage at Tilbury (London) early today her deck was crowded with 492 Jamaicans, who have come to Britain to seek work.

Unloading was organised by the Jamaicans themselves because of the dock strike.

Fifty-two of the men have volunteered for the Services, 201 have prospects of work, and 236 are without jobs.

Flight- Lieut. H. J. Smythe, who had looked after their welfare on the voyage stated: "Between 30 and 40 of the men have volunteered to go down the mines, and all are hoping that something will be done for them to help them to begin a new life."

STOWAWAYS ON SHIP

Eight stowaways were found aboard. Two were put off at Bermuda and one, a woman, had her first class fare, totalling £48, paid for by the colonials who organised a collection when they heard she was to be put ashore.

Five more were discovered last night and today.

Among the Jamaicans are singers, students, pianists, boxers- and there is a complete dance band- who are to seek arrangements here.

Mr Floyd Raynor, a business man from Kingston, is here to buy agricultural machinery and livestock.

"Many of the men would not stick the conditions and poor pay in Jamaica" he said. "Some of them think that the streets of Britain are paved with gold, and a lot will be disappointed."

Winston Webb, a builder from British Guiana, said "All we ask is for a job and a chance to help Britain in her manpower shortage."

Shields Daily News, 22nd June 1948



What impressions does each story give about the new Windrush arrivals? What messages are given about how welcome they are?

How does this compare to the ways in which the arrival of European Volunteer Workers was reported?



Eileen Johnson onboard the Empire Windrush

Read the text of this newspaper story from the Daily Mirror on 17th June 1948, about one of the white passengers onboard the Empire Windrush and her family.

Eileen comes back from Isle of Lost Hope

Mrs Eileen Johnson, 24, is homeward-bound from “Disillusion Island,” West Indies, to Nowhere – the postal address of her old home at Nailsea, Somerset.

To Eileen, her coloured husband, Willis, and their two children, Maureen, 4, and Terry, 3, Nowhere means new hope.

On the boat with them are 450 coloured West Indians whose journey from “Disillusion Island” – the name they have given to Jamaica – to Britain in search of work, was raised in the Commons.

The problems faced by Eileen and her husband are typical of those which made the 450 Jamaicans on the boat leave for Britain.

Seven months ago Eileen and another English girl, Mrs V. Brown, of Lancashire, went to join their husbands in Jamaica.

When Eileen arrived she found her husband unemployed. Their savings almost disappeared. At last Mr. Johnson, a war-time plumber in the RAF, got a job – for 25s. a week.

“For seven months we scraped and struggled” Mrs. Johnson told the Daily Mirror when the homeward-bound SS Empire Windrush docked at Bermuda.

“Perfect Gentleman”

We decided to save up every farthing, sacrificing as much as we could to get to England.”

Eileen’s husband is wondering what reception he will receive in her village, where he spent most of his wartime leaves.

Eileen’s widowed mother, who is preparing her two-roomed cottage for her daughter’s family said: “Some of the villagers turned their heads when they met him in the street. I hope they will be nice to him now. He was always a perfect gentleman.”

Mr Hector Shepherd the village plumber, said: “I have no objection to coloured men. If there is work to do, Mr Johnson can certainly have a try out with me.”

And a villager said: “We’ll do our best to make the couple happy.”





Uncovering Black British History

The Windrush and Afterwards: Keywords Flashcards



**The
Commonwealth**

**Displaced
persons**

**European
Volunteer
Workers**

**British
subject**

**The
Empire
Windrush**

Colour bar





Boycott

**Racial
discrimination**

'sus' laws

**Stephen
Lawrence**

**MacPherson
Report**



The Commonwealth



Displaced persons



European Volunteer Workers



British subject



The Empire Windrush



Colour bar



Boycott



Racial



'sus' laws



Stephen Lawrence



MacPherson Report

