

Born, bread and buttered in London

Transcript: Allen Roome

Interviewer: So, Allen, can you just tell me a bit about the part of the UK that you're from?

Allen Roome: Right, I come from London. I was born in the West End. I don't remember much about that because we moved on to Kings Cross then we moved up to Tufnell Park where I spent most of my life. I did move back to the West End when I was a bit of a younger man, you know – to see what was going on down there, obviously. And then I moved back to Tufnell Park and now I'm in Islington. I suppose in all those – I had moved within that area; I suppose, you could say that it's a seven-mile square area that I never moved out of.

Interviewer: Good heavens. And can you tell me about any changes in this area of, perhaps Tufnell Park in London where you were living most of the time?

Allen Roome: Well, yeah the Tufnell Park area, where I lived was just off of Tufnell Park. In your eyes what has changed greatly is the shops. There are all different types of shops there. You could literally buy anything you needed in general. Not furniture, but there's a couple of dairies there, a pub, off-licence, there was a laundrette – Westerns they were called. They was a big company when I was younger and we used to get what we called our bag washed there and I had to pick it up on a Thursday. Number ninety-seven was always wet; I remember that, yes.

Interviewer: You went and collected the wet laundry?

Allen Roome: We took it on Monday and collected it on Thursday and I can't remember how much it was. It was only sort of, in those days, coppers. It wasn't a great deal of money at all. But it was the sort of period of time when people never had washing machines and that was the ideal sort of thing to do.

Interviewer: Yeah. And would you say your area, perhaps the area that you're living in now – Islington; is that famous for anything?

Allen Roome: I don't think it's all that famous for anything. Not the part I live in anyway. The ex-prime minister lived there, Tony Blair. I don't know what you make of that if that's famous or not. But I did think on it and there are some little areas in there where I think there's a lot of, sort of, actors and actresses live. But I'm not into that sort of thing, so that passes me by.

Interviewer: And just tell me something about how people speak in your area of north London, would you say.

Allen Roome: Well, it's such a diversity there that you couldn't say anybody speaks, it's a general accent or a general theme. What I do notice is the young people now, they have this type of speak where they use a lot of American phrases and things like this. I remember a kid a week or so ago. He was shouting out 'oh that is wickedly evil, man'. Which, that sort of terminology comes from the United States of America. And that's 'cause they watch this rubbish television.

Interviewer: What does that mean 'it's wickedly evil, man'?

Allen Roome: I think it's supposed to mean it's good, which it means obviously the opposite. But that's what they do. They do speak like that, you know.