

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 BST ON THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 2023

Portraits of the Windrush Generation commissioned by His Majesty King Charles III go on display at the Palace of Holyroodhouse

The Windrush Generation is being celebrated in a series of ten new portraits that will go on public display for the first time from Thursday, 22 June for visitors to Edinburgh's royal palace. Commissioned by His Majesty The King in 2022 when Duke of Rothesay, the special display commemorates the positive contributions these pioneering men and women have made to the United Kingdom.

Windrush: Portraits of a Pioneering Generation honours the accomplishments of the Windrush Generation, the name given to the men and women who arrived in Britain on HMT *Empire Windrush* 75 years ago in June 1948, and the generations who followed.

Against a backdrop of political change while the country emerged from the ravages of the Second World War, these men and women took up jobs in construction, with the NHS, and on the railways, often facing discrimination as they navigated life in a new country and pursued their dream of a better life for their families. The portraits, which have become part of the Royal Collection, are a powerful reminder of not just personal resilience and determination, but also of the legacy of these individuals, representing the positive impact of diversity across Britain.

In the foreword to the accompanying book, The King wrote: 'It is, I believe, crucially important that we should truly see and hear these pioneers.'

His Majesty added: 'I dearly hope, that though we might all be different, every individual, no matter their background, has something unique to contribute to our society in a way that strengthens us all.'

The ten sitters, who are now into their 80s and 90s, are:

- **Delisser Bernard** painted by **Honor Titus**. RAF veteran Delisser was optimistic about his future when he boarded HMT *Empire Windrush*. He stayed at a military hostel before settling in Wolverhampton where he met his future wife Marjorie Wildey at a dancehall. A good work ethic was important to Delisser, and he instilled that in their four children, including Olympic sprint champion Verona Elder.
- **Alford Gardner** painted by **Chloe Cox**. Alford's portrait shows a sense of reflection and contentment as he looks back on his life. He arrived in the UK on HMT *Empire Windrush* a determined RAF veteran and overcame obstacles to find work as an engineer and helped establish the first Caribbean Cricket Club, which still exists today and promotes equality and anti-racism.



*Professor Sir Godfrey (Geoff) Palmer OBE
painted by Derek Fordjour*

- **John (Big John) Richards** painted by **Deanio X**. John, known affectionately to his family and friends as Big John, arrived in London on HMT *Empire Windrush* knowing no one. But after a short time, he found his first and only job – working for British Railways (later, British Rail), where he stayed for over 40 years. Big John was one of the founding members of the Learie Constantine West Indian Association in north-west London, which aims to continue the work of his friend, the late cricketer and human rights campaigner Learie Constantine, to advance integration and eradicate discrimination.
- **Carmen Munroe OBE** portrayed by **Sonia Boyce OBE**. Carmen began drama classes after she came to England in 1951 with her sister. She made her West End stage debut in 1962, before taking on roles in film and TV and co-founding the Black theatre company *Talawa*. It has gone on to become the country's leading group for nurturing talent of African and Caribbean heritage and in 2007, Carmen was given an OBE for her services to drama.
- **Gilda Oliver** painted by **Clifton Powell**. Gilda, a former NHS support worker, travelled to Birmingham in 1955. She provided care to both patients and people in her community – whether by cooking meals for those in need, being a motherly figure or through establishing Grace in Age, a group encouraging seniors to be active. Throughout her life, Gilda has found strength in her Christian faith.
- **Professor Sir Godfrey (Geoff) Palmer OBE** painted by **Derek Fordjour**. Sir Geoff's love of science and botany developed after he arrived in the UK in 1955. His degrees in botany and grain science led to major innovations in the brewing industry, and in 1977 Sir Geoff became Scotland's first Black university professor.
- **Jessie Stephens MBE** painted by **Sahara Longe**. Jessie left St Lucia aged 28. Arriving in London in 1955, she became a strong and dedicated member of her community, playing important roles in creating a cultural hub and campaigning for better relationships with the police. In 1982, she was made an MBE for her services to the St Lucian community in the UK.
- **Laceta Reid** painted by **Serge Attukwei Clottey**. Laceta's large, mostly monochromatic mixed-media portrait was inspired by African lifestyle photography. After arriving in Britain in 1957, Laceta settled in Newport, Wales where he was employed at Crompton Batteries for most of his working life. In his free time, he enjoyed tending to his allotment when he was not travelling around the country for dominoes competitions.
- **Linda Hays OBE** painted by **Shannon Bono**. Linda worked for the Civil Service in Jamaica before her mother persuaded her that she would have more opportunities in the UK. She arrived in October 1958, setting her sights on her lifelong dream of studying sociology and graduated in 1972. Linda dedicated her life to youth and community services and was the first woman of colour to be a full-time member of the Police Complaints Authority.
- **Edna Henry** painted by **Amy Sherald**. Edna arrived by plane in 1962, following her brother to Cardiff. Edna found life in the UK hard at first – the food was very different, she was not used to the smoke and cold and she experienced discrimination. But through her Pentecostal Church community, Edna developed an inner strength. Edna's portrait is vibrant, showing her as a woman with dignity who persevered to give her family the best opportunities.

The portraits were undertaken by Black artists personally selected by His Majesty. The sitters were invited to take part by the Windrush Portraits Committee, appointed by His Majesty and chaired by Baroness Floella Benjamin OM DBE, which included Paulette Simpson CBE, the Right Reverend Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin MBE, and Rudolph Walker CBE.

A BBC Arts documentary which follows the creation of the portraits with the sitters and artists will be broadcast on BBC Two on Thursday, 22 June 2023 at 19:45 and will be available on BBC iPlayer.

Ends

The *Windrush: Portraits of a Pioneering Generation* display is included as part of a visit to the Palace of Holyroodhouse from 22 June to mid-September 2023. The portraits will then go on display at the National Portrait Gallery from October 2023 for approximately six months.

Visitor information and tickets: www.rct.uk, +44 (0)303 123 7306. The Palace of Holyroodhouse is open five days a week, Thursday to Monday, remaining closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, except between July and September when it is open seven days a week.

Images of the ten portraits are available to download via [Dropbox](#), embargoed until 00:01 BST on Thursday, 22 June 2023. Images of the display at the Palace will be available from PA Media and from the Royal Collection Trust Press Office from the afternoon of Wednesday, 21 June, also under embargo. Photographs of the reception hosted at Buckingham Palace by Their Majesties The King and Queen for the sitters and artists on Wednesday, 14 June 2023 are available from picture agencies.

For further information, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, press@rct.uk.

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Notes to Editors

Royal Collection Trust, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The King. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes. Royal Collection Trust's work is undertaken without public funding of any kind.

The Royal Collection is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for his successors and the nation, and is not owned by The King as a private individual.

The Windrush Portraits Project was facilitated by the **Royal Drawing School**. The Royal Drawing School (RDS) will deliver free drawing workshops aimed at young people aged 12-18, both in person and online, to coincide with the exhibition. The workshops will explore the living history of the Windrush Generation through drawing and aural history. Royal Collection Trust (RCT) will collaborate with the Royal Drawing School to develop Teacher's Packs, including resources and lesson plans. These free materials will be available online from the RCT and RDS websites, ensuring an ongoing dialogue and celebration of the Windrush community, beyond the 75th anniversary. www.royaldrawingschool.org

Admission to the Palace of Holyroodhouse is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SCO39772).