



JOURNEYS

An Oral History of Migration to SW London



Journeys is an intergenerational oral history project exploring the stories of some of the many people who moved to the South West London area between 1948 and 1972.

After WW2 Britain was going through a labour shortage while ambitious plans for a National Health Service generated further demand for workers. In 1948 the British Nationality Act was passed, inviting people from the Commonwealth to come to live and work in the UK to help rebuild the country. From then until 1972, when laws became more restrictive, people moved to the UK from all over the Commonwealth. People came for many reasons; for economic opportunities, for adventure, education, to escape war, to join family members. Many came intending to stay only a short while. This project records some of the stories of people who moved to the UK. These are stories of excitement, hope and pain, dislocation and loneliness, humour and solidarity, the challenges of their journeys, setting up home and finding work.

With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Battersea Power Station Foundation, the project was run and coordinated by arts and education charity *digital-works*. Young people from CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) and children from Furzedown Primary School explored the history of these stories. They were assisted by historians, the Migration Museum, Wandsworth Heritage Service and Black Cultural Archives



Above. Some of the young film makers at CARAS.

An intergenerational meeting.



Filming an interview



who all hosted visits and workshops. After initial research and meetings the young people learned oral history and film making skills which allowed them to meet and record interviews with local people.

We organised talks and a visit to the Migration Museum for people who attend The Furzedown Project, an activity centre for older people located in South London. The Furzedown Project worked closely with us to find people to be interviewed and children also interviewed their own older family members. After training, young people from CARAS and Furzedown Primary School recorded 24 interviews, developing the interview questions, conducting the interviews and operating the camera and audio recorders.

These interviews have been given to the archives at Wandsworth Heritage Service and are available to listen to on the *Journeys* project website. They have also been edited to make a wonderful documentary film. The children worked with their class teachers to produce pieces of creative writing inspired by their research and meetings. Some of this is printed in this booklet.

The film was launched in July 2018 at the Ritzy Cinema in Brixton and has been shown across South London. You can watch the film, listen to the full interviews and see more at...

www.migrationstories.org.uk



Some of the film crew at Furzedown Primary School.
At the launch event at the Ritzy Cinema in Brixton.



Migration Dream

By Alena Pamnani

A fresh start and beginning,
Full of hope and excitement,
A better job opportunity,
Calming landmarks and
landscapes,
What more could I have
asked for?
This is a new life.

Saying goodbye to loved
ones,
Hearing their words of wisdom,
Seeing their beautiful faces,
Missing their mouth-watering
food,
It is a huge task leaving them,
This is a new life.

Desperate to feel the glow of
the sun,
Walking around with no litter,
Craving for delicious sushi,
Ecstatic to see my best friend,

A new independent start,
This is a new life.

But a new area,
A new language,
A different community,
Will they be prejudiced?
The knot tightens in stomach,
Thoughts clouded my head,
This is a new life.





At home in Tooting in the 1960s.

A Taste of Fresh Air

By Annie Jones

My heart beating like a firework,
Eyelids throbbing from staring at
the wall till dusk,
I was leaving my family,
It had been planned, I had to go,
I kept telling myself not to worry,
The small suitcase glared at me,
I decided to pack a photo
album and my coat,

On the journey I felt lost,
Overwhelmed by opportunity
opening its arms to me,
The rippling blue waves washing
me overseas,
Abandoned palm trees waving
goodbye,
I felt like a single twig in a forest,
It was the biggest risk I could
make,
Home sweet home had
vanished,
I decided to stay hopeful.

There was no arrival party,
No welcome band,
Our innocent smiles wiped clean
from our faces,
We were not people anymore,
just robot with passports,
Cold stares pierced through me
grey bricks swallowed me,
I decided to stay calm.

England became my home,
Shopping centres everywhere I
look,
Judgemental people
everywhere I look,
I decided to stay.





Paul Canoville (centre), the first black footballer to play for Chelsea, came and spoke to the Year 6 children at Furzedown Primary School about his mother's journey to the UK from the Caribbean and his own experiences.





Back home in Bangladesh with family.

To my Dearest Friend, Sally,

Life in the UK is forever changing and I have to overcome many obstacles each day but thankfully it is all worth it. I miss home but I'm starting to call this home and one day hopefully it can be my son's home too. I haven't seen him in a while due to the mishap at the airport (he got sent back to America when he came to visit) but we Skype call every night and it makes me feel at home once again. I haven't seen you and many other close friends since the wedding as well but it was really beautiful and I will treasure that moment forever.

Everything is very different here and once I became a British Citizen, I finally got voting rights and it feels good to know I am contributing to Britain's happiness. After 20 years in the UK, I'm really starting to wonder whether I prefer life here or in the USA. Teaching university students Oral Biology is fascinating and I know I'm not meant to say this but I learn so many new things from them everyday. One thing I know is true is that it definitely keeps my morale up to know I'm helping many young adults pursue their dream.

As soon as I can fly back home, I will and I can come and visit you and my family. I hope to get a reply back soon but many kisses from the UK.

Lots of love,
Wendy *(By Evie Waldeck-Evans)*



On board a ship bound for England.

Migration Poem

By Emaad Daud

It was a brand new start
Desperate to leave the horrid
London weather
A bright and happy future awaits
me
I shall soon become a legal
citizen of Dubai.

Mouth-watering food to come
Landmarks, attractions
I couldn't wait to go
Everyone greeting me as I land
on the runway.

And then I waved goodbye to
my family and friends
"Goodbye" I say to the crusty
timeworn trees
"We shall soon meet lovely palm
trees"
And then I walked up the ramp,
and onto the plane.

It wasn't the biggest of all planes
There was a swarm of black hairs
all around me
Seats waiting to be sat on
And then, we arrived.





Hello Migration

By Julia Luczak

This is the opportunity,
For a better life,
Having my friend with me,
Make the journey different,
We'll be there for each other,
Hopefully our parents will come.

I'll miss:
Family,
Friends,
The multi cultural community,
Leaving it all behind,
The new beginning will be hard.

Big Ben,
London Eye,
Buckingham Palace,
Museums,
London Bridge,
Might never see them again.

Hopefully we will be fine,
Hopefully.





Dear Diary

By Mimi Stone

I have now fled war-torn Angola and have just arrived in the Netherlands in Europe. I came here last night and we are staying in a hotel called Hotel California which has space for travellers like me.

Today I, my mum and my little sister Maya are going to go to a big building in Amsterdam the capital city to get asylum to stay in this country until we decide to move somewhere else.

Amsterdam isn't like Angola where we lived, it's all so grand with coffee shops, big supermarkets and clothes shops but the food just doesn't have that same taste like the food back home.

I miss Angola, I miss my friends, my family, all the community and all the fun in my village but what my mum said "it's the only way, don't you worry you'll understand one day" so I'm going to hang on to that thought till I know she's right.



Jamaica is My Home

By Jaden Nurse



It was time to move,
I asked my Nan for suggestions,
She told me to come to
Jamaica,
All my cousins lived there so did
Nan,
I was all for it when I was in
contact,
But then all the problems in
Jamaica came to mind,

What about the hurricanes will I
survive?
Survive,
What about the weather, will it
be too hot?
Too hot,
What about my cousins, will they
like me?
Like me,

I went anyway, what's the worst
that could happen..
I packed my phone, headphones
and clothes,

Hey, Jamaica here I come
I booked my flight and got my
self a residence,

I was worried on the plane, I
calmed myself down,
I thought of the wide smile on my
Nan's face,
She'll be happy, right?
We are close to the airport now,

I looked through my window,
The palm trees waved at me,
The beaches were full,
Have I seen a beach in time?
I landed 5 minutes later scanning
the area,

As I stepped out the plane,
A wave of heat consumed me,
Then a cold breeze flew past me,
The weather was hot but the
breeze made up for it,

Nan drove me to the house,
They were all waiting for me,
My cousins holding food, fans,
clothing and maps,
My cousins are really nice,

The Hurricanes are minor,
If you stay inside you're safe,
The festivals are really colourful,
My favourite food is served there,
It's a sweet fried dumpling,

My life, future it was in Jamaica I
just never knew it,
My culture, happiness it was in
Jamaica I just never knew it

Jamaica is my home.



The Journeys Project was developed and produced by digital:works (Matthew Rosenberg and Sav Kyriacou) and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Battersea Power Station Foundation.

This booklet was written by Year 6 children at Furzedown Primary School. You can read and listen to more of their writing on the project website.

The film contains interviews developed and shot by young people at CARAS and Year 6 children at **Furzedown Primary School**.

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Image Credits: Thanks to all of the interviewees.

You can listen to all of the full interviews, see the film, and find out more about the project on the project website:

www.migrationstories.org.uk

JAMAICA
1940

Journeys

ft. in.
**Stories of
Immigration
1948-71**

ANTS
sance Sex Sexe

Bearer
Titulaire

Wife
Femme



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(PHOTO)

DVD



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participation through creative media

