

CHAPTER TWO

A New Opportunity

A few months after returning to Jamaica, Sam saw an advertisement in a Jamaican newspaper:

Passenger Opportunity To United Kingdom

Troopship 'EMPIRE WINDRUSH' sailing
about 23rd MAY.

Fares: – Cabin Class.....	£48
Troopdeck.....	£28

Royal Mail Lines, Limited – 8 Port Royal St.

The *Daily Gleaner*. Thursday, 15 April 1948.

This was Sam's chance to return to England! The ship's fare of twenty-eight pounds (£28) was not cheap. For some people this was three months' **salary**. Sam came from a family of farmers; they sold three of their cows to raise the money for his fare.

Sam was one of more than 500 passengers who boarded the HMT *Empire Windrush* in Jamaica. However, Sam and the other Jamaicans were not the first Caribbean people on board the *Windrush*. The ship had already stopped at another British colony called Trinidad. Many Trinidadians also believed that England was their 'mother country' and they too wanted to go to Britain.



The Caribbean region today. Trinidad is near the South American mainland.



Peter Dielhenn

Peter Dielhenn, an Englishman who worked in the ship's bakery, was surprised to see hundreds of **civilians**, many of African descent, boarding the ship to go to England. He was one of the 240 **crew** who worked on the *Windrush*. When the *Windrush* first sailed from England earlier that year it had about 2,000 passengers on board: mostly White men, nearly all soldiers from England, Scotland and Ireland. The *Windrush* was a **troopship**, carrying British soldiers to and from the colonies throughout the world. Peter thought that the ship would return to England empty apart from its crew; he didn't know that the ship would be picking up non-military passengers on the way back. 'It was really something to see,' he later recalled.

The *Windrush* also stopped to pick up passengers at Tampico in Mexico and also Bermuda before departing for England.



Some of the Caribbean people on board the *Windrush* were of Indian descent.

At Tampico, 66 Polish people, nearly all women and children, joined the ship. During the war, they had left Poland and ended up in Mexico for their safety. Now, they too were coming to England.

On board the *Windrush* were more than a thousand passengers from the Caribbean, Britain, Bermuda, Poland, Gibraltar and Burma. However, it was the Caribbean people who made up the majority of the ship's passengers.



This map shows the last stage of HMT *Empire Windrush's* journey from Bermuda to Britain.

Some passengers felt unwell due to the motion of the ship, the English food served on board or the weather.

