

You Have the Same Accent as Me

By John Joyce

I was wet and exhausted after snow shoe running on top of Grouse Mountain. It had been raining and my socks were wet. In fact all my clothes were wet from being out for more than an hour. In fact it was still raining so I paused to don my blue southwester, stuffing my ski tuque into my black gym bag. There was music in my head, probably the same song that blared from the skating pond at the top. Desert Rose by Sting. I proceeded with caution, due to the tiredness of my legs down the stairs leading away from the Grouse Mountain Skyride. Another person dressed in a black cortex outfit limped past me in the adjoining staircase.

“You have the same accent as me, where are you from?” She asked.

I was pleasantly startled. My English back ground sprung into action and I tried to decipher the origins of the voice. It had been a while since I had heard this intonation. I gathered the cortex stranger limping down the stairs also hailed from London. She must have heard me talking in the Skyride to my snowshoe running buddies. I still carried a mild posh London accent, similar to Mick Jagger when we are both having a good day. Except he tends to tone his down and I tweak mine up.

I tried to recall where I was from. Like so many immigrants in Canada, from where I come doesn't officially exist.

“Middlesex.” I replied.

“Do you live here?”

“I come from Palmers Green ”

she said, descending the slippery stairs slowly. Since Palmers Green was a long way from where I grew up and to further expound my origins, I added,

“South London, by the Thames, Hampton Court.”

I recollected Sabine, a French au pair girl I once knew lived there. Attempting to think like a Londoner I tried to pin point the closest underground station to Palmers Green, but it had been too long; nothing came back. I must add I was at Grouse Mountain, 20 minutes from Vancouver, Canada, a major tourist zone and fraternized by locals such as me. Different accents and languages were the exciting norm here. Naturally, Grouse Mountain employed youth from all over the world so my new companion might have been a worker “plodding home at the end of the parting knell”

My mind fleetingly yearned to be near the River Thames, where I had fished and swam as a boy. I thought of wind vanes on top of Norman churches, meaningful radio programming, thought provoking newspapers, Georgian architecture, Waterloo Station, fashion trends, theatre productions and arts personalities, country lanes and stiles. Milk bottles and visits to the seaside. As my foot hit the bottom step my limping cortex companion spoke again and joltingly forced me to return to my drenched condition

“Second ski board lesson, did this to me. ”urt me back” she said without the dramatics’ . ”

“Are you visiting or do you live here.” I inquired again.

“I ’m here on a visa but I’m trying to change it so I can stay,” She sounded like a girl being interviewed in London England. Possibly an expert on Roman remains or a singer in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s latest musical?

“Do you like it here?”

“It is wonderful” she responded. My fellow accented companion with deliberation continued walking towards the number 253 transit bus.

“You don’t miss London?”

“No” she mocking replied. With a full elucidation of vowels.

“I hope the back gets better. Good luck.” I continued on to the car park.

I was wet, exhausted but in a state of mild euphoria as I drove home in my European styled wagon with the Rolling Stones playing ‘Angie’. I would have an English beer at home and eat a Cornish pasty with my wife Diane. We would visit the Thames next summer but probably not swim in it. I thanked my limping cortex stranger from Palmers Green for washing away my momentary homesickness, and hoped she would make it to the third ski-board lesson.

© 2010 John Joyce