



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL
TRANSFORMING. TOGETHER.

June 2026

Windrush Day Newsletter



What Is Windrush Day?

Windrush Day is observed every year on 22 June, the date in 1948 when the HMT *Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury Docks, carrying hundreds of passengers from the Caribbean who had been invited to help rebuild post-war Britain. The day honours the contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants, who helped shape the NHS, public transport, the Church, and countless other institutions we rely on today.

As a Diocese committed to building welcoming and inclusive churches, we want to mark this day by celebrating the remarkable people and communities who are part of our story. In this newsletter, you'll find spotlights on key figures from the Windrush Generation, as well as resources to help you learn more and get involved.

Discovering Windrush: A Personal Reflection and Invitation

It was 2020, lockdown number two to be precise, and like most people, my then-boyfriend (now husband) and I were doing what we did best during that strange, suspended time: watching television.

One evening, we came across a BBC series called *Small Axe*. What followed was my first foray into a part of UK history I wasn't familiar with, but came to deeply value learning about. *Small Axe* is a beautifully crafted, five-film anthology that tells personal stories from London's Black Caribbean community between the 1960s and mid-1980s.

For me, *Small Axe* became both an introduction and an awakening of sorts. It opened a door to the story of the Windrush Generation, one I hadn't been taught growing up in the United States, yet one that is essential to understanding the UK. What struck me most were not only the histories of struggle, but the enduring spirit woven through them: resilience, perseverance, joy. These are not just stories of the past; they are part of the living fabric today. From national contributions to local milestones like the Bristol Bus Boycott, these are stories of courage and conviction that deserve to be known, honoured and carried forward.

So in this resource, we've gathered a selection of books, films, and other materials to help you explore and celebrate the Windrush Generation. If you find yourself, as I did, wanting to go deeper, particularly around how you might engage with this heritage throughout the year, not just in June, we hope what follows gives you a place to start.

Happy reading,

Jillian Downing Racial Justice Officer on behalf of the Racial Justice Team, Diocese of Bristol



Spotlight On...

Bristol Reggae Orchestra and Windrush Choir



Founded in early 2010 by Stella Quinlivan, the group began life as the St Paul's Reggae Orchestra before being renamed the Bristol Reggae Orchestra later that year to reflect its growing scope, though it has stayed true to its roots, rehearsing weekly in St Paul's.

The idea came from a chance conversation: local Jamaican resident Chris Williams, a regular visitor to the learning and family centre Stella ran, challenged her to start a reggae orchestra for the area. With support from Chino Odimba and Charles Ogilvie of Black Roots, and Norma Daykin as its first Music Director, the orchestra's debut gig sold out St George's, Bristol's renowned classical venue, turning it into a dancehall for the night.

Since then, the orchestra and the more recently formed Windrush Choir have gone from strength to strength, with every performance drawing dancing crowds eager for more. In 2023, the two groups reached a major milestone together, performing on the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury Festival as part of the Windrush75 celebrations. Both groups continue to rehearse every other Monday, the orchestra at the Rose Green Centre and the choir at St Agnes Church.

Visit their Website to Learn More: <https://www.bristolreggaeorchestra.com>



| Sources: BBC.com & bristolreggaeorchestra.com



SPOTLIGHT ON DR PAUL STEPHENSON OBE

Born 1937, Essex



| Source: The Guardian

Paul Stephenson's name is inseparable from one of the defining moments in Britain's fight against racial injustice. The son of a West African father and English mother, he trained as a youth and social worker before becoming Bristol's first Black social worker.

In 1963, Paul Stephenson led the Bristol Bus Boycott after the Bristol Omnibus Company's "colour bar" policy was tested by sending a well-qualified candidate, Guy Bailey, for a job interview, only for the offer to be withdrawn once his race was known. As the public face and spokesman of the boycott, Stephenson brought national and international attention to

Bristol, drawing comparisons with the American civil rights movement and support from figures including Tony Benn and Harold Wilson.

Interesting Facts

- After four months, the company lifted its ban, and the campaign's success is widely credited with paving the way for the Race Relations Act of 1965 and the 1968 Act that followed.
- Stephenson was also among the community activists who co-founded what is now known as St Pauls Carnival in 1968.
- He awarded an OBE in 2009 for his services to equality and human rights.

SPOTLIGHT ON ROY HACKETT MBE

Born 1928, Jamaica



| Source: The Guardian

Roy Hackett's legacy is woven into the fabric of Bristol. He came to Britain in 1952, carrying the hopes of better opportunities and the desire to contribute to rebuilding a nation still scarred by the Second World War. He came to advance his career as a bookkeeper. The reality was harsher. On his first night in Bristol, having been refused a room in boarding house after boarding house because of the colour of his skin, he ended up sleeping in a doorway. Yet Roy Hackett did not retreat - he organised.

Interesting Facts

- In 1963, Roy Hackett co-organised a boycott of the Bristol Omnibus Company, which at the time refused to hire Black or Asian people as drivers due to a "colour bar" that was entirely legal under British law at the time.
- He organised Bristol's Caribbean community into the boycott, organising blockades on Fishponds Road so buses could not reach the city centre. It took four months, but the company submitted.



SPOTLIGHT ON BARBARA DETTERING

Born 1939, Guyana



BARBARA DETTERING

| Source: BBC.com

Barbara Dettering has been a steadfast and influential figure in Bristol’s journey towards racial justice. After arriving in the city from Guyana in 1961, she became actively involved in responding to the inequalities faced by African Caribbean communities, particularly in housing, employment, and education.

Working as a social worker, Dettering combined practical care with determined advocacy. She was a co-founder of the Bristol West Indian Parents and Friends Association, which played a central role in organising the 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott.

While often working away from the spotlight, Dettering’s contribution was vital. Her commitment, alongside others involved in the boycott, helped secure a breakthrough moment in Britain’s civil rights movement, contributing to the conditions that led to the Race Relations Acts of 1965 and 1968.

Interesting Facts

- Dettering was among the community activists who co-founded St Pauls Carnival in 1968, creating a lasting space to celebrate African Caribbean culture in Bristol.
- She has spent over six decades supporting her community, including work addressing housing inequality and health disparities such as sickle cell anaemia.
- In recognition of her lifelong contribution to civil rights and community development, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Bristol in 2024.



PAUL STEPHENSON | Source: BBC.com



BARBARA DETTERING | Source: streetartcities.com

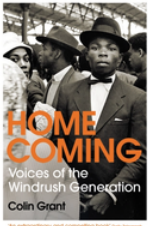


ROY HACKETT | Source: BBC News



We recommend...

WHAT WE'RE READING



Homecoming

by Colin Grant

A non-fiction set in London, *Best of Friends* tells the story of Maryam and Zahara, childhood friends who, as adults, must face ghosts they thought were long left behind. This page turner explores themes of identity, friendship, and power.



To Sir With Love

by E R Braithwaite

A collection of essays that examine the complexity of feminism and the ways in which it intersects with other identities. Gay writes candidly about her own experiences as a feminist and woman of colour, and explores the ways in which these identities shape her understanding of the world. This book is a thought-provoking and insightful look at what it means to be a feminist in today's world.



Coming to England

by Floella Benjamin

This novel is a retelling of "The Great Gatsby" from the perspective of a queer, Asian-American woman. It explores themes of race, class, and sexuality, and how they intersect to shape our experiences in the world.

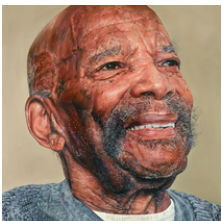
We recommend...

TV SHOWS AND MOVIES



Small Axe

Small Axe is Steve McQueen's acclaimed five-film anthology exploring the lives, struggles, and joy of London's African Caribbean community from the 1960s to the 1980s.



Windrush: Portraits Of A Generation

BBC documentary in which King Charles commissioned ten artists to paint portraits of pioneering Windrush generation members, many of whom are in their 90s, speaking candidly about arriving in Britain and the profound contribution they made to their communities and the nation



Sitting in Limbo

a powerful BBC drama based on the true story of Anthony Bryan, a painter-decorator who had lived and worked in Britain for 50 years before being detained and nearly deported as a result of the Windrush scandal.