MANGOES TO MOSS SIDE: CARIBBEAN MIGRATION TO MANCHESTER IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

Jo Stanley

Manchester's once notorious Moss Side area, now subsumed into 'Hulme', was a key site of first settlement for migrants coming from what the British then saw as their colonies in the West Indies. This article details the way some Caribbean migrants from Jamaica and St Kitts represented their lives in a recent lifestory project based at Hulme Adult Education Centre that has since had major educational spin-offs.

Manchester's significant Caribbean population is under-recorded, but this article attempts to lessen that problem by focusing on six individual histories gathered on an award-winning oral history course and contextualising those histories. The course, *Mapping Our Lives*, ran at Hulme Adult Education Centre, Stretford Road, in 1998. It became part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the first major voyage of Caribbean people to the UK, on the *MV Empire Windrush* in June 1948. The BBC, half a century later, hailed the ship's arrival with its 492 passengers as "a pivotal point in modern British history. The whole notion of who and what it means to be British was thrown into chaos; Britain was never the same again." [2]

Initially the course ran for six Wednesday mornings, then continued for another year. Led by tutor Loretta Harris (whose own family are from Jamaica) and me (with substantial direct knowledge of the Caribbean), the sessions were a mix of talking, improvised acting, and writing where people might burst into an illustrative song at any moment. Although the group, which came to be known as the *Windrush* group, was led by tutors, the students themselves determined much of what happened.

'Caribbean' is used here as a way to state the region's independent status, although older Caribbean people actually refer to themselves in the old imperial way, as 'West Indians.' I use the term 'migrant' rather than the more loaded word 'emigrant' or 'immigrant.' The language that the story-givers use has been left untouched out of respect for the particular version of the English language that some Caribbean people use. For example there is non-use of 's' and 'ed' at the end of some verbs, such "she comb" rather than "she combs" or "she combed". I have just amended some punctuation for clarity. The title of this article reflects a central metaphor: the bringing of something valued from another place: mangoes selected in a dewy backyard in Jamaica, wrapped carefully, and delicately carried all the way to Moss Side to enrich life here.

Coming to England

None of the elders (all over 60) attracted to the course had actually come on the *Windrush*, but they had been part of the diaspora it presaged. At the very start of the course we noted the different dates of arrival and the different lengths of time (see below) it took them to make that physical transition from the island that Christopher Columbus described, say today's tourist brochures, as "The fairest Island that eyes have ever held" to this crowded northern city under its shocking pall of smoke.[3]

In date order:

Charles Lyn Lloyd, 1953, from Jamaica then Bermuda, Shannon, London (3 days) and later to Manchester.
Barrington Young, 1954, from Jamaica via New York, Southampton (16 days) and later to Manchester.
(Kendasz) Daisy Shortman (nee Duggan) 1954, from Jamaica, via Miami, New York, Plymouth (15 days) and later to Manchester.
Edith Stanley (nee Lawrence) 1955, from St. Kitts via Martinique, Southampton (13 days) and later Manchester.
Dorothy Blake, 1961, from Jamaica, New York to Heathrow (28 hours) then Manchester later.
Ishmael Wright, 1961, from Jamaica via Newfoundland, London to Manchester (2 days).

These people were part of a major diaspora that decimated the Caribbean's population. As table 1 shows, over 1.6 million Jamaicans (nine percent of the entire population) left the island.

Table 1. The Caribbean Diaspora in 1961

	ISLAND'S POPULATION IN 1960	MIGRATION TO UK 1955-1961 POPULATION IN 1960	EMIGRANTS AS % OF ISLAND
Jamaica	1,609,814	148,369	9.2
Barbados	232,085	18,741	8.1
Trinidad & Tobago	825,700	9,610	1.2
British Guinea	558,769	7,141	1.3
Leewards	122,920	16,025	13.0
Antigua	54,060	4,687	8.7
Montserrat	12,167	3,835	31.5
St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla	56,693	7,503	13.2
Windwards	314,995	27,154	8.6
Dominica	59,479	7,915	13.3
Grenada	88,617	7,663	8.6
St Lucia	86,194	7,291	8.5
St Vincent	80,705	4,285	5.3

Source: *Ethnic Minority Groups in Manchester, City Planning Dept., 1984.*

Of this 1.6 million who left the Caribbean, 148,369 (9 per cent) came to the UK. Nearly 2 per cent of them came to Manchester. Only 350 Caribbean people had been living here in the city in 1951. These newcomers formed part of a 1961 Manchester-Caribbean population of 2,502, which then grew to 4,738 by 1981 as table 2 shows.[4]

Table 2. Caribbean people in Manchester, 1981: Place of birth of Manchester residents[5]

Place of birth	Number
Jamaica	4,738
Barbados	397
Trinidad & Tobago	128
West Indies Associated States	483
West Indies (so stated)	258
Other Caribbean Commonwealth	138
Belize	21
Guyana	100
TOTAL	**6,263**

Source: *Ethnic Minority Groups in Manchester, City Planning Dept., 1984.*

While most Caribbean people came to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, islanders from the Windwards and Leewards were not people new to migration but part of a continuing movement. As oral historian of Caribbean migrants, Mary Chamberlain, points out, migration can now be seen not as an aberrant event and a disruption to routine, but part of the development of a transnational identity, the deterritorialisation of culture.[6] Edith Stanley, a member of the *Windrush* group on whom this article is focused, highlights this continuum. From St Kitts, she pointed out that, "had I not come to England I would have gone elsewhere. All of my family have travelled…(to) the Virgin Islands, America, Bermuda."[7] Temporary migration for work, mainly by men, had been on-going in the inter-war years. Edith's father had worked in the oilfields of Curacao, when he was 19 and her uncles worked in "Santa Domingo, Aruba and all over the North Antilles."[8] She was part of a (gendered) pattern of mobile labour, although Caribbean women migrants were outnumbered by men for most of the 1950s. For example, in 1953, two years before Edith came, of the 2,300 Caribbean migrants to the UK, 26.1 per cent were female and 73.9 per cent were male.[9] Most of them were skilled. Historian of black Britain, Peter Fryer, found that in general in this period 27 per cent of the women and 46 per cent of the men who came were skilled manual workers.[10] That is, migration was not new nor were all migrants unskilled; the stereotypes were incorrect.

Caribbean Attitudes to Coming

These six Manchester dwellers who formed the *Windrush* group at Hulme centre stressed that many Caribbean people who came did not particularly want, nor need, to migrate. Nor were they necessarily keen on the UK, for all that it was "The Motherland" to those from the more British-identified islands. Edith remembered: "coming to England did not appeal to me and then I made up my mind and decided and I would come and spend five years…Really, I did not have to come all this way to look for work."[11]

Britain was some Caribbean migrants' selected target only because the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act had restricted drastically Caribbean entry into the US. The allowed quota had dropped 88 per cent from 65,000 to only 800 per year.[12]

Caribbean migrants came equipped with talents and abilities, not with the outstretched palms that hostile stereotypes suggested. Dorothy Blake not only brought ten sets of new underwear but enough traveller's cheques to live on during quite long transition periods. "When I left Stoke-on-Trent a few months later [after arrival], I had no job to go to. So I was using my [traveller's] cheque book while I looked for work."[13]

They knew about England through reading about it and hearing stories from their British-born teachers. Characteristically they had always celebrated on Empire Day. Edith remembered that: "We thought of England as somewhere nice, where the king and queen lived. When we came here we were not treated with respect, we were referred to as 'these people.' England was poor when we came, the people were even poorer than us."[14]

Considering the enormity of re-location and people's needs to prepare well for such major changes, the knowledge with which they were equipped appears to be idealistic and patchy, Edith wrote: "When I got the taxi from Victoria Station I was told that it Manchester it never stopped raining. I thought it was just a saying!"[15] A useful symbol of their need to become familiar with many new skills is shown by Edith's story of her trouble with unfamiliar textiles. "I ruined many jumpers until I was shown how to wash wool."[16]

Manchester

In past centuries, as historian of black settlement Peter Fryer notes, Manchester had had a mixed history of attitudes to race. In the late eighteenth century it had been one of the five industrialised cities which had most profited by the trade in black slaves, along with London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol.[17] But also "mass support for Abolition [of slavery] was first expressed in Manchester."[18] Led by the city's abolitionists such as Thomas Cooper and Thomas Walker, in the 1780s Mancunians were to the first to sign an anti-slavery petition that was then used as a model by other areas. It was the earliest large-scale use of petitions as political weapon. Nottingham praised Manchester citizens "for the Zeal, Activity and manly Firmness, which they have manifested in this noble cause."[19] A 1792 petition brought 10,639 signatures, out of a local population of less than 75,000. However, there was also opposition from white supremacist physician Charles White (fl. 1795).[20]

In subsequent centuries such organisations as the Negro Welfare Association were established. A leading Pan-Africanist radical, Ras Tefari Makonnen, moved to the city in 1930. The Pan-African Movement's aim was to promote rights, and well-being and co-operation.[21] Among Makonnen's initiatives were a chain of restaurants, including the Ethiopian Teashop, the Cosmopolitan, the Orient, a club called the Forum and a place called Belle Etoile.[22] That focus enabled the new Pan-African Federation to flourish from 1944. The booming food businesses also facilitated the setting up of publishing house in Manchester that produced a stream of pamphlets and the monthly *Pan–Africa.*

Neat children look longingly at the toyshop in Denmark Road, 1962

Such a visible black presence not only meant that in World War Two "the city became a magnet for black American service men stationed in the north of England" such as Burton Wood.[23] Manchester then became the site of the key Pan-African Congress, in 1945, 20 weeks after VE day. The congress was organised out of concern at the increasing racial discrimination in Britain. And the reasons why Manchester was chosen illuminate something of what the people who are the focus of this essay encountered. Makonnen said the city was the selected site not only because he was established there and had good contacts (such as the Lord Mayor), meaning he could easily book halls and find accommodation for delegates. He also added that "Manchester had become quite a point of contact with the coloured proletariat in Britain and you could say that we coloured people had a right there, because of the age-old connections between cotton, slavery and the building up of cities in England."[24] However, the post-1940s Caribbeans did not necessarily know these arguments and history, even though some had been in the UK during the war and served in the UK armed forces.

Windrush voyager Euton Christian remembered that Lancashire had given a warm welcome to Caribbean people, particularly the RAF men like himself, and munitions workers, in World War Two. But he points out that black people were still unfamiliar then:

> *the few they see in England is more or less those they saw who are working on the docks in Liverpool or Manchester or Swansea....so reactions were, you know, varied. I can say for sure that the people in Lancashire accepted us very very well. I don't know if it is because of a tradition they have, but we had no difficulty in going about in Manchester...They were quite helpful and cheerful and willing to give you any assistance that you would need...other parts of England, I would say, is different.*[25]

However, wartime spirit and a familiar uniform could skew reactions. Post-war attitudes were not generous. By 1948 H. J. Wilson, of the North West Regional Office of the Home Office, in Manchester 3, was being told by headquarters "we had hoped that shipping restrictions would have prevented any further influx of West Indians... but I am afraid we must expect small parties from time to time."[26]

From 1948, the "small unwanted parties" became thousands of invited workers. In 1953 2,300 migrants came from the Caribbean to the UK.[27] By 1958 125,000 had arrived [28] and by ten

years later 238,000 had entered the country.[29] Manchester's Afro-Caribbean population rose dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s, as Table 3 shows, and Caribbean people were the second largest ethnic group in Manchester after white British. By 1981 migration from the Caribbean had tailed off; that from India and Pakistan became greater. Today Manchester has an ethnic population of 12.6 per cent.

Table 3. Caribbean people in Manchester and the UK, 1951-81[30]

DATE	NUMBER AND % IN MANCHESTER	NUMBER IN UK
1951	351 (2.34%)	15,000 (approx)
1961	2502 (1.45%)	172,379
1971	6185	N/a
1981	6263	N/a

A Manchester City Council planning department study found that Manchester's earliest Afro-Caribbean population initially lived:

> *around Salford docks and from there spread to areas within easy reach where furnished rooms were available. This meant a movement south-east to Trafford, Moss Side and Hulme, and north east to Cheetham. A wartime hostel for West Africans in Carlton Street, Moss Side and another for West Indians in Demesne Road, Alexandra Park, helped to establish immigrants in these areas.*[31]

Manchester was not actively chosen, but selected organically and instrumentally. Most of the people who came from the Caribbean knew someone who was here, or understood that they could get work in the area. They chose Manchester rather than any other major sites of settlement such as Leeds, Nottingham, Handsworth, Bristol and London (particularly Notting Dale) because they had connections here. For example, printer Barrington Young, from Kinston, Jamaica headed for his brother Vincent's home in Chorlton-cum-Medlock.[32]

Their first task after putting down their suitcases was to find employment. As Edith wrote:

> *we arrived at 3 Seaton Street,*[33] *Moss Side at 3am in the morning of the 30th of August 1955. The family we came to was glad we arrived safely. We went to bed and had a good sleep. We were tired from travelling [for 16 days]. Later that day we went to Labour Exchange to sign on for work; I got a job that same day, in a raincoat factory. My first day in Manchester it rain all day. It was that fine rain, that drizzled all day. Everything had to be explain. What you can do and what you can't do. Such as the buses, and the time they did the cooker and the heating.*[34]

Local Ignorance

Barrington Young was shocked by what he found:

> *The first thing that struck me was that the British people were poor, it was not as we were led to believe. We were told that every Englishman was rich and well bred. Another surprise was that considering we were ruled by Britain, their people knew nothing about is – where Jamaica was. And up to then we had been ruled for over 300 years by Britain. I had to keep telling people where Jamaica was, and why we were here. They would more often than not say how could you leave such a beautiful warm country to come and here. My usual reply was "you cannot eat sunshine!". They also believed we were illiterate and knew nothing about cars, trains, carpentry, building etc. As one teacher told a friend of my son, where his father came from, they live in trees, so we are only fit for the dirty work.*[35]

Other native Mancunians leavened their innocence with genuine interest in what it meant to be Caribbean. At the Jewish factory where Edith pieced together section of gabardine raincoats for the machinist, and fetched buttons and thread from the store, "they treated me fine. They were interested in me and where I came from because they thought every Black Person was an African and they did not know anything about the West Indies."[36]

One of the meanings of the Mancunian lack of knowledge was that any Caribbean person might be taken to be representative. This could make newcomers weary at being obliged to explicate and act as a good example of their country, rather than be a person in their own right.

A far less benign aspect of ignorance and concomitant stereotyping was heavy police surveillance. Barrington found:

> *They would not be respectful towards black people. If they stopped your car, looked inside and saw that you were a black person, their manners and attitude became aggressive and hostile, because they knew the British Courts would always believe their Police Force, rather than a black person, because we were regarded as liars, thieves etc.*[37]

The *Windrush* group members had been shocked to not find allies where they might be expected. Barrington, a socialist, regretfully affirmed:

> *Another thing was the Union. They were supposed to be there to protect the rights of workers but instead they encouraged racial discrimination, by being outspoken against black people and ensuring that promotion was unlikely, if not impossible. Also a lot of union men supported the National Front.... Because the "Bosses" were too afraid to cause disruption, they followed the Union.*[38]

This Manchester experience confirms Peter Fryer's general findings about union racism. For example at that time Wolverhampton Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) insisted that

no more than 52 (5 per cent) of the city's 900 bus workers should be black.[39]

Binary Oppositions

There are some useful general binary oppositions pointed out by the group that can help us imagine the Manchester that received these migrants. Later I show how some of those oppositions are more complex and ambiguous.

Firstly, the climate. It was dark, not bright, cold not warm. When one of the group looked out of her plane window she thought it must be a place of many bakeries, so dense was the smoke. Once here, said Edith,"The fog was worse than the snow...it got on your chest, it smelt and it dirtied your clothes."[40]

Manchester houses seemed small and stood in streets of regular terraces, as opposed to the space, pleasing irregularity and gardens ("yards") of the homes most of our group came from in the Caribbean. Getting a home in England at all was hard, given post-war shortages of houses, plus racial hostility on top. Getting a home that respected one's decency felt nearly impossible. Moss Side was a key area of black settlement. Because most of rooms available for rent to black people were in multi-occupancy houses, conditions were sometimes affronting to newcomers who lived with finesse and respect back home. Edith described this most fully:

> *There was a bath but no hot water. You had to use the kettle to boil the water. It was a nightmare in the kitchen. One cooker between four people, sometimes you did not have your evening meal before 8 o'clock because you had to take your turn.[41]*

Food was plain and often unhealthy, not lush or fresh. Most big factories then provided midday meals but it was not the sort that Caribbean people felt they could palate. "The canteen food was horrible. West Indians are fussy over their food. We used to take a food flask to work," Edith recorded.[42] The new migrants to Hulme were shocked to find that the English versions of mashed potatoes were lumpy grey mush, not snowy-white swirls enriched by huge knobs of fresh butter as at home. And the shops did not offer the exotic foods of the islands: dasheens and yams, soursop and mango, salt fish and black-eyed peas. Caribbeans in Moss Side found "You could not get rice, the only rice was for making rice pudding."[43] Its gooeyness spoiled the savoury dishes. But, remembered Edith,

> *food was cheap. There was plenty of meat, fish, bacon shank, ribs, fruit and cabbage... We ate potatoes every day... Mr Lee had a continental shop on Denmark Road in Moss Side.[44] He was Italian. He started importing our food such as Yam, Sweet Potatoes, Green Bananas, and Rice, Cooking oil. People in England were using lard and dripping. Every Friday evening Mr Lee's shop was full of West Indians buying their groceries...They would meet with other West Indians and talk.[45]*

Food was recognised as significant for survival in the North West's physically hostile climate. "Our lives was eat, sleep and work. Our motto was 'if you eat well, it will help us bear the cold.' We were from different island but we all became friends, sharing whatever we had."[46]

This claim of harmony is all the more remarkable because the islands span a vast distance. Jamaica is over 1,000 miles away from some other islands. So most Jamaicans had not met other West Indians until they came to Britain. Some derided the "small-islanders."

Another distinct binary can be seen in the work available. The kinds of jobs that the UK offered to Caribbean people were not skilled, but lowly; low-paid, not high paid. Migrants took a cut in status as well as pay in many cases. Barrington had had a decent wage as a print worker in Kingston. However, in Manchester he worked for less, even on the relatively good wages on offer in the cotton mills. Edith found:

> *The men got the worst paid jobs. It was piece work. Some of the managers and foreman gave the black people the worst jobs, so they could not make any money. There was no one to stand up for us. Even the union was racist, and everything that went wrong, we were to blame.[47]*

Another binary highlights the cultural gap: clothes. To fit in, it had to be unobtrusive in colour rather than "garish". Clothing in this non-tropical climate needed to be warm, not light. "There was a lady [Mrs Bramford] who used to sell clothing on Denmark Road. They called her the tanner lady.[48] Many West Indians got their first coat from here. Your first coat was important. The winter was harsh...Most coats were fur-lined and you tied a scarf around your throat and wore gloves to keep you warm."[49]

The clothing was bought by instalments. "It cost ten guineas. I paid her ten shillings a week, and when I had paid for my coat, I would get something else."[50] Edith's recommendation was crucial in the Caribbean credit network in Moss Side. "I introduced several women and men to Mrs. Bramford so they could get a coat as well. She always said 'Do not let Miss Morris down.' They all paid regular until the goods were paid for."[51]

A further binary is that of lifestyle. Caribbeans found that the Manchester culture expected people to be quiet. The kind of exuberant parties people had in the Caribbean, sometimes called shebeens, brought arrests by the police. Indeed Moss Side police station had a map that showed the houses Caribbean people were living in. Barrington found this to his shock when he happened to go in. He had known there was hostility, but not that extreme level of discriminatory surveillance.

Contradictions and Commonalities

But beyond the binaries there are commonalties, ambiguities and contradictions. The commonalities include that both Manchester and the Caribbean were still bearing the legacy of war, in which Caribbean people had fought alongside white people from many colonies as well as the UK. Bereaved families in both places were still grieving. Ex-service personnel were still in flux, adjusting to post-war change and passing on the knowledge gained from visiting other countries and mixing with other cul-

tures. Both Caribbean migrants and local people saw England as the mother country. They shared its tongue and were united by a habit of loyalty and perhaps by the residue of the wartime spirit of working together for a common aim.

Some Manchester people also had the church in common; religious organisations in the UK provided welcome networks. For instance, Father Farry, Dorothy Blake's parish priest back home, arranged that the Jamaican High Commissioner, Mr. Desour, and his secretary, Miss Blake, welcome Dorothy on arrival. They had her paged at Heathrow airport, greeted her, and helped her through the formalities on the evening of May 20th 1961.[52] Greeting was not just a pleasant ceremony but a necessity for innocent migrants who were faced at British entrepots by the "spivs, wide boys and sharks of both races [who] circulated in the crowds wanting to prey on the unfortunate ones."[53] When Caribbean people arrived in the UK, some local churches helped them settle. Edith wrote:

> *On Denmark Road in Moss Side, there was a community hall by the name of St David's Hall. My Friend and myself used to go there, to play games. My Friend played the Piano. We would have a talk and a cup of tea. The Priest was Father Bernard. He did a lot to help West Indians settle in. He also helped them find work in Smith Wire Works[54] and Turners. He had their respect, also that of the Singh family.* [55]

Priests helped practically and spiritually, over issues where when support was particularly appreciated, for example accommodation. Edith remembered that after her initial humiliation in poor rooms: "My Minster got me somewhere nice to live with an English lady by the name of Mrs. Ralph. She was a Christian lady, she treated me well, she was always concerned about me. I was happy living with her."[56]

But church was not necessarily a refuge. Because of the fear that racism can create, otherwise-generous people could be worried about peers' disapproval. Edith discovered: "Some [churches] did not welcome us because the Minister was scared of the members and what they would say. [But] there were some who went out of their way to help regardless of what anyone said. It was our faith that kept us sane. How else could we have survived?"[57]

And the religious lifestyle of the islands could actually create a further divide in Caribbean people's relations with English people. Edith said: "Coming here I thought England was a Christian country but I was taken aback. If you were ask on a Monday by your workmates what kind of weekend you had had, if you said you went to church they laughed and think you can do something much better."[58]

But for most people in the Hulme *Windrush* group, the church continued, and continues to be, a source of support. For example Daisy is a member of the Manchester International Church of Christ. Edith found that "Through my Christian beliefs many doors has been opened up for me."[59] Members of their congregations supportively came to see the exhibition the *Windrush* group created in Hulme Library.

Church and work were community or public life, and in private life making a home was as symbolically important for Caribbean women newcomers as it was for local people. However, it was difficult in practical ways, given the housing shortages before World War II, the slum clearances that had to be postponed because of the war, and the destruction of 223,000 UK dwellings by Germans. Council waiting lists could run into tens of thousands.[60] Many women migrants' accounts stress how finally getting their own place was a way create an enclave of what it was like back home: they proudly made a little West Indian island in Moss Side. Reproducing somewhere "like home" reduced the loneliness and alienation. Escape from multi occupancy and the informal 'colour tax' imposed on black migrants enabled the newcomers to feel proud of, not humiliated by their homes. Edith described how the process worked for her.

> *After one month I left Seaton Street [which no longer exists] to live in Lloyd Street[61] on my own, because I had another friend coming over. The rent for the room was one pound, ten shillings. [£1.50] There was no kitchen, just a gas ring on the landing. The bathroom was a disgrace. The bath was chipped and dirty so you had to make other arrangement for your cleanliness. For heating you had to buy a small bag of coals to make a fire in your room… You had to get your own bedding to keep warm. The landlords who owned the houses were only interested in making money out of us… that was the hardest part of our lives in England: the living accommodation.*
>
> *When you want to rent a room you had no idea who was living there. Some people worked shifts so you did not know who they were. You only saw them when you met them on the stairs. The house was full of people but if you did not know anyone you could feel very lonely.*[62]
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> *[After three years of living alone] I met my husband [to be]. We saved up to get married. We lived in rooms. The front door used to be left open by the tenants and anyone could walk in from the street. We had our first baby while living at 44 Darcy Street.[63] [No longer exists] The baby's cot was in the same room. Also I had to dry the Baby's nappies in the room and sometimes cook in the same room on a little paraffin stove…at times because there would be no electricity left because other people would use it. When you had put your money in the meter it was very frustrating.*
>
> *All the money we had was £100.00. We decided to look for somewhere decent to live. We found a house and it was £100.00 as Deposit. We did not look anywhere else. We had to save up for our solicitor's fee. We were successful and got the first house we tried for. It cost £7,750. The monthly payment was £10.00 per month and it was a struggle to pay although it was half of what we were paying in rent. We just managed a cooker and furniture for the bedroom. We moved in and took it from there. I felt proud that we were able to provide somewhere of our own, that our [two] children could have somewhere different to live.* [64]

Black and white children playing together in Denmark Road, 1958

Edith's story indicates that Manchester people, whatever their origin, could share common aspirations for spiritual well-being, friendship networks and decent homes despite post-war scarcity. And in contradiction to the binary of work for Caribbean people often bringing ignominy, it also brought mates and even future partners, knowledge about where and how to live, and an informal education in the new culture.

Progress

It is beyond the brief of this article to deal in depth with the decades after arrival. Indeed, the time that our *Windrush* group chose to remember were the first years of adjustment. However, the Moss Side area continued to be multi-racial, and grew larger. By the 1980s the council found that "areas of council housing to the north of Plymouth Grove contained significant numbers of residents in households where the head was born in the Caribbean." [65] Just south of Plymouth Grove, there was mainly private housing headed by people born in India or Pakistan. In Cheetham, which was whiter, Caribbean-born people tended to live around Queens Road. People in houses headed by those born in India and Pakistan lived predominantly round Cheetham Hill Road. By 1981, 6,263 Manchester residents had been born in the Caribbean. Table 2 showed that Jamaicans predominated. Most Afro-Caribbean people remained in the Hulme Moss Side area.

In general, Caribbean people did not experience the same prosperity as the average city resident. As Mary Chamberlain notes in her oral history work with Barbadian migrants "migration to Britain…was neither temporary nor lucrative…What we hear in the oral narratives is the displaced hopes, the struggle to transform a past into a constructive and useful enterprise."[66] Caribbean people in Manchester tended to have less space and fewer facilities in their homes, and instead of being owner-occupiers they lived in council, private furnished and private unfurnished rented accommodation. However, their homes had more services than Asian homes where owner-occupation was higher, e.g. more baths and inside lavatories.[67]

Those Caribbean people who succeeded did so with style. A greater number of them were managers than in the general population. But there were also more Caribbean people doing manual jobs than the average in the population. Asian people did better. The 1981 census found they were in professional and managerial jobs while Caribbean people were in unskilled manual jobs. Two thirds of those Electoral Districts (EDs) where over 30 people in the average 450 households were born in Asia had an above-average proportion of residents in professional and managerial jobs, by comparison to the more Caribbean EDs, such as those in Hulme. Two thirds of these EDs had above average percentages of workers in unskilled manual jobs. Asian people also owned far more cars than Caribbean people, which is taken as an indication of relative affluence.

Table 4. Lifestyle patterns in predominantly Caribbean and Asian Electoral Districts of Manchester, 1981[68]

	Caribbean EDs	Asian EDs	All EDs	City average
Over 50% of households were in council housing	65%	9%	43%	N/a
More than 1.5% of households lacked a bath	10%	20%	N/a	1.4%
More than 4% lacked an inside toilet	19%	24%	N/a	4.2%
More than 60% did not own a car	83%	40%	N/a	N/a
Over 11% of economically-active residents were in professional and managerial jobs	29%	60%	N/a	11.1%
More than 9% of economically active residents were in unskilled manual jobs	60%	44%	N/a	8.7%

Returning from the shops: Caribbean people on the east side of Denmark Road, 1962

The city planning department cautions that the information does not relate to the Caribbean or Asian population as such, just the EDs in which they were concentrated. Because of this, no definite conclusion may be drawn.

In short, the Caribbean people in Hulme's *Windrush* group - like their neighbours, family and friends - were disadvantaged contributors to Manchester economy and development. And although they think about going back over the Atlantic to live on family land on the islands, they do not do so - not least because their families and networks are here. They may experience themselves as exiled in Manchester, but in the Caribbean they find they are strangers. And it has changed too, to a barely recognisable tourist site. Indeed, two of the group have never even returned there on a visit. Edith pointed out

> *It is nice to retire in the sun but... your health deteriorates as you get older and... it wouldn't be fair to use up a much poorer country's resources when we have already paid into a health service we believed would look after us. Our families are grownup and we have grandchildren here now.*[69]

The difficulties they foresaw include the problems of selling up, restarting and adjusting to an island where neighbours no longer help each other:

> *the people at home have lovely homes and drove big cars and they did not even leave the island... the education standard is very high. I felt like a stranger because I did not know the younger generation. They lived life to the full... It is not the same as when we left. You will have to try and fit in.*[70]

One of the many complex attitudes to Manchester was summed up by Daisy: "Being in England is one of mixed experiences, sadness and joy. But the joyful part has exceeded the sadnesses because my greatest delight is in the academical affairs and this I'm greatly involved in….and all is well so this is a fulfilment of my wishes."[71]

The Products

Remembering and retelling are complex and telling processes, as a number of leading oral historians have pointed out.[72] What people remember is not what actually happened but is a version affected by emotional need, available information and the circumstances of telling. The conditions in which the composure of the narrative of "How I came to England what I found here" affect how the story is told, what is omitted and celebrated, what is denied politely or criticised passionately, as I discuss elsewhere.[73]

The outcomes from the Hulme *Mapping Our Lives* project are substantial. The group continually reflect with pride: "I never knew it was going to be this big when we started, Jo." They won a NIACE national award for Adult Learners of the Year. They also made an exhibition for the Hulme Library which was then put in the Pump House People's History Museum, from November 1998 to February 1999. But it had a new form. Workers from the museum had looked in their archives and found material about race relations in the 1950s and 1960s. Some of it was, predictably, hostile to black newcomers, but the group decided bravely that the truth of those times should be revealed.

The memories were also put together in play form: *Anticipations*, which the group themselves performed on camera at the Pump House People's History Museum. National history was enriched by their part in Manchester's *Windrush* celebrations which were spearheaded nationally from Spring 1998 by the BBC who organised a major national programme of regional educational events. This "broadcasting odyssey" included TV documentaries and activities co-ordinated by the BBC's learning link advisors network; and our group appeared on Sky TV, Granada TV, and Manchester Live, as well as in the local papers. The main Manchester event of the season was the *Windrush* in Manchester celebration in the Town Hall (2-6 November 1998), organised by the West Indian Organisations' Co-ordinating Committee in conjunction with MANCAT. The Hulme group joined in by displaying their objects - such as an original suitcase and plane ticket - as well as participating in the Civic Gala presentation.

Caribbean men gather at the Denmark Hotel, 1963

The Ethnic Clubs, St. Gerards Overseas Centre, Denmark Road, Greenheys, c 1962, which Afro-Caribbean newcomers used

And the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Archive, based at Manchester University, was augmented by our group's work.

Subsequently they began touring local schools speaking about Caribbean heritage. This continues. Ishmael says "I feel very happy to speak to the children while they were looking at our exhibition, we could correct some of the negative stories that were said about us."[74] They also helped make a play, *No Bed of Roses,* which has been pivotal to the museum's Moving Lives: Living History Outreach Project. This one-woman show about coming to Manchester is still running as a key part of the education programme. Our Hulme *Windrush* project was just one of many initiatives in collecting the history of people newly arrived in UK, which are especially being made in oral history, education and community writing.[75] Examples include two 1998 books about the *Windrush* and its legacy.[76] However, this project in Hulme was unusual because it focused on a provincial city, not London. The process that happened in that classroom in Stretford Road is something that cannot be separated from the four months of events in the *Windrush* celebrations generally.[77] Related north British projects include Oldham's Afro-Caribbean Project doing oral history study, partly in collaboration with Manchester University, and Liverpool University's black roots summer schools.[78] The Caribbean Garden Exhibition at the Museum of Liverpool Life marked the arrival not only of *Windrush* but *Orbita* too.

The crucial effect of the *Windrush* celebrations in general, of which this project became a part, is that the Caribbean presence in Manchester, and in other parts of Britain, is now better known. *Windrush* provided the ledge, if you like, that all the accumulated data could stand on and became visible from the generalisations of 'multicultural city' and the destructive stereotypes of 'West Indians in Moss Side.' This process has become yet another event in the international struggle to challenge the standard binary of black = bad, white = good, and show the complexity, which includes that not all Caribbean migrants were as socially responsible as this group, and by no means all whites were hostile, in Manchester as elsewhere. For example, one of the group, Daisy wrote: "I was denied knowing about my own race…because of the area in which I live, which is Salford, because there were not many of us there. When I first lived in Salford I did not see many of our Black People there."[79]

There is also a changed self-identity and a changed historical record-in-the head for the *Windrush* group and for people who visited the exhibition, school children e.g. from Bishop Bilsbrorrow and Royce Schools who heard talks, and all the people who watched the two plays. Race and 'other' culture have been foregrounded. By their intrinsic richness, they challenge an older indigenous perception of Moss Side as a site of 'coloured' vice, garishly-shirted layabouts and iniquitous Calypsonians. Instead it instates this hybrid area of South Manchester as a place where some Caribbean people sought to make the best of often insulting circumstances.

Along with carefully-wrapped gifts of mangoes, they brought information about the wider world to Moss Side. That knowledge was not necessarily well received but it was necessary. As the BBC saw it, Caribbean people's "unique physical, emotional and spiritual journey… transformed Britain's cultural, social economic and political consciousness."[80]

People wanting to book the Windrush group as speakers, see the play No Bed of Roses or access material from Moving Lives: Migration, Work and Identity in Manchester's Caribbean Community, should contact
the People's History Museum: 0161 839 6061.
www.peopleshistorymuseum.org.uk.

The images in this article are from the Computerised Local Image Collection held in Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Central Library, Manchester. The collection is made up of 77,000 images, mainly black and white photographs, which show the development of Manchester and the surrounding area. Strongly featured are city centre and suburban street scenes but there are images of people, trams, Manchester at war, churches, schools and many other subjects. The whole collection can be viewed in Manchester Central Library or there is a selection on the Manchester Archives and Local Studies page of www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries.

Ishmael Wright at Manchester Victoria Station, where he worked for most of his Life (Courtesy Ishmael Wright)

Notes

[1] This article acknowledges with love and respect the contributions of many people: the members of three Mapping Our Lives Courses, especially 'The *Windrush* group'; my ex-colleagues at Hulme Adult Education centre, particularly Loretta Harris and Glenda Cox; also Patricia Kushnik, Andrea Foster, Janet Burton-Cowie, Linda Robinson, Andrew Brown for a vast range of support; the Pump House People's History Museum, especially Andy Pearce and Ruth Stephens; the wider Caribbean community in Manchester, particularly those who organised the *Windrush* events, such as Walt Crowson and the MANCAT team, and the West Indian Standing Committee.
[2] A *Windrush* Season Briefing for the BBC Centres meeting, March 1998, p.1.
[3] Cited by D. Shortman in the portfolio exhibition of the *Windrush* project, 'Where We Came From' section.
[4] Statistics from C. Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography* (Oxford, 1968) (hereafter Peach, *West)* and City Planning Department, *Ethnic Minority Groups in Manchester*, (hereafter City, *Ethnic*) (Manchester, 1984). This is a booklet without page numbers so none can be given here.
[5] Source: Peach, *West*, p.15, from statistics complied by the Migrant Services Division of the West Indian Federation Office.
[6] M. Chamberlain, 'Gender and the Narratives of Migration', *History Workshop*, 43 (1997) (hereafter Chamberlain, *Gender*), p. 88.
[7] E. Stanley in the portfolio exhibition of the *Windrush* project, 'How We Came' section (hereafter E. Stanley, *Exhibition).*
[8] E. Stanley, *Exhibition.*
[9] M. Phillips and T. Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain,* (1998) p.124 (hereafter Phillips, *Windrush*). Women came in equal numbers by 1958 but this still fluctuated. In 1960s the balance was 37.8% females, 56.3% males and 5.9% children.
[10] P. Fryer, *Staying Power: the History of Black people in Britain,* (1984) p.374 (hereafter Fryer, *Staying*).
[11] E. Stanley, *Exhibition.*
[12] Fryer, *Staying,* p.373, and E. Dodgson, *Motherland: West Indian Women to Britain in the 1950s* (1988) (hereafter Dodgson, *Motherland*), p.7.
[13] Dorothy Blake, in the portfolio exhibition of the *Windrush* project, 'How We Came' section.
[14] E. Stanley, *Exhibition.*
[15] E. Stanley, *Exhibition* 'What We Found' section.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] Fryer, *Staying,* p.16.
[18] *Ibid.,* p. 209.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.,* pp.168-9.
[21] *Ibid.,* p.347.
[22] *Ibid.,* p.338.
[23] *Ibid.,* p.347.
[24] *Ibid.,* p. 347, citing R.T. Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within* K. King, (ed.), (Oxford, 1973) pp.163-4.
[25] Interview with Euton Christian, quoted in Phillips, *Windrush*, p. 37.
[26] Phillips, *Windrush*, pp. 82-3, source H.O. 213/714 Public Records Office.
[27] B. Keeffe, *King of England* (programme Theatre Royal, Stratford East, 1988) (hereafter Keeffe, *King*) citing 'Thirty Thousand Colour Problems'. *Picture Post* 71, 10, 9 June 1956.
[28] Phillips, *Windrush*, p. 83.
[29] Dodgson, *Motherland*, p. 8.
[30] City, *Ethnic.*
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Daily Dispatch*, 3 May1954, p.5. He arrived at Southampton with 690 others other Jamaicans (299 women), the largest number to arrive in the UK thus far. He had saved up £100, spent £36 on the Palisades to New York fare and then the US-Southampton voyage, and had £3 left. The fare to Manchester was £1.6s 10d (£1.39), leaving him £1.61 to live on.
[33] The 1954 street directory shows that the householder for 3 Seaton Street, M.14 was Mrs Hannah Gould. It appears to have already been an area of settlement. Of the 23 houses in the street, three householders had Asian names, one Greek and one East European.
[34] E. Stanley, *Exhibition.*
[35] Barrington Young, in the portfolio exhibition of the *Windrush* project, 'What We Found' section (hereafter Young, *Exhibition*).
[36] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[37] Young, *Exhibition.*
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Fryer, *Staying*, p. 376.
[40] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[41] E. Stanley, *Exhibition.*
[42] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] I could find no reference to Mr. Lee in the Trade and Street Directories. Possible sites for the shop could have been the Varta Trading company (a delicatessen) at no. 133 or the Denmark Street Stores (Hulme and Raw) at no. 153.
[45] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*
[48] The 1964 Trade Directory shows a Mrs. Palmira Bamford, draper, at 123 Denmark Road. Her Italian-sounding first name suggests that she too may have been a migrant, hence her sympathetic attitude to newcomers' needs.
[49] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Dorothy Blake, in the portfolio exhibition of the *Windrush* project, section, 'How We Came'.
[53] E. Scobie, *Black Britannia, A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago, 1972), p. 179.
[54] Frederick Smith and Co were based at the Anaconda Works, Salford 3, according to the 1954 street directory. They operated in conjunction with the London Electrical Wire Company & Smiths Ltd. at 4 Chatham Street, Manchester.
[55] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Dodgson, *Motherland*, p. 25.
[61] Lloyd Street in Greenheys by 1954 was called Lloyd Street North, and Lloyd Street in Rushholme was called Walmer Street East. It appears to have still been a traditional white area; no foreign names appear in the street directory at all, except one East European surname.
[62] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[63] Of the 108 household in Darcy Street, M14, by 1954 there were five householders with foreign names: Chukuka, Yora, Asuma, Kopu and Grundzinski. The householder given for number 44 is Mrs. Mabel Bragg.
[64] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Found' section.
[65] City, *Ethnic.*
[66] Chamberlain, *Gender*, pp. 86-108.
[67] City, *Ethnic.*
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] E. Stanley, *Exhibition,* 'What We Find When We Go Back' section
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Daisy Shortman, in the portfolio exhibition of the *Windrush* project, 'Who We Are' section.
[72] For example, L. Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge, 1987); A. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, New York, 1991); A. Thompson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend*, (Melbourne, 1994).
[73] See my forthcoming article on the oral historiography issues in this process: *Talking about mangoes in Moss Side.*
[74] Imaginary letter to son Tony from Ishmael Wright, 29.3.01
[75] These tend to be London based: examples of plays include Keeffe, *King of England*; Dodgson, *Motherland*; and community education and writing, such as *Voices*, 27, (1983), a special issue on black people in Britain, including Reddish.
[76] Phillips, *Windrush* and Vivienne Francis' book of *Windrush* survivors' memoirs: *With Hope in Their Eyes*, (1998).
[77] For example, in 1998 Manchester Metropolitan University ran a series of talks about early post-war black migrants, although not with a specific Manchester focus.
[78] Its sections included 'The Roots of Liverpool Sound'; 'Slave City Revisited' and 'Innovation out of Hardship'.
[79] 'Letter to Marilyn' from Daisy Shortman, 1.3.1999: a class exercise in summarising the project.
[80] A *Windrush* Season Briefing for the BBC Centres meeting, March 1998, p. 1.

Additional reading

R. Benmayor and A. Skotnes, *The International Yearbook of Oral History and Lifestories, 3, Migration and Identity* (1995).

J. Stanley, 'Mapping Lives,' *Adults Learning* (Nov 1998), pp. 11-13.

Oral History, 27: 1 (1999) special migration issue based on the papers from the 1998 conference at Luton: *Moving On: Testimonies of Migration.*

South London Press / The Voice / Lambeth Council, *Forty Winters On: Memories of Britain's Post–War Caribbean Immigrants* (1998).