



The Windrush Project

LEF WI

This publication is dedicated
to the memory of Tamara
Madden who passed away in
November 2017

The Windrush Intergenerational Project

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Special thanks to Claire Jones, Art Teacher at Pentrehafod Comprehensive School

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The Windrush Project

The *Windrush Intergenerational Project* was developed by the African Community Centre to work with young people in schools to research the lives of the Windrush generation who arrived in Wales from the West Indies in the 50's, 60's and later.

Our project seeks to bridge the gap between the older and younger generations especially with regards to passing down culture, tradition, journeys, settlement and other experiences. Along with recording and documenting the amazing contributions that Black and Ethnic Minority migrants have brought to the UK and to Swansea/Neath Port Talbot in particular.

This publication, along with all artwork, interviews and their video recordings were created by the young people on the project.



Immigration has brought about rich diversities and amazing growth & development to the economy, polity, and public service among other sectors of the United Kingdom and many of these contributors have passed by uncelebrated.

Many of our first arrivals to Wales are now ageing and there is very little record of their contributions and impact to Wales. We wanted to capture this, for young people to learn, to be inspired and to be proud of their heritage.

The African Community Centre therefore explored these ideas with our young people who access the services of the Centre and decided to explore the community of people who traveled here after the war up until the early seventies. We hoped to learn about their innumerable sacrifices they made and rich contributions they offered to Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot.

The HMT Empire Windrush, originally MV Monte Rosa, was a passenger liner and cruise ship that was acquired by the UK Government as a 'prize of war' and was renamed Empire Windrush.

The Empire Windrush was used to bring the first large groups of post-war West Indian immigrants to the United Kingdom, carrying 492 passengers from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other islands. Most of the passengers were ex-servicemen seeking work in the UK. The ship arrived at Tilbury Dock, Essex, in England in June of 1948, marking the beginning of post-war mass migration.

The passengers on board the Empire Windrush were invited to come to Britain after World War II, to assist with labour shortages. Many of the passengers had fought for Britain during the war.

All who arrived in the UK between 1948 and 1971 became known as the 'Windrush Generation' - bbc.co.uk

Many others from the Caribbean were later invited to Britain to train as nurses.

In this publication, you will read about our elders from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic; their journeys to the United Kingdom, the jobs they worked in, the challenges they faced and the successes they achieved.





Lenny the lion is a name Mr Lawrence was called back in the day by his colleagues, due to his knowledge and strength. He was thought of as the best worker.

Mr Lawrence built the Tawe Bridge at the entrance to Swansea, cool right!?

He also built bridges in Port Talbot centre and the list goes on!

He also did a lot more, with all his hard work and strength, and all by just one man called Mr. Lawrence.

To be honest, I'm sure his children must be happy and proud of thier Dad.

Queeny Muniazo

"Not potatoes again!" was heard many times during our interviews - because our participants were not used to eating such bland foods.

They migrated from a country where traditionally a lot of spices were used in their cooking, namely Jamaica.

When they arrived in the UK, they found that potatoes formed a large part of their meals. After eating nothing but potatoes, they tired of them very quickly. Baked potatoes, fried potatoes, boiled potatoes. They hated the change of diet so much they laugh about it today.

Tina Johnson

"Not Potatoes
again"





LEF Wi YARD!

Jamaican Patois (Patwa/Patwah) Language

Patois (patwa/patwah) is a native dialect or language referred to as *Jamaican Creole* or broken English. It is an English based language with West African influences. The Patois is majorly spoken in Jamaica and some parts of the Caribbean islands.

These were a few of the words/expressions we learnt during the project while interviewing our elders and through research:

Back a yard - an expression used to refer to one's hometown or country particularly in Jamaica

Wah gwaan
what's going on or what's up?

We run tings, tings nuh run wi
We are in control of our own destiny

Wah ya do
What are you doing?

A suh wi dweet
That's how we do it

Booyaka
a sound used to imitate a gunshot

Hush yuh mouth
be quiet

One heart
an expression of unity

Isioma Ikediashi

"WHERE YA GO
BWOY!?"

Banana boat - slang
term for a boat used
to ship immigrants from
the Caribbean

DWL

as opposed to the
commonly used LOL *Laugh
Out Loud* when texting,
this is *Dead With Laugh*

Where ya go bwoy?

where are you going
young man?

Nuh ha nutten

Do not have anything

*One of the elders we
interviewed spoke this
to us in telling us
about patois/patwa
language*

Frah wha pawt yuh deh?

Where are you from?

Mi Soon Come

I Will Be Right Back

Likkle more, Walk good

See you later

Small up yuhself

Move Over

Alis Fender





"ONE WAS BORN IN THE DAY,
ONE WAS BORN IN THE NIGHT"

This saying came out of an interview with a second generation Windrushian, personally I like this quote because it is symbolic of two brothers dealing with racism.

The gentleman I interviewed had lived in Wales all his life, we talked about racism from when he was a child. He and his brother have different skin tones and he would frequently get asked by his class mates "why are you and your brother not the same colour" "Why are you two not the same" which came as a surprise to him because he had always seen his brother as his family - the same. He decided to ask his mother about the difference in colour, and she told him "one was born in the day, one was born in the night" the quote became a staple to the family and became a frequent saying.

Miles Thornton

Interviewing Tamara Madden

The group interviewed Tamara Madden over a video call to find out about her artwork, her migration to the United States from Jamaica, her heritage and how that influenced her art as they were interested in learning more for their Arts Award



Do you prefer living in America or Jamaica?

In Jamaica I can go outside and pick a mango off a tree, I can pick guava off the tree in my backyard. I can however pick apples off the trees in my yard in America - but its not the same.

Jamaica is a beautiful island and America is so big with so many opportunities... I can't compare them - they are too different.

When did you start Painting?

I was 14 when I first started painting, I had just come from Jamaica, I was a weirdo and an outcast - everyone thought I was different because I had a very broad accent and I didn't operate like most of the American

kids. I took a Summer School art class, and there was a teacher there who saw my talent, and he believed in me, he supported me through my Summer School class. And at the end of the Summer School, he gave me all the paints to take home. I could not believe it!

Did you find any challenges as an artist or a painter?

Some people write, perform, sing - but painting for me was a way to communicate my deepest feelings.

Struggle and my life go hand in hand. Life is not easy for anybody, sometimes we go through ups and downs. Art can save you from a lot of things. I think its cooler to be the weird outcast sometimes, rather than fit in with everybody



else. That's what I think I have been always. I like that.

With painting... All I did was pursue my dream, and I mastered it as best I could. Whatever you choose to do, make that decision and be the best at it you can be. You try and master it. Try to be the best 'you' you can be - don't compare yourself to anybody else.

I also practice photography. So I photographed and often dressed the people to prepare for these paintings.

I used to be a teacher and worked in an Arabic school, I've met and have been around people from different walks of life. Growing up in Jamaica I met people from all different backgrounds and who believed very different things about the world.

Why do birds feature in so many of your paintings?

When I was growing up as a kid in Jamaica I used to kill birds with slingshots. Yes, we grew up in the country. And we would roast them up outside and eat them and I enjoyed them. Now I'm a vegetarian believe it or not. I always appreciated birds, even though I ate them, because they could fly away - freedom!

Birds are symbolic for me. I got sick in 1997 - I had a very rare disease called IgA nephropathy, it usually only occurs in Caucasian and Asian men. So it was strange for myself, a woman to contract this illness. It made my kidneys fail. I ended up on dialysis, where you are stuck attached to a machine for very long periods to clean your blood, during this time I started to paint.



My brother, who I didn't know from Jamaica, donated his kidney to me. When I had the transplant, I decided I would put a bird in my paintings as a reminder of my freedom from being trapped on a dialysis machine, from this illness. Birds fly wherever they want to go, they be wherever they want to be, it's a symbol of my survival and a personal thing I put in all of my paintings.

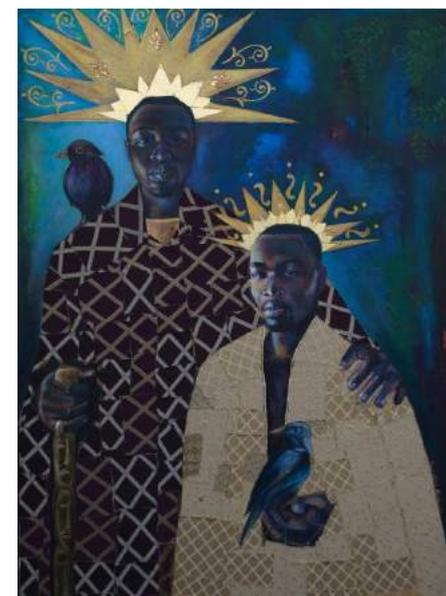
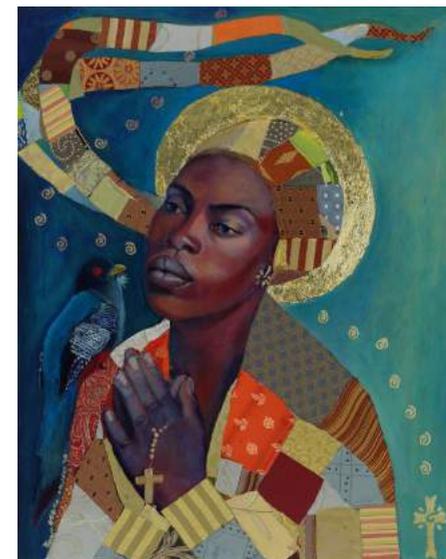
How many paintings have you made?

Probably thousands. I can't tell you - a lot!

Do you paint everyday?

All of my paintings are meaningful to me, there's a reason why I create what I create.

The creative process is not always about acting on it all the time, the creative process includes thought and for me I spend a lot of time thinking, writing down ideas, going through my mind to make sure it makes sense to me. Even when I'm not physically drawing or painting something, I'm always working on it in my head. I'm always in the process of creating. There's a new series I'm working on right now, I'm thinking about it a lot before I even start, making sure it makes sense.



Rudis Perbenton

What was life like in Haiti?

I was Dominican, life was very easy for me. But not for others, if they were Asian and Dominican or British - there is a law, immigration it was difficult for them. I speak Spanish I speak French I speak Creole.

Why did you come to the UK?

I was an artist, they offer me to sell, I had promoters here, one of them in Cardiff. I work all over the world. But because I'm an artist that is why I originally came here.

The journey?

I was born in 1969, I came over here in 1997 so I was 28. I found the journey here very bizarre, I had to leave all my friends behind. I had to live here for one whole year due to taxes, before I could return back to visit my friends.

I had an exhibition in the Taliesin Art Gallery, Swansea in June of 1997. I was very pleased to be promoting my work.

I was very shocked by the weather. The first houses I saw when I arrived had chimneys, and I did not understand what they were for. Back home they only have them for baking bread. I had to ask my friend



to explain them and I found out that every person has them to keep warm.

When I was out and about, going to the shops, I would feel uncomfortable because I didn't realise I had to put more clothes on. I was used to a hotter climate and wearing little clothes. It also has an effect on my skin, it has become

very dry and I had to get cream from the doctor to help. And also, not having a lot of sunshine I think can make me feel a little depressed sometimes. But you have to get on with it, we're all human, if others can get on with it, so can I

What is life like in the UK compared to the Dominican Republic?

In Dominica, I would serve the tourists in my shop. I would sell my artwork - I would also have people working for me, which was a responsibility to make sure they get paid and stay in jobs. When I moved over here, I started working in schools teaching art, mainly primary schools and continued to exhibit my work.



Nena Lawrence, Joyce Hall & Elva Headman

How did you find people were towards you when you first came to the UK?

Joyce: They just passed and stared at us, but after a while our neighbours started talking to us and wanted to know more about us. 'What's your name?' and you introduce yourself and it goes from there. Friendships start...

Do you miss your home country?

Joyce: Oh yes, we miss the climate, when its winter over here we wish we in our country. But after a while you get used to it and you know how to dress to suit the weather.

How did you feel when you came to this country?

Elva: It was terrible, we all missed our families at home. I came over in 1961 to join my parents so it was alright, really. I came to Bristol and I joined my

parents, so it was different from not coming over without anybody. I was lucky that I came to join my family. It was very good in Bristol, our white neighbour was very friendly to my parents.

Was the food similar here or different?

Joyce: Food, food! It was completely different from our food. All potatoes! When I started working in the hospital here, every

time we went to get food I would start crying and saying 'not potatoes again, not potatoes again, not potatoes again'. Potato and veg! The catering assistant said to me 'you're the one who left your sunny sunshine to come here, it's your own fault!' (laughs) After a while you got used to potatoes, either chips, mash potatoes, boil potatoes, 'oh not potatoes again' but we made the best out of it.

Did you like the school you went to?

Joyce: No, I didn't go to school I went straight into nursing but I obviously had to go to school before I could get into nursing. I went to school in my country and then came over here to do nursing. IWhen I was first here, I couldn't get used to the language or the way they were speaking, we spoke in a patois language. But here it was English and then a bit of Welsh dropped in at the same time - so it was like 'what you talking about?'

Did you have difficulties speaking or people having a hard time understanding you?

Nena: Everyone spoke much faster than us!

Joyce: Our native language in Jamaica is English but there was what we called patois, well broken English like, 'where ya go bwoy', 'wa wrang?', 'Behav yaself boy'. There would be time when my kids would

misbehave and I would just start off in patois and they would say 'mom calm down we can't understand a word you are saying'. (laughs)

Did you find the food that you had back home in Swansea?

Joyce: Not in the beginning, when I went to the hospital I used to cry 'not potatoes again, not potatoes again', not fried, not boil or mashed.

Nena: We used to get tinned yam in one of the shop in town,

Joyce: There was one shop in the square where we would go to get bananas, everybody would go around and tell every else that there's banana and yam in town square and everybody would just run to get it. And we use to get Ackee and Saltfish in a tin in the market, and when there would be new stock everyone would flock around and call their friends. But, we got used to the food, we adapt to the new food, use the ingredients and make the best of it. There was a shop in the market where you could get lamb neck and we'd have it with vegetables on the weekend when all the family was home.

Can you name some of the dishes that you had back in your home country?

Joyce: Chicken curry and rice, banana, yam, sweet potatoes, cassava and cocoa.



Elva: Sweet potato! You can get sweet potatoes in Tesco but it's not the same - wouldn't be as good as Jamaica sweet potatoes.

What did you do for work?

Elva: We all work in hospitals - we're retired now love, we're too old for that now. We all came in 1961.

What was life like working?

Joyce: At first it was hard, we didn't understand most of the things, and people would turn their nose up at us but after a while we get used to it and you know what to expect. I would never put up with any bad behavior, 'I'm not putting up with that' I used to say 'and if you carry on like that I'm going to report it'.

I learnt my job as much as I could and would say 'you can stop there,

I'm not putting up with that' and would then report it to the nurse in charge. Whatever I did I would do it to the best of my ability, and then they can't point the finger and say you didn't do that correctly. I tried to practice what I learnt in the class room.

I used to work in Neath General Hospital and after I had my children, I could no longer work full time, so I went part time at the nursing home working with older people. Oh and that was hard! There was a lot of heavy lifting and I'm suffering from it with my back and my neck even now. And in those days there were no machines or wires to help you, you relied on the person you were working with, if they weren't agile or in coordination you took a lot of the weight.

Do you still miss Jamaica?

Joyce: We still miss Jamaica, I've been there a few times. I came here 1961 and I've been back two or three times

Do you visit a lot?

Elva: No, no, no too expensive you have to have quite a lot of money to go to Jamaica. The air fare alone is over a thousand pounds sometimes. And when you get there, you have to give everyone something, some money. You have to give everybody you see a couple of pounds.

Do you like Jamaica more than Swansea?

Elva: Of course I like Jamaica more than Swansea, that's my home country. It's where I was born! (laughs)

What sort of things did you do back home that you can't do now?

Nena: I've been here so long I don't even know.

How did you find Wales when you arrived?

Nena: It was so cold. You can't take your money out of your pockets because it was so cold.

Elva: Sometimes you get home from work and you go to open the door with the key, and you just can't

do it. It really was that cold in the 60's, we don't have winters like that anymore. It was bitterly cold.

Joyce: We used to have coal fires in those days, my brother was so cold one day, he used to work all day on a building site, he stood with his back to the fire warming himself and he didn't realise his bottoms were burning!

Nena: Blankets in those days - not quilts like today

What was your favourite thing about Wales?

Elva: Nothing really. There was nothing to favourite because all of our home country food is in Bristol or London and none of our home country food was in Wales.

Why did you come over to this country?

Elva: The British wanted people to work here because the people of this country didn't want to do the type of work that we would do, so that's why most of us Jamaicans came here in the late 50s and early 60s. The country wanted more people so that's why we came here.

Nena: We came to work!

Elva: They couldn't get enough people to work, so they went to the Caribbean and told people to come and work from different places. The British people, they don't want to do

this or don't want to do that. When we came here there was a lot of prejudice, and that will never die out, just because of the colour of our skin.

Joyce: We did all the work because we're used to doing work like this in the Caribbean. We did whatever work that was given to us.

And people would say 'you West Indians especially Jamaicans you come over here with a suitcase in your hand and the next day you have a big house and a car in front of your houses, and I would say 'yes... we worked for it!'



Above: Visit to Tilbury Docks. Pictured are Leonard Lawrence, Nena Lawrence, Irving Saunders, Elva Headman | July 2018

Jackie Jones

Did you come on the Windrush ship?

No. I think that is possibly before my time. I'm not that old! (laughs)
I came to do my nurse training in Neath hospital, around 45 Years ago. I now live in Pontardawe.

What was it like when you first came to wales?

I came in April of 1972 and I was 21. I remember it was a bit rainy and wet. When I was landing in London I felt that all the houses were very close together and just looked cramped and damp, so you know it wasn't the best first impression.

What was your first impression of the people?

I found that the people of Wales were very friendly. But coming from a place where you don't necessarily ask a lot of personal questions I thought maybe this was a little bit intrusive... but now I've got like that myself (laughs)

But I think it's just because they want to get to know you. It's not meant maliciously. Its just to get to know

people and their backgrounds and also they in this part of wales they didn't see a lot of black people, so I think it was just interesting

So how did you like cope with the different food?

When I went to the interview in Jamaica to come over to train to become a nurse, they asked a lot of questions about how you would manage the food. They said 'you know they eat a lot of bland food such as potatoes' and things like that but when I came over I coped fine with the food, obviously it wasn't as spicy as we have our food it wasn't as seasoned but it was



ok, I managed. I was among other overseas students and we lived in the nurses home where we used to cook our own food. There were others there that were from other parts of the West Indies, Africa, Malaysia, Mauritius and they were cooking. We were all cooking in the same small kitchen in the nurses home so we learned from each other, so we picked up bits from other cultures as well.

Rob:
Not long after we were married, I started having heart burn and indigestion. We did an investigation into it, and found that my body wasn't used to the spicy cooking. My mother used to cook traditional British bland foods. It took a while for my body to acclimatise to it!

Jackie:
It was more highly seasoned than he was used to. Nowadays the cooking

has changed in Britain, you have a lot more restaurants and diverse foods, and people are introducing different things into their diet. But in the seventies they weren't used to a lot of spicy foods!

What was your favourite food in Jamaica?

My favourite food from Jamaica is Ackee and Saltfish, which you can still buy in this country but in a can.

What was it like growing up in Jamaica?

It was very free. Where I was born was right by the sea, so we could go to the beach and the sea everyday - we could pick mangos from the tree. Not like today where you worry about where your children are playing. It was very free.

Then we moved further inland



and we had coconut trees and avocado trees, orange, cocoa trees from which you get chocolate - grapefruit, bananas. It was lovely.

Do you often visit Jamaica?

Not often now because my family emigrated to America, some of my family live in London but some are in America. We used to go to America quite often when my father was alive but since he died we haven't been quite as often.

The last time we went to Jamaica was around 3 years ago but we stayed as tourists really on the North Coast.

How did you find the weather in this country?

Having lived here for so long, I've got used to it. I don't like the cold, but the rain - I can cope with the rain.

When I worked and was living at the nurses home, we used to stand in the shelter outside the home and wait for the rain to stop - because that's what you did in Jamaica. You had very heavy rain but you would wait for it to stop before you go out. But then someone told me that you don't wait for the rain to stop in this country, you get your mac on, you get your umbrella and out you go.

Difference in culture?

Because Jamaica is under British Rule, the culture difference wasn't as great. Have you ever seen a map of Jamaica?

The island of Jamaica is an island in the Carribean or the West Indies. It was discovered by Christopher Columbus shortly after he discovered America. He thought Jamaica was another part of India, where as India is in the East.

It has three counties, Cornwall,



Middlesex and Surrey, which are all British names. A lot of our places have British names. The place that Christopher Columbus landed is called Discovery bay, but around that area there are also some Welsh names. After the Spanish left the island, the British took over, and there are Welsh places too, there's a beach called Cardiff Hall, a place called Llandoverly. The island is



roughly the size of Wales.

Why did you want to become a Nurse?

There was an advert in the local paper for trainee nurses in Neath Hospital

I came over from Jamaica in 1972 specifically to do my nurse training. I wanted to become a nurse because I care about people, I always want to help people, become involved with them, make people better. Before nursing I was clerical officer in Kingston and St Andrew Council, and if someone got ill or injured I would be the first person there to do something to help them. So I thought, I don't know what I'm doing, so I thought it would be a good thing to go and get trained to become a nurse. That was what I wanted to be.

When I started my nurse training in Neath, in my 'set' or 'class' there were two other overseas students, they were both from Malaysia. We are still in contact even now - one of whom is a very very good friend. The 'set' ahead of me had more overseas students, I knew another student from Ghana and we are also still friends.

I was very fortunate, as I was a member of a church in Swansea, the first time I went to church, one of the families there invited me back to their house in Port Talbot. They adopted me almost, my church

family looked after me, I was never lonely. It was nice to have people who cared. We were like a little family in the nurses home, there were so many overseas students and we really got on well, but it was nice to have somewhere outside as well.

Our preliminary training was 8 weeks long, and most weekends I would go and spend with them. And after that we were let loose on the wards, we had to do a ward at a time for 8 weeks each.

What was it like working as a Nurse?

It had it's ups and downs overall. We lived in a nurses home, and there were a lot of overseas and British students living in the nurse's home. We had great fun. We would be in our small kitchen cooking food, we would all be together cooking food, from different countries, so you picked up tips from one another. I enjoyed the training so much, I didn't pass all my exams immediately, however I found out nursing was my vocation. I'm glad that I did it.

I trained at Neath General Hospital and I was there for five years and then moved to Morriston Hospital. When I finished my training in Neath I worked in Accident and Emergency - when I moved to Morriston I worked in Intensive Care - This was Neurosurgical intensive care, head injuries, tumours -

anything to do with the brain and the spine. I worked there for 25 years. Then I had a promotion and I moved to a department called Maxillofacial surgery again to do with the head and neck, people who had problems with their teeth or their jaw.

Greatest career achievement?

That's a really good question! Looking after the patients who were totally dependent on you, a lot of the patients I nursed were unconscious, machines breathing for them - you had to give total care. If you had to go for a break, someone else had to keep an eye on that patient. I really enjoyed this, you got a real sense of looking after that patient and in a care capacity doing everything for them.

Do you have any children?

I met my husband, Rob, in the Christmas of 1973, we were married in 1975, and we have 2 girls and



we have 4 granddaughters. 42 years we have been married.

Rob:

I had never been out of the country before, so going to Jamaica was a big learning curve for me - a good learning curve. And it's funny, when you think about it, if Jackie hadn't moved here, we would never have met, our children or their children wouldn't have been born, all because she decided to apply for that job.

Jackie:

Before this I was working for the Parish council in Jamaica

Do you remember any Patois?

My children ask me, although the national language is English in Jamaica, to speak some Patois but I can't remember very much of it.

Was there any discrimination when you got married?

There was nothing overt, it was more quiet you could say, people used to stare at me because I was a black person in a white person's world. But when we both got together, they used to stare even more! It was very rare in those days, there were only around two mixed race couples in Neath at that time. There wasn't anything really nasty though, maybe behind our backs but not to our faces.



proud of him when we got married, he was involved with the president of Ghana. We didn't have any opposition from the family.

How has Swansea changed?

We were driving past a primary school near where we live one day and all the school kids started taunting and shouting 'blacky blacky blacky'. I stopped the car and got out and they were shocked, I said 'it's not blacky, it's Jackie' Rob's uncle, who was living in Ghana at one point, he was very

The food has changed, there are more nationalities and diversity now. More different races, colours. The most people you saw of different colour in the seventies were from the University. The culture has changed, there's a lot more mixing of the cultures in Swansea now.

A close-up portrait of Leonard Lawrence, an older Black man with a mustache, wearing a brown hat and a light-colored sweater over a white shirt and blue tie. The background is blurred, showing colorful patterns.

Leonard Lawrence

Leonard Lawrence came to Wales to work as a constructor, to rebuild after the second world war. His ability to always get a job completed and saving Swansea from flooding earned him the nickname 'Lenny the Lion'

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Leonard Lawrence and I came to Port Talbot in 1960. It has affected me a whole lot, you have to leave Jamaica, come over here, and start life all over again. I'm a builder and a community worker and I'm now 82 years of age.

Was it hard to adapt to the culture in this country?

For me? It was very hard. I'm one of fourteen brothers and sisters and I had to leave all of them in Jamaica and come over to Wales. I remember my mum wrote me, I wrote her back to tell her what I was doing and wrote "sorry mum, only God will help me, but I don't think you can help me now, I've got to do what I can to make my life".

Leonard was among dozens of people who settled in Wales as part of the Windrush movement. He had followed in the footsteps of the first 492 passengers who had sailed from the Caribbean to Britain in 1948 on the Empire Windrush.

It was hard leaving my family; we were a loving family but I had to leave them because there was a life to be made. Jamaica wasn't independent then and things were taken from us and brought to Britain, there was nothing there for us. I felt like I had to make something for myself.



* MR. Lawrence in charge
of SITE with
all PHOT

Did you find living here a big change?

In some cases, it was hard, as the only thing you could get to eat is potato. There are a lot of things you couldn't get. You couldn't get no West Indian food to eat.

Why did you choose to come to Port Talbot?

I had an uncle and a brother here in Port Talbot. My uncle left Jamaica to the UK when he was 19 and settled in Port Talbot working in the ships. We didn't know him but when my brother arrived in Manchester, he found him and moved to Port Talbot. So, when I came to the UK, I joined them here.

What was working life like?

In 1960, it was very hard. I had to wake up at 3.00 am to catch a bus

from Port Talbot to Swansea at 4.00 am to start work at 8.00 am. It was the no 4 bus coming over the bridge. If I took the bus that goes through Neath, I will get to Swansea at 9.00 am. That was the type of transport available at the time. When I finish work at 4.30 pm (as a builder), I get home at 9.00 pm. Travelling was very difficult.

Did your type of food change?

Yes, in Swansea we mostly had potatoes, swede. You look for food from West Indies and cannot get it. There was only one guy who had ethnic minority foods and once it finished, you have to wait for when he next had the food to sell.

What were people like towards you?

You meet some, you meet others! I started working when I arrived in



Port Talbot as a carpenter. My first weekly wage was £4.19. I sat down and I cried like a baby because I couldn't believe it. Within two weeks, I left to Newport and was working in the steel works. Some people were good and I worked there for a year. I decided to come back to Port Talbot because of my family and I was transferred by my contract company. Nobody in Port Talbot wanted to give me a start, they were biased against me. One person did accept me, Tom Lanchbury, he was a gentleman and we kept in touch, he was a foreman at the time. He admired my work and he gave me the privilege.

Did you work at the Steel Works in Port Talbot?

From 1981 - 1987, I worked in Tata Steel as a contractor with a company called Andrew Scott. I worked refurbishing the mill as a contractor, we worked 12 hour shifts at the time, very long hours and it was hard work too. It was like working like a slave. But I enjoyed it because I am a hard worker.

Workwise, did you notice a bias because of the your skin colour?

Yes, I felt isolated. People will be talking and as you come close to them, they switch to speaking in Welsh. Anyway, I was the type of guy that so long as its work, I would carry on with my work. And I did carry on for many years. I wanted an opportunity to show what we could do; I was definitely harder working and was very knowledgeable. I wanted to prove myself. I have built roads, bridges, shores, lakes, heavy timbering, colleges etc. since 1960.

Can you tell us what you built in the past?

Have you been to Port Talbot town centre? That's one of my constructions. When I say my construction, I take most of the responsibility for building it. I was sent there because I was a general foreman. I also built the bridge over the Tawe river, it's at the entrance to Swansea City Centre.

I am a builder and a community worker - that's how I'd describe myself.



Can you tell us a little about how you stopped Swansea from flooding?

This happened during the time I was building the first Locke gate in Swansea, where the marina currently is now.

The issue was due to a problem

between the original drawing plan compared to what we found at the site. The drawings showed three entrances to the tunnel and it was actually four. We were excavating and suddenly found there was a fourth. We had to do something quickly. The tide was coming in and the water level was rising up a foot at a time.

My boss asked me 'what are you going to do to stop Swansea from flooding?'

I had to think fast, I had 35 minutes to make a decision. I made a plan and instructed my men what to do, as the sea levels were rising - we were pouring concrete. We were pressed for time to seal the

hole, if we didn't succeed Swansea would have flooded. The plan was successful.

At the time they would ask me to do anything and it would be done. That's why they called me Lenny the Lion. Lenny the lion...that's me.





How was your experience of community?

It was very bad when we came, because the first thing we understood was that no black man was allowed to have a pint of beer and drink it in a pub. So we had to change that - we started the Swansea Committee for Racial Equality in 1982 - it began life as Carribean Friendship Group from 1962, and then went on from 1982 to change a lot for racial equality. There was a lot of fighting in Port Talbot, Black against White, I wanted no part of it. I wanted a voice. I wanted a community working spirit. And it's still going on today in Swansea.

When you weren't working what would you do for leisure or for family time?

For leisure, we formed a Caribbean cricket team and we played all around, from one park to the other and even in Margam park. Every Sunday I use to take my children to Margam park and we go up the hill where the children can play around.

What changes have you seen?

When I arrived in Wales, you couldn't get a house to rent from the council... so we changed that. We had it changed that if you are a citizen and you apply for a house, that you are entitled to take the council to court to explain why you were not eligible for that property.

And this extended to jobs too, if you felt you were discriminated against. We changed that. And we changed the Police in 1998, if you apply for a job with the police, as long as you are entitled and have the qualifications, then you are entitled to get the job. And not just the police actually - anywhere. That's what we changed - and that's what the Committee for racial equality did.

How has Swansea changed?

There is a vast difference! Look at all you young people living here now, it was never as diverse back then.

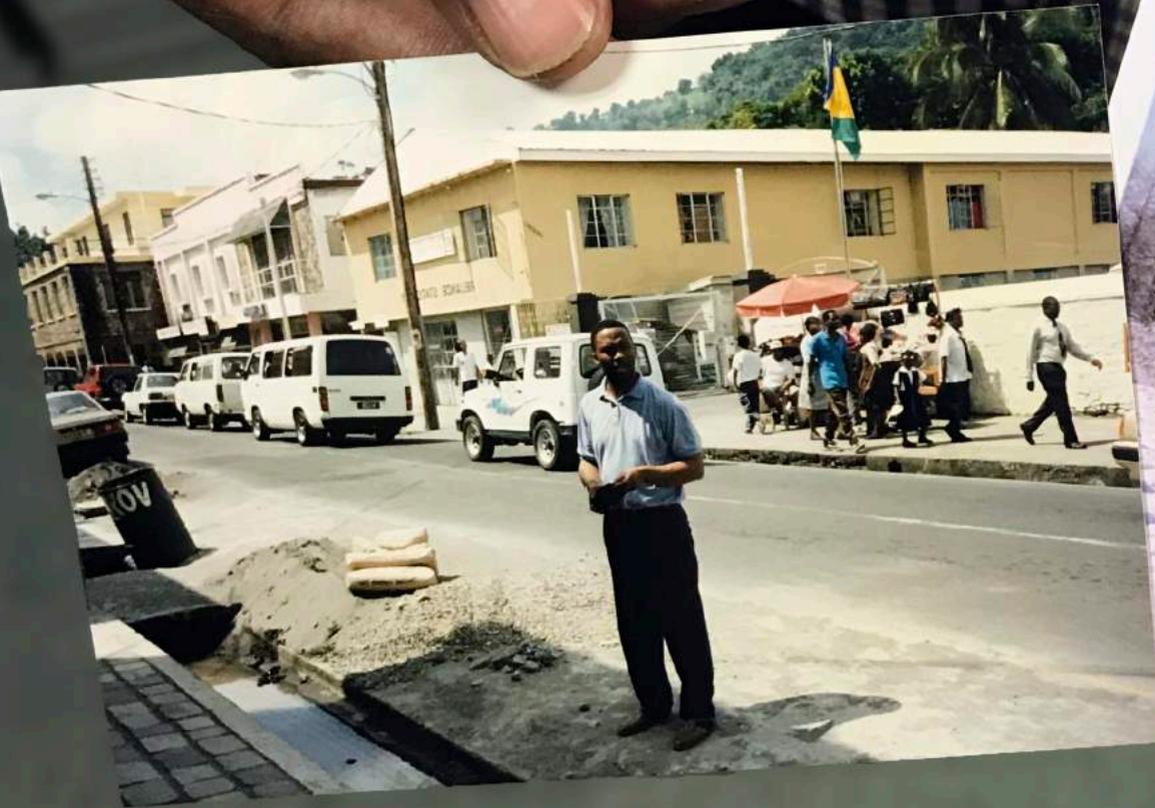
At one time there used to be a few ethnic minorities living in Port Talbot but in Swansea there was none.

I came to Swansea to work on the Tawe Bridge and you could walk miles through Swansea and there was only one like me you could find. And then in 1979, everything changed. There are now 85 different groups or cultures living in Swansea. Swansea has changed a lot.

I traveled here on the Ascania ship, not the Windrush. It was my first experience of racial inequality, all the people who were west indian had second seating for dinner, and were not allowed to eat with the other passengers.

Things have changed a lot since then, and they have changed greatly.

Irving & Lil Saunders



Could you both tell us a little about yourselves?

Irving: I was born in a country called Curaçao and that is in the Dutch West Indies. We left Curaçao for Trinidad when I was five years old. I lived in Trinidad for seven years before I came to England

Lil: I was born in Jamaica and I left Jamaica when I was twenty. Living in Jamaica was lovely, loads of friends, I love the variety of foods, the variety of fruits, the clubs we used to belong to, we used to go swimming every Sunday morning at 5am. We would walk three miles to get there and then would probably get a lift home in the back of a

pickup truck or something. The memories are just of great fun

Irving: I grew up in Trinidad - from what I can remember you really felt part of a community, even from 5 years old. Everybody knew you, your family, one another - it just felt comfortable. In Trinidad we had a mix of different ethnicities,

Negro, Indian, Chinese - so we experienced a lot of different cultures too, including their foods.

What's your favourite memory?

Lil: I didn't grow up with my father,



my father lived up in the country. And when I went there on a holiday, my sister and I would walk miles to wash our clothes down by the river. On the way we would pick mangos, collect them all up and carry them along with us. You never went on your own, there were always large groups going, so it was an experience and a group connection. They were happy times.

Irving: For me, doing boy's things – playing cricket or football – the freedom of leaving home at 9 in the morning and not returning until 6 in the evening, and your parents wouldn't worry because they knew you were safe. And also the other memory is the food, the availability of the food, it was just everywhere and you absorbed it.

When did you arrive in the UK?

Lil: 15th January 1975 – I remember it well because I was so excited because I was going to fly for the first time

Irving: We came to England in May 1968, I was 12 years old. My father came in 1962 – that's usually what would happen the father or mother would come first and then they would send for the rest of the family.

So my father sent for my second brother, he was coming up to 18, and he had to come before he was 18, so he came about 6 months before us. Then my mom, myself and my two older brothers came by ship, and it took about three weeks before it arrived in England, it left from Trinidad and then it went to four or five different islands. We arrived in Southampton and then got the train to Dagenham.

It was strange! I remember the train leaving Southampton and seeing lots of fields and children playing in the fields, and I thought to myself I'm going to be doing that soon. However, we got to Dagenham and I was surprised to see all the houses – they were all joined up, they had all these terraced houses, it was so strange.

I remember waking up the first morning in Dagenham and hearing this weird noise, you don't see them as often now, but it was a milk float. I looked out the window and saw this vehicle driving along. It was all strange to me.

Lil: As Irving said – all the houses joined up! I remember thinking 'wow' it's so different from back home where there were single detached houses. I remember going to the newspaper shop, and seeing all these sweets. I wanted to buy one of every different sweet – I couldn't. I just couldn't believe the choice.

Why did you come to the UK?

Lil: I came here to do my training, to train as a nurse I mean. I went straight to the north of England to Omskirk just outside of Liverpool, I was there for about 3 years for my general training. Then I went off to Yorkshire to do my midwifery and then came to London.

It felt good, this is what England is all about, I've been dreaming about

going to England and I was here and enjoying it. The nurses group there were so glad to have us, they would do anything for us it was lovely.

Irving: I came here when I was 12, so I went into Year 8 of secondary school in England. The first thing I can remember is the school dinners, I remember the sponge pudding and custard. I didn't find school hard; there wasn't any prejudice from the others – I think as boys at that sort of age you're so excited about everything, you just settle in and get along. I left that school in July, and we moved further out to Essex. I finished my schooling there.

Lil: For me, when I came here. I came through the Overseas Employment Department in the Government of Jamaica – so when I came here there were already a few other Jamaicans who had arrived ahead of me. So when I



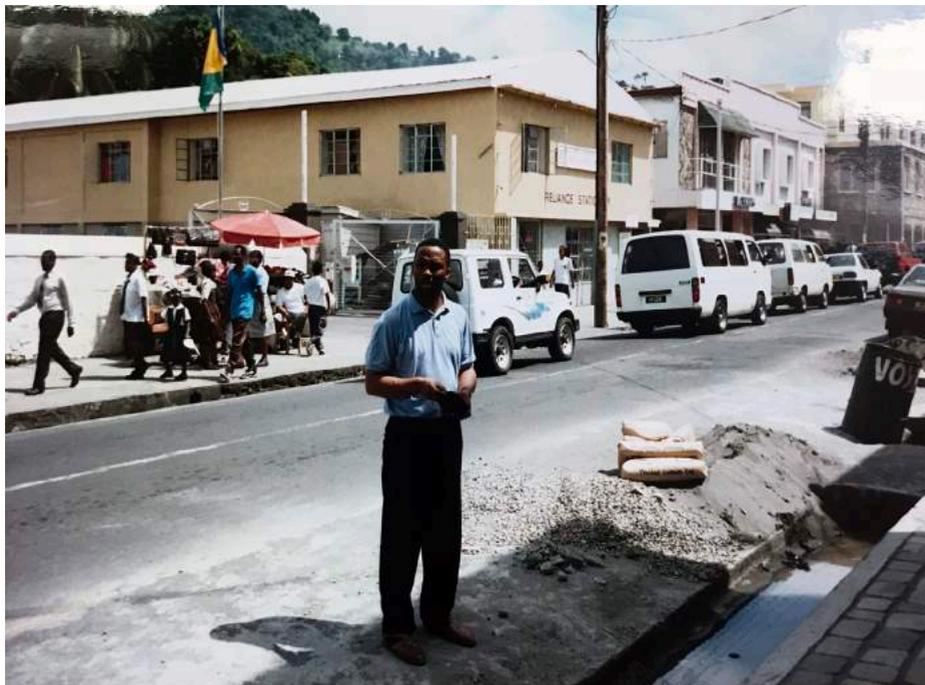
started in Omskirk, there were two other nurses ahead of me, in senior roles, so we felt very protected even though we met no prejudice at all. The nurse who was in charge of the nurses home, we could go to her and we would get anything we asked for.

Irving: When I started my school in Essex, there were only three pupils from ethnic backgrounds. I wouldn't say it was hard, but it was very different, because you were three amongst three hundred and fifty students, we had to adjust. The times we grew up in, the times we were in secondary school, immigrants didn't have it easy. They did certain types of jobs such as nursing or bus driver, train driver -

and you would hear 'we have too many immigrants - when are they going to go back home' - so the atmosphere was... I wouldn't say it was hostile, but certain members of society weren't as welcoming. So you had to live amongst that.

There was a politician named Enoch Powell at the time and he gave a speech about immigrants and there would be 'rivers of blood'... this would have taken place on the Saturday and there would be school on Monday morning, and it would be in your mind at the time, you would carry it with you. Although nothing ever happened at school, we would just feel it still.

Do you have any children?



Irving: We have two boys, they were born in Essex England, and we moved to Swansea when they were two and three-year-old. They are Welsh speaking, they went to the Welsh school in Gowerton. They were in the same position as me at that age, they were the only ethnic minority in their school, but they adjusted. I think generationally, my parents made it better for me, and we have made it better for our children. They grew up amongst the Welsh kids and they were fine.

Lil: When we came to Swansea and the boys were young, we really felt welcomed, we had cards through the door from the neighbours, and I really thought that was so sweet. We had never had that before, I thought it was so special considering we were a black family moving in.

Irving: Our children settled fine, they had a wide range of friends at school and at church. They did miss their cousins in Essex but they settled fine.

How did you adapt to Welsh or British culture?

Lil: I think to be quite honest, the church has a lot to do with it. The fact we are Seventh-day Adventist, and there was a local adventist church and we became part of the fellowship there. There were so many things the church had on, we became very involved in it, we become part of the community



and became friends. Our children grew up with all the children at the church. So it formed a big big part.

Irving: The weather. The rain. Essex was cold, but it wasn't as wet. But coming to Swansea, it was the rain - I couldn't get used to the rain.

However, I worked as a District Nurse in Swansea and the people were lovely. I've done a lot of travelling - the more I've travelled you realise how friendly the Welsh people are. Swansea felt like the West Indies, that sort of community feel, people welcoming you. You go to other countries and you don't get that closeness, you pass people in the street elsewhere and you don't get acknowledgement, in Swansea you do, there is a real sense of community.

Lil: I did crave the Jamaican food. I missed mangos, it's my favourite food. When I would go in the shops, and would have to pay for Mangos,

I would be shocked as we used to get it for free back home. After three years in Liverpool, by the time I came to Wales I had adjusted.

Irving: We couldn't get any hair products or creams, so we had to go to Bristol or Birmingham to get these things. When we came to Swansea, there wasn't diverse shops like you see now on St Helens Road. Even ethnic groups, if you see anyone from Africa or so, we would hoot in the car and wave. We were so few and far between – but now all that is changed.

Lil: There weren't many black people were there? You would cross the road just to go and talk to another black person as it didn't happen so often.

What part of your culture has stayed with you to date?

Lil: My Patois, I try not to forget it. Irving does not understand it as he is from Trinidad. But whenever my sister comes to visit we go straight into the patois. I miss it. I try to hang onto it, because it's like an identity of Jamaica.

Irving: It was the community. Everyone you met or saw, you acknowledge that person. Everyone was accepted in Trinidad. You just accept people for who they are. You take the goodness from somebody else's culture, even their food, such as can I use that in my cooking. Just you know, breaking down those

barriers between people.

Do you have any family back home?

Irving: I have a few cousins in St Vincent. But some of my family who were born in Curaçao have now moved to Holland, so part of my family is there. Not many in the West Indies.

Lil: I still have family in Jamaica, there were 12 of us. So I still have brothers and sisters in Jamaica. I haven't been back as often as I should. I have been here for over 40 years and I've lost my contact with Jamaica. I didn't cultivate the habit of phoning my family every week like some people. So we don't keep in touch as often. The last time I went home was 2015 and it was my sister's birthday.

Irving: I think, where you spend your childhood, that's home! That always stays, you may be here for 40-50 years, but a part of you is back where you spent your childhood

Did you bring any family traditions with you?

Irving: Our religion, we brought that with us. And the food

Lill: The denomination was an essential part of our lives when we were home, so we fell into it when we came here.

Irving: With regards to 'bringing

things with you', you take it with you because it's inside you in spirit, some things you can't transport from where you came from.

Can you tell us about British Traditions?

Lil: We had to adjust to the food. It used to be, before I gave up meat, I loved beans and chips, and burgers. I had to adjust to the food over the years.

Irving: We tend to season our food a lot more, herbs and spices salt and pepper. Where as here it was a little bland.

What do you feel your greatest achievement is?

Irving: I went into nursing. I feel this would be engaging with people, helping people, seeing people who were ill get better. To me that's been my greatest achievement.

Lil: I'm also a nurse, and I didn't have any problems settling into the job when I came here. I thanked God all the time for where I work, the environment was so good, the people I work with are really nice – I'm not going to say there's no prejudice in the environment. But it hasn't really affected me as such. I see the prejudice now that didn't exist before, it's a different generation now, so I see how they treat newcomers – others from different countries.

Did you experience any prejudice?

Lil: I listened to a presentation once, and the speaker talked about a nursery rhyme – you know 'pussycat, pussycat where have you been? I've been to London to see the Queen'. And at the end of the nursery rhyme, the cat was asked what did you do there, he said 'he frightened a mouse under a chair'. The speaker went on to say out of all the things in London, Big Ben, Buckingham palace – all these exciting things and the Cat concentrated on the mouse under the chair. So if you look for something you will find it, if you look for prejudice, you will find it. Don't focus on it, don't look for it. Look for things that are more positive. Not to hide prejudice, be aware of it, but don't concentrate on it. As you go through life, aim for what you want, achieve something – if a black man can get into the white house, there are more opportunities too. Go for the top – always!

Irving: The environment that you young people are growing up in, it's the best time to be here, there are people from all parts of the world, use the positivity of everybody and move things forward.

I have learnt so many things being part of this project. It's been a fantastic opportunity getting into the world of our amazing elders from the West Indian or Windrush Community. All the people we've interviewed have really taught me how heritage is very important, how culture is important, and how migration has really been a blessing - not just to Swansea, but to the world at large.

Having the opportunity to interview Tamara Madden who migrated from Jamaica to the US - is a good example of the rich heritage and culture migration brings to different parts of the world, not just Swansea, and how it enriches people and society generally.

It's great to see how these things are passed on from the older to younger generations and to be able to facilitate this process has been amazing. We have had some fantastic young people on the project and each of them has shown individual skills, talents and personality.

I feel during this project I've developed a more artistic eye for things. Alongside the project I've been supporting the young people with their Arts Award, that they gained during this project, and have been able to encourage and enable them to look inward and identify what their creative instincts may be - and to be able to judge what is artistic to them. So many things we don't think of as artistic are in fact art. Painting, dancing, filmmaking - they've all produced different work for their art award, which has grown out of this project.

I wouldn't say I have a favourite interviewee; I love all of them. Each interview has been amazing in itself. Interviewing Mr Lawrence and visiting Tata Steel where he used to work, and seeing how his work has impacted on the industry and also the changed South Wales. Then Jackie and looking into her world as a nurse along with Nena and her two friends who were also nurses, and finding out about Patois dialect. Rudis and his amazing artwork. Irving and Lil and learning how they brought up family. There's no favourite. Together there's a richness of life that celebrates everything this project is about.

Isioma Ikediashi | Project Manager





"My favourite interview was with Mr Lawrence because he had a great experience of life, he came from Jamaica and has lived and believed in Great Britain for over 50 years now. He has contributed so much"

Saba Humayun



"I've enjoyed learning new skills such as filming, interviewing and art Peoples' stories inspired me, it revealed to me that life is hard and people go through many difficulties sometimes."

Mohammed Ali Shah



"My favourite part was making documentaries about the Windrushians and how they came to the UK. I learnt some new skills, such as using the cameras, And I learnt how to perform interviews, how to structure questions properly."

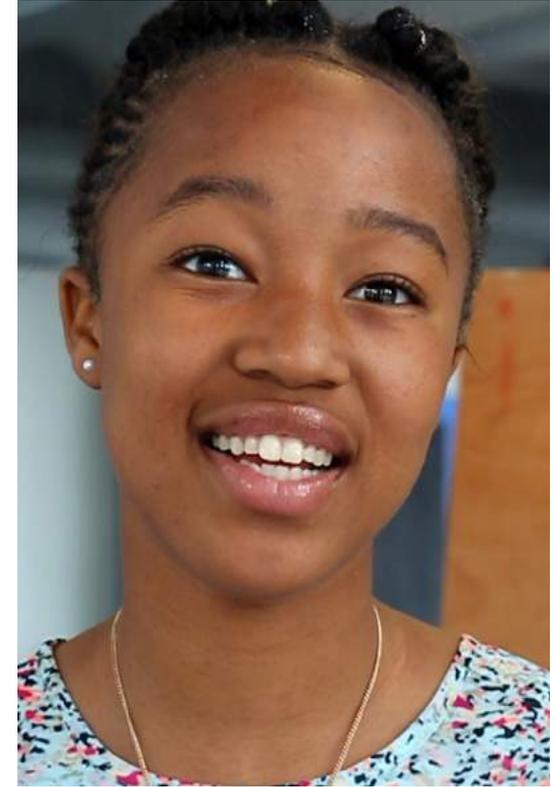
Tina Johnson

"This project has taught me how to be open with people, especially when interviewing the people who came here from Jamaica. Allowing me to ask more questions, and knowing more about how they've been, and how they're doing."

My favourite part has been working on the interviews with my fellow participants, it's really great. It gives you more friendships and to get close with others.

When interviewing people I think I should have an open mind, I'm just going to get to know the people. It feels really good as I get to know how they've been in the past - the feeling is just phenomenal."

Queeny Muniazo



"I enjoyed finding out information from other people, and writing about them. I learnt how to put information together, how to interview people properly - making sure there is no awkwardness and selecting good questions that avoid simple yes and no answers."

Alis Fender



"I enjoyed learning how to collect information, how to carry out interviews and how to work as a team. I enjoyed planning out questions."

Miles Thornton





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Working together to break down barriers

The Windrush Project

Isioma Ikediashi

Tim Stokes

August 2018