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Windrush at 75

Reporters, cameras, speeches, and even songs publicised the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush when it docked at Tilbury on June 22, 1948. The ship carried 1,027 people on board, including many passengers from the Caribbean, invited to help rebuild Britain after World War II.

In this episode, we're marking the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush through the lens of several unique records held at The National Archives, including the official passenger list. Hosting this episode is Chloe Lee, a Migration and Citizenship Researcher, and she is joined by specialists Iqbal Singh, Lisa Berry-Waite and Vicky Iglkowski-Broad.

This episode is part of a season of events and activities to mark the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush on its 75th anniversary. To find out more, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/Windrush-75

Documents from The National Archives used in this episode: [BT 26/1237/91](#), [CO 876/89](#), [AST 7/1125](#)

For more information about the records covered in this episode, look at our research guides to [passengers](#) and [Individuals from the Caribbean](#). For help navigating our catalogue, you can watch our [top-level tips on using Discovery](#).

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Transcript

This episode contains some language that listeners may find offensive, and stories of racism.

Chloe Lee: The *Empire Windrush*, a former German cruise ship, was not the first ship to carry Caribbean people who wanted to settle in the UK after the war. Two other ships brought passengers from Jamaica to Liverpool and Southampton in 1947. But the Empire Windrush was the one that got the attention. Newspaper reporters, newsreel cameras, political speeches, and even songs — all publicised the arrivals when they disembarked at the port of Tilbury on June 22nd, 1948. This group of people exercised their right to entry and settlement through the British Nationality Act of 1948 and became known as the Windrush Generation.

Reader: Jamaicans arrive to seek work. Of the 492 Jamaicans who arrived at Tilbury on Monday to seek work in this country, 236 were housed last night in Clapham South deep shelter. The Times, June 23rd, 1948.

Reader: 30 WEST INDIANS WANT TO GO INTO OUR MINES. Thirty of the 417 West Indians bound for Britain in the troopship Empire Windrush, have volunteered for the mines, thirty for the RAF and fifty for the Army, said a Colonial Office spokesman yesterday. Daily Mirror, June 10th, 1948.

Reader: Attlee steps in as a colony protests: Welcome is planned. Evening News, June 17th, 1948.

Chloe: This is On the Record at The National Archives: uncovering the past through stories of everyday people.

I'm Chloe Lee, a Migration and Citizenship Researcher at The National Archives.

I want to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush by pulling out some of the fascinating stories about the Windrush Generation using the unique items we hold here in Kew at the National Archives.

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One of those documents is the official passenger list, which contains the names and details of all 1,027 people on board the ship (not counting the two stowaways), and gives us a unique insight into their experiences in their new home. We actually have a booklet by H.D. Carberry and Dudley Thompson,

written as a guide for the West Indian arriving in the UK. Carberry and Thompson were both Jamaican immigrants studying law at Oxford and were commissioned by the Government to write this booklet in 1949.

They warned: “The light in England is never as fierce in intensity and brilliance as it is at home, nor is the range of natural colours as great.”

But I want to bring some colour to these old stories and experiences — by looking behind the headlines we’ve heard, to learn about the context that led to this momentous event in British history — and to discover more from primary sources like that booklet about what it felt like to be one of those new arrivals. My colleagues will be coming into the studio to tell me about the histories they’ve found in our archives — picking out a few names from the passenger list and finding out more about them.

Chloe: And I also want to highlight some of the cultural impact that members of the Windrush Generation have made — for me, that’s primarily through music. I’ve made a playlist of songs to accompany this podcast episode. It’s linked in the episode notes.

The playlist features performers such as Lord Kitchener, aka Aldwyn Roberts, who famously performed the song “London is the place for me” for the Pathé Newsreel as he stepped off the Empire Windrush in 1948. And Mona Baptiste, a singer born in Trinidad and Tobago, who was listed as a clerk in the passenger list, but who was also photographed with a saxophone on the dock.

Her song Calypso Blues is on the playlist.

Other passengers I’ll hear about in this episode include Ena Claire Sullivan, who moved to the UK to be a nurse, and Janina Folta, who was one of the Polish refugees on the ship. That’s a story that’s often left out!

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The history of the Windrush, and the generation of passengers and their descendents, is an essential part of British twentieth-century life. But there are difficulties in telling this story. There are gaps in this history. The National Archives only has government records, so we don't have any direct personal accounts. That's one reason why I've made the playlist.

Archives are always incomplete, and the Windrush Generation and their descendants have experienced, and continue to experience, racism. And it leads to some stories in this episode that might be difficult to hear, but ones that I believe are important if we are to continue learning from history.

We must start with the context. Although the Windrush landed in the UK in 1948, the factors that led to this wave of migration had been brewing for years. So, my first guest is Iqbal Singh, Regional Community Partnerships Manager at the National Archives.

Iqbal has two records that, together, give a picture of what was going on in the Caribbean through the 1930s and 40.

Iqbal Singh: Hi Chloe. My first item is from the working papers of the West India Royal Commission ([CO 950](#)), and it's a submission to the commission from Harold Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples, and George Padmore and others ([CO 950/30](#)).

Chloe: What is this document?

Iqbal: It's a very long account of the conditions of people living in the Caribbean. They submitted it to the West Indian Royal Commission, which was led by Lord Moyne, and was a government investigation into what was going on in the Caribbean. So, it gives us a unique insight, from the time, from the people with lived experience, of what we now might think of as the 'push factors', or the reasons why people in the Caribbean wanted to leave, and take their chance to move elsewhere. It's also important to note that traditionally, travelling abroad for employment was normal for people from the Caribbean.

Chloe: And what about further back in time?

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Iqbal: Most of the people living in the Caribbean at the time were descendants of enslaved people. As slaves, and then ‘free’ workers, these people were exploited by land owners and companies. These islands and nations often had a range of peoples, including people descended from African enslaved people, and also lots of migrants from China, India and elsewhere. Culturally and politically, often these groups were set against each other.

Employment often relied on sugar plantations, or other plantations growing just one crop, which is dangerous because when the crop fails, the whole economy suffers. By the 1930s, it was clearer and clearer that these economies were failing.

Chloe: So, people weren't living in great conditions.

Iqbal: Absolutely. The result was a lot of unrest in the Caribbean, especially labour protests, led by workers calling for labour reform, independence, and self-rule.

Reader: Despite the tendency in certain sections of the British press to attribute these disturbances to hooligans, agitators, unruly and irresponsible elements, the widespread character of the unrest, the speed with which it spread from district to district, from industry to industry, where the Butlers, Paynes and Bustamentes were unknown, suggest that the real cause of the disturbances is to be found in the economic and social conditions of the colonies. This is also the view of the colonial office. Mr Malcolm MacDonald, speaking in the House of Commons on June 14th, 1938, said inter alia: “These feelings of unrest are a protest against the economic distress of the colonies themselves, a protest against some of the consequences of that economic stress; uncertainty of employment, low rates of wages, bad housing conditions in many cases, and so on.”

Iqbal: Harold Moody and others, who wrote that submission, were clear that the unrest was not just a bunch of hooligans making a mess, as British newspapers were saying. It was more fundamental — it was about the “economic and social conditions of the colonies”.

Chloe: So, does the submission go into details about the conditions?

Iqbal: It does indeed, it’s a real laundry list.

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Chloe: So, for instance, working people what was it like for them?

So, for them, I mean, here's a quote: "The labourer in Barbados cannot afford milk in his tea, whilst in the recent Jamaica rising hundreds of labourers, clad in rags and hungry, prayed for admission to the public gaol [what we today would know as a jail] in order that they might obtain food (See Manchester Guardian, April 8, 1938)."

Chloe: And what about children and education?

Iqbal: Again, this is part of the submission. Around 50,000 children are unable to go to school as their parents are unable to provide them with food and clothing. And here's a quote: "The resultant illiteracy is high. In Trinidad, one of the wealthiest and most advanced of the colonies, the percentage is, after a century and a half of British rule, still 45%."

Chloe: And health?

Iqbal: On health, the submission quotes from a doctor with 20 years' experience in the Dutch East Indies who said, "he had never seen such distressing conditions as existed here among the East Indian labouring population, where apparently men and women suffered from the absence of all the known vitamins."

Chloe: So, what recommendations did they make?

Iqbal: Simply put, major reform. An uplift of health, provisions of parks, trade unions, democratic government, self-rule. The league and the others who wrote this submission were saying: "The history of England suggests that the capture of political power is the first requisite for the improvement of the condition of the masses."

Chloe: That was one of the submissions made to the Royal Commission, led by Lord Moyne. What happened with this Moyne commission?

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Iqbal: It's a very good question. The first thing to remember is that it was a 10-member commission that was all white. No one with lived experiences of being a person of colour living in the Caribbean.

Chloe: On that we have a letter in the archive from a man living in Aberdeen in Scotland, Mr R. S. Peat. He petitioned the government's Colonial Secretary, about this very issue in 1938.

Reader: Past commissions have done very little to improve conditions. In my opinion it would be far better to get a full report from those in Jamaica who have the interest of the labourers at heart and who know far more than your commissioners will ever find out.

...

You may if you wish Sir, regard me as a fanatic or even a lunatic, but I wish to assure you that there are few Britishers more loyal than I am or indeed than any Jamaican is, but we all know what happens when a kingdom becomes divided against itself, and this is fast happening to Britain.

...

It is not too late to improve conditions, not only in the West Indies but throughout the Empire, and I trust that a sincere effort is being made to do so.

Yours truly,
R. S. Peat

Iqbal: Lord Moyne and his all-white panel delivered the report in 1938, but it was considered controversial, so the government didn't publish it until 1945. It recommended sweeping changes to the colonial administration. The closest record we have to the time it was delivered to government is the transcript of a broadcast Lord Moyne made, which gives a sense of the scope of recommended reforms.

Chloe: Assuming that's because of the war going on at the time?

Iqbal: Absolutely, there was a real concern that the enemy would be able to take those issues that the Moyne commission had raised and use it against the recruitment of new troops and support for the war.

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Reader: Our main recommendation is therefore an entirely new departure in colonial administration. We recommend that a British grant of a million a year for the next 80 years should be devoted to West Indian welfare. We propose that a West Indian welfare fund should be established, under the control, of the colonial office but administered by a comptroller, whose duty it would be to work out with the colonial governments, long term programmes of social development suited to their particular needs. The colonies themselves cannot afford to pay highly qualified technical advisors and we recommend that the controller should be provided with an expert advisory staff paid from imperial funds.

Chloe: So, we know change is coming. But whether it's fast enough perhaps another question...

Iqbal: Absolutely. I mean, the change that was being called for from the Caribbean was much greater than what Moyne and others were offering. And I think that in itself is part of the reason why the British government could not really respond in the way that the Caribbean wanted.

Chloe: Thank you, Iqbal, see you soon.

Iqbal: Thank you, Chloe, thank you so much.

Chloe: The UK government was not ready to make such sweeping changes that Lord Moyne recommended. Likewise, most people in the UK probably didn't predict just how much of an impact the new arrivals would make. Back to the playlist, which also features Eddy Grant's Electric Avenue, and No Woman, No Cry by Bob Marle, and the Wailers, two songs that are still loved today. And of course, there's cricket. Lord Beginner, or Egbert Moore, is listed on the Windrush passenger list: when the West Indies beat Britain at the test match in 1950 for the very first time, he made a calypso song about it. It's also on the playlist.

On the passenger list are hidden stories that reveal something of the aftermath of the second world war, which left huge changes to society in the UK and elsewhere. The war had displaced millions of people. One of the passengers on the ship was a twelve-year-old Polish girl called Janina Folta. She joined the voyage from Jamaica to London when the boat stopped in Mexico, along with 65 other Polish women and children who were displaced by the war. We can get a

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sense of Janina’s life from a letter she wrote in 1951, when she was settled in Derby and applying for college.

Reader: I, Miss Janina Folta of 31 French Street Derby, was born on 2.2.1936...

In the fifth year of my life, I was deported to Russia to concentration camp where I stayed two years. When the circumstances changed, I was taken to Persia then to Mexico. I was 8 years of age when I arrived in Mexico. I lived in a Polish camp where I went to school. When the camp was closed, I went to a Spanish school. In 1948 I arrived in England, and I received my education in Stowell Park near Cheltenham Gloucestershire. Now I wish to continue my education in Technical College Derby. Janina Folta

Chloe: Janina is among the group of Windrush passengers that the passenger list describes as “distressed” and trying to return home to Europe after the war. In Poland, during the height of Stalin’s ethnic cleansing, families like Janina’s were loaded onto cattle trucks and moved to labour camps in Russia. Soviet statistics say this happened to 280,000 families, but it could be as many as two million. In 1948, Janina was being moved again, this time on the Windrush, to England.

Reader: “Row after row of rather dreary brick houses, all with chimney-pots some six or more to the house and with the washing hanging out in the back garden, which overlooks the railway line.”

Chloe: This is that guide again, by H.D. Carberry and Dudley Thompson, writing specifically for ‘West Indians’ at the time, who were arriving in the UK and needed to know what to expect. It’s important to note that this pamphlet was written by people of colour who wanted to convey the truth of their experiences in England, such as racism when looking for a home, but also sponsored by Colonial Office.

Reader: “You may resent people staring at you on the bus or as you walk by, but remember they may seldom have seen anyone like you before. For example. an English friend and I were travelling the other day in the bus and after the little girl aged four sitting behind me had studied my hair for some time she announced to her mother " Mother. his hair is just like little clock springs!”

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Chloe: I've got another guest now. Vicky Iglkowski-Broad is a Principal Records Specialist in Diverse Histories. Hi Vicky.

Vicky Iglkowski-Broad: Hi Chloe.

Chloe: So, you want to tell me more about another character connected to the Windrush story?

Vicky: Yes, absolutely. I want to talk to you about Ivor Cummings, an extraordinary individual who worked for the Colonial Office, and whose job it was to greet arrivals off the Empire Windrush as a Black British person.

Chloe: OK, so what do we know about him?

Vicky: So in terms of Ivor's early life, we know he was born in West Hartlepool to a father from Sierra Leone, and to a white mother from England. He was predominantly raised by his mother, and his father went back to Sierra Leone, where he worked as a doctor. Ivor struggled at school, so he was essentially targeted due to the colour of his skin. So much so that he travelled to Sierra Leone to see if he would fit in better there in the school system. Eventually, he returned to Britain and actually flourished at a school here, where he really cultivated his academic skills. At the outbreak of the Second World War he tried to get a commission to join the RAF, but couldn't, because at the time, the stipulations were that you had to be of "pure European descent", although those regulations quickly changed. And essentially, the RAF loss was the Colonial Office's gain, and he moved into that particular service.

Chloe: Right, so that's part of how he became the person greeting those arrivals in 1948.

Vicky: Absolutely, he was very invested in the welfare of Black individuals. Prior to his Colonial Office role, he'd supported African students at Aggrey House, a Colonial Office connected student hostel, essentially. This hostel offered students support particularly where they may have faced barriers to accessing accommodation because of the colour bar essentially at the time. Ivor worked in programming social activities and lectures for the students are focusing on key political for the day and through those lectures, we can get maybe a sense of his personal politics. He

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invited speakers like pan-Africanist George Padmore to speak to students. It's interesting to ask why the Colonial Office chose him for this particular job greeting people off the Windrush.

Possibly it's because of how he presented Britain in a certain multicultural light. He was also almost like an ideal citizen at the time, a Black Briton who in many ways represented a high-achieving individual, highly educated individual. So it was a very careful presentation that I think was chosen. However, you could see that also was misleading, potentially to passengers, because essentially, at the time Ivor was a minority in government, as a Black British person. Maybe they felt that sending Ivor would gain more support from these passengers who were weary after their long tiring journeys and the colonial office was undoubtedly worried about discontent in the Caribbean. So they would have wanted to have a friendly face to greet these people.

Chloe: That's great. So what about behind this ideal figure?

Vicky: Yeah, so Ivor was prominent in Black intellectual communities at the time, he worked closely with individuals like Harold Moody of the League of Coloured Peoples, and he also became known as the gay father of the Windrush generation. So we know Ivor had relationships with men. What we don't know is the terms he would have used to describe himself at this time, or how open he was necessarily able to be about his sexuality. What we do know is that he associated with many prominent Black gay individuals such as composer Reginald Foresythe and doctor and intellectual Dr Cecil Belfield Clarke, and also one of his very close friends, the Guyanese dancer and bandleader Ken Johnson. At the time, there was a substantial queer scene largely underground in London, with places like the Shim Sham club, championing new music and cultivating kind of a Black queer clientele. So it's likely that he would have frequented such spaces. Certainly many of his acquaintances did.

Chloe: OK, so when we say he greeted Windrush passengers, what does that mean exactly?

Vicky: So in our records, we can see that he met individuals, he welcomed them on the night, the Windrush initially docked in Tilbury, and he actually greeted them through the broadcasting system on the ship, so people would have gathered and listened. As well as the kind of behind-the-scenes organising behind greeting people, essentially running the on the day operation, he delivered this short address targeted at the Caribbean passengers in particular. In our archives,

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we have the full text of this address that he gave to them. So it goes into the practicalities, such as transport and accommodation being provided for those without an address. And that was provided at the Clapham South Deep Shelter. And he was also accompanied by military representatives, colleagues in the Ministry of Labour, as well as other colonial officials who were trying to support people finding work. He also gave names and offices of where to register for looking for work and other advice.

Reader: First of all let me welcome you to Gr. Britain and express the hope that you will all achieve the objects which have brought you here. I know that many of you have friends and relatives to who you wish to go in various parts of the country, and that you have good prospects of employment. In order to facilitate your departure the Ministry of Labour proposes to give free travel warrants from Tilbury to your places of destination to those of you who may not be able to pay for long distance journeys. I hope I shall hear that many of you have in actual fact got somewhere to go. I now want to address my friends who may have nowhere to go and no plans whatsoever. I am afraid that you will have difficulties, but I feel sure that with the right spirit and by co-operating as I have suggested above, you will overcome them.

Chloe: It's quite a formal welcome. I guess what we don't know, Vicky, is if he shared in any private conversations? I wonder if he ever went on a tangent.

Vicky: Yeah, it is very formal, I think very befitting of his role as a senior colonial official at the time, and it was heavily drafted and scripted. So we do have the kind of draft texts in advance, in our files. I think through the text, though, we can also see glimpses into his personal experience and personal life. He acknowledges directly the challenges these individuals were likely to face. So Ivor had already experienced racism in school and in the military and fought tirelessly against the colour bar through his Colonial Office work. At one point, he was even described by a colleague as someone who would relish the fight against the colour bar in boxing. So clearly, there are some allusions to his personal experiences. And in talking to these individuals, he was really trying to prepare them for the reality of life in Britain.

Chloe: Thank you so much.

Vicky: Thank you, Chloe.

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Chloe: Thanks, Vicky. See you soon.

Chloe: As Ivor Cummings' address reveals, there'll be some help — but arrivals needed to know they were really on their own. That's why the guide for West Indians arriving in the UK said this:

Reader: "It is particularly difficult in London, where the blitz destroyed thousands of houses, and even the English student finds it difficult to get lodgings. You have an additional difficulty, " colour prejudice". You may find that on answering an advertisement for lodgings by telephone or letter and saying you are a strident or tourist you will be told by the landlady that the rooms are available, that the rent is so much, and would you like to come and have a look at them? On arrival, the landlady, suppressing a gasp, and puzzling over the fact that a coloured person could have so English a name as Smith or Brown, will politely tell you that she is very sorry, but that she has just let the rooms to someone else who also answered the advertisement. This will hurt, because in most cases you will be sure that it is untrue."

Chloe: It's hard to read that, how discrimination is dressed as a fact to accept. It also reminds me how people's African names were not recognised and written over through slavery in the Caribbean. Working in the archive, we have to be prepared for the emotional labour of working with material that sometimes uses racist language. It's important to be prepared so you can continue with important research. On this theme of what's known as the 'colour bar', also know as racism, in the archives, we have examples of people turned away from dance halls and boxing matches. There's a cartoon from the Daily Mirror, September 4th, 1943. I'll describe it.

Two soldiers, one from the Caribbean regiment and one from the British Indian army, are looking at a sign that says "No coloured people admitted". One of them is saying, "We didn't see that notice in the trenches".

The sketch reveals the flawed nature and hypocrisy of prejudice like this, especially coming so soon after the war, where people of colour fought or supported the war effort from the colonies, but also from places like China. Many of the people on the passenger list had been in the services, like Sam Beaver King, who went on to become the first Black mayor of Southwark, a former RAF engineer.

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Others were answering the call for health workers, as the British government was seeking to staff the newly created National Health Service, our NHS. One person on the passenger list, in particular, exemplifies this. And my colleague Lisa Berry-Waite, another records specialist, is here to tell me about her. Thanks for joining us today, Lisa.

Lisa Berry-Waite: Hi Chloe, thanks for having me. Yeah, so I want to talk about Ena Claire Sullivan, who was one of seven nurses on the Empire Windrush who were migrating to Britain to staff the newly formed NHS.

Chloe: So can you tell us a bit more?

Lisa: Yes so the NHS was born out of the idea that healthcare should be available to all, regardless of wealth. At its launch in July 1948, just a month after the Windrush landed, the health secretary Aneurin Bevan said it was based on three core principles: so the first was that it meet the needs of everybody, that it should be free at the point of delivery, and that it be based on clinical need, not the ability to pay. It was nurses like Ena Claire Sullivan who were needed to help staff the newly established NHS.

Chloe: So what do we know of Ena Claire Sullivan?

Lisa: Our records can tell us a lot about Ena’s story, particularly about her long and varied nursing career. We know from the Empire Windrush passenger list that she was 35 years old when she travelled on the ship, her occupation was listed as a nurse, and her proposed onwards address was West Middlesex Hospital. We also know that she travelled in Class A, the most expensive ticket type, so she would have had her own cabin for the journey and we also know that she was travelling alone.

Chloe: Right, so does she appear anywhere else in our records?

Lisa: Yeah, so another record we hold is Ena’s registration of British nationality which reveals a lot about her family, her employment history and the places she lived. So, under the 1948 British

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Nationality Act, Ena was classed as a ‘British subject’, as she had been born in Jamaica, a British colony at the time.

So, this is a really important record as we learn that Ena was born in St Anns in Jamaica. We also see that from 1948 to 1959, Ena’s place of work is recorded as ‘South West Middlesex Hospital’ suggesting that after she qualified there, she worked at the hospital for another eight years. Ena subsequently went on to work as a ‘Health Visitor’ for the ‘Local Authority’ in Stoke on Trent between 1959 and 1961. Then after that she actually moved to Manchester too and worked as a staff nurse at the hospital there from 1961 to 1968.

Chloe: So we know quite a lot about her life story.

Lisa: Yeah, we do. But I think it’s really important to acknowledge that these are government records and that they don’t provide us with information on how she personally felt about living or working in Britain, or how she experienced the colour bar.

Chloe: Oh right, so there is actually a lot of gaps in the archive and in our knowledge?

Lisa: Yeah. What we do have in the records is a discussion on a training scheme for ‘colonial subjects’ in nursing and midwifery. Which was organised jointly by the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Labour and National Service. We hold minutes from the committee for this scheme, which discuss the various applications or people who that had already arrived on the scheme and were undertaking training. These minutes are a really important record as they offer an insight into who was applying and their individual stories. For example, we learn about one woman had arrived on the scheme called Ruby Cynthia MacDonald. She had arrived at a hospital in Chertsey but was unhappy at the hospital and had asked to move to a different hospital. It doesn’t say why she was unhappy, but it might have been because she was experiencing discrimination.

Another woman we learn about wanted to be placed at a hospital in Rochester as her friend was currently training there, and wanted to be reunited with her. So I think these types of government records can offer a glimpse into the stories of those who applied, but of course, there’s no denying there are lots of gaps in the archive too.

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Chloe: So the challenge of staffing the NHS — big?

Lisa: Yeah, huge — when we think about the NHS we often think about nurses and doctors. But there are so many other people who work for the NHS such as other healthcare professionals and cleaners. We have a record from the Ministry of Labour which discusses how 18 women were recruited from Barbados as hospital domestics (aka cleaners) in September and October of 1948, and also 20 women in April 1950. I think it's really important that we think about the many types of roles that people worked in and the contribution that they all made.

Chloe: Thanks for that insight, Lisa, that's really insightful in painting a picture of people's experiences.

Lisa: Thanks Chloe.

Chloe: You may have noticed that Ena aside, there are a lot of men in this episode. That's just another example of gaps, or what I like to call 'present unpresences', in the archive. Often men are the ones whose stories get told, and it can be harder to find stories of people like Ena Claire Sullivan, the nurse, or Amelia King, a Black British woman, born in London, who wanted to be part of the Land Army. We will hear more about her story in our upcoming episode of On The Record at The National Archives, on the Women's Land Army.

But hopefully, this brief tour through the history of the Windrush through our archives has given us a sense of the diversity of those who migrated to the UK on that famous voyage, and most importantly, given the context of Empire and the complexities of racism and prejudice in the lived experiences of people of colour. Although a colour bar was never formalised into law, by the 1980s, the laws around 'suspected persons', for instance, gave police increased powers to stop and search, leading to the unfair targeting of young people of colour by the police.

Linton Kwesi Johnson's poem Sonny's Lettah (Anti Sus Poem) is written in the form of a letter about a violent encounter with the police that ends tragically in murder. Linton migrated to Britain in 1963, joining his mother, who also had been a passenger aboard the Windrush. Sonny's Lettah is one of the tracks on the playlist and linked to the episode notes, and his words are still powerful 43 years on, as we mark the 75th anniversary of the Empire Windrush.

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Finally, thank you to all our experts who contributed to this episode. This episode was written, edited, and produced for The National Archives by Aunt Nell. Readers were Marc Thompson, Phil Samba, Abi McIntosh and Des Shillingford.

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