

Goat

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After Reading

Finsbury Park & Multicultural London



Have a look at these extracts from the beginning of the story again, and make a mental note of the references to a multi-cultural city.

Byron told me to meet him at the New Beacon bookshop on Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, at two o'clock. 'Don't be late. Please.'
It took me a while because I had to skirt the crowd outside our newly world-famous mosque to get to the bookshop.

Byron stared at the halal counter heaped with meat, bones and flayed goat heads. Next to it was a cooler full of chicken feet, wings, necks and thawing drumsticks.

I had first met Byron at a Bhundu Boys concert at the Town and County Club back in the mid-eighties. He claimed to have been a freedom fighter in Rhodesia, pre-Zimbabwe, before getting a British Council scholarship to come to England.

His head seemed to shrink down as an elderly bearded gentleman in a white kurta squeezed by for a hunk of meat.

'So, you want goat curry now?' I hadn't thought of it as an aphrodisiac - halal or not.

'She's from your hometown.'

'Mine?'

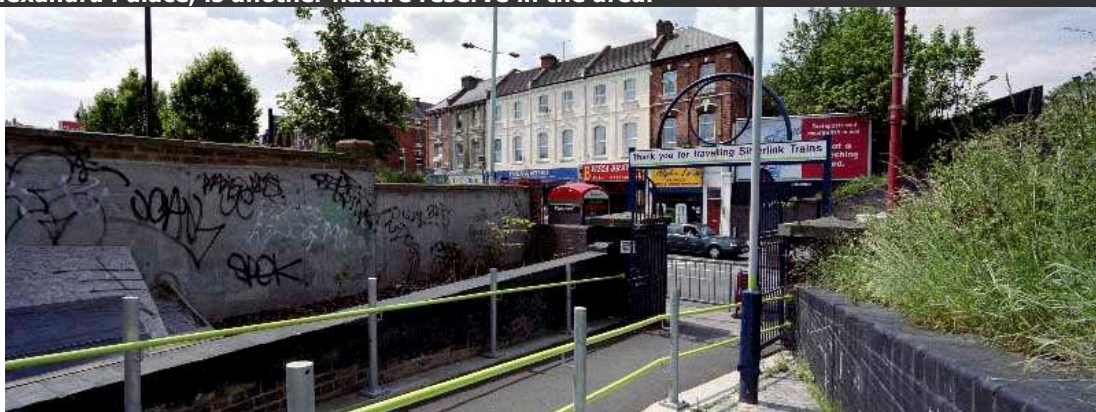
A small storm clouded his face. 'Colombo, Sri Lanka, right?'

The background to the story has clear references to a Muslim community (the mosque and a halal butcher) while it is populated with people from Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. The part of London that is being described is Finsbury Park which, along with other districts of London, is well known for its multi-cultural communities.

Finsbury Park is now split between three London boroughs, Islington, Haringey and Hackney. It is a vibrant multi-racial area, with cafes and shops which reflect this, and many small specialised retailers not found in large modern shopping centres. Green Lanes is a centre for Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and the Mosque is a major landmark in the centre of the area. African, Caribbean and other cultures from around the world are also represented in the area.

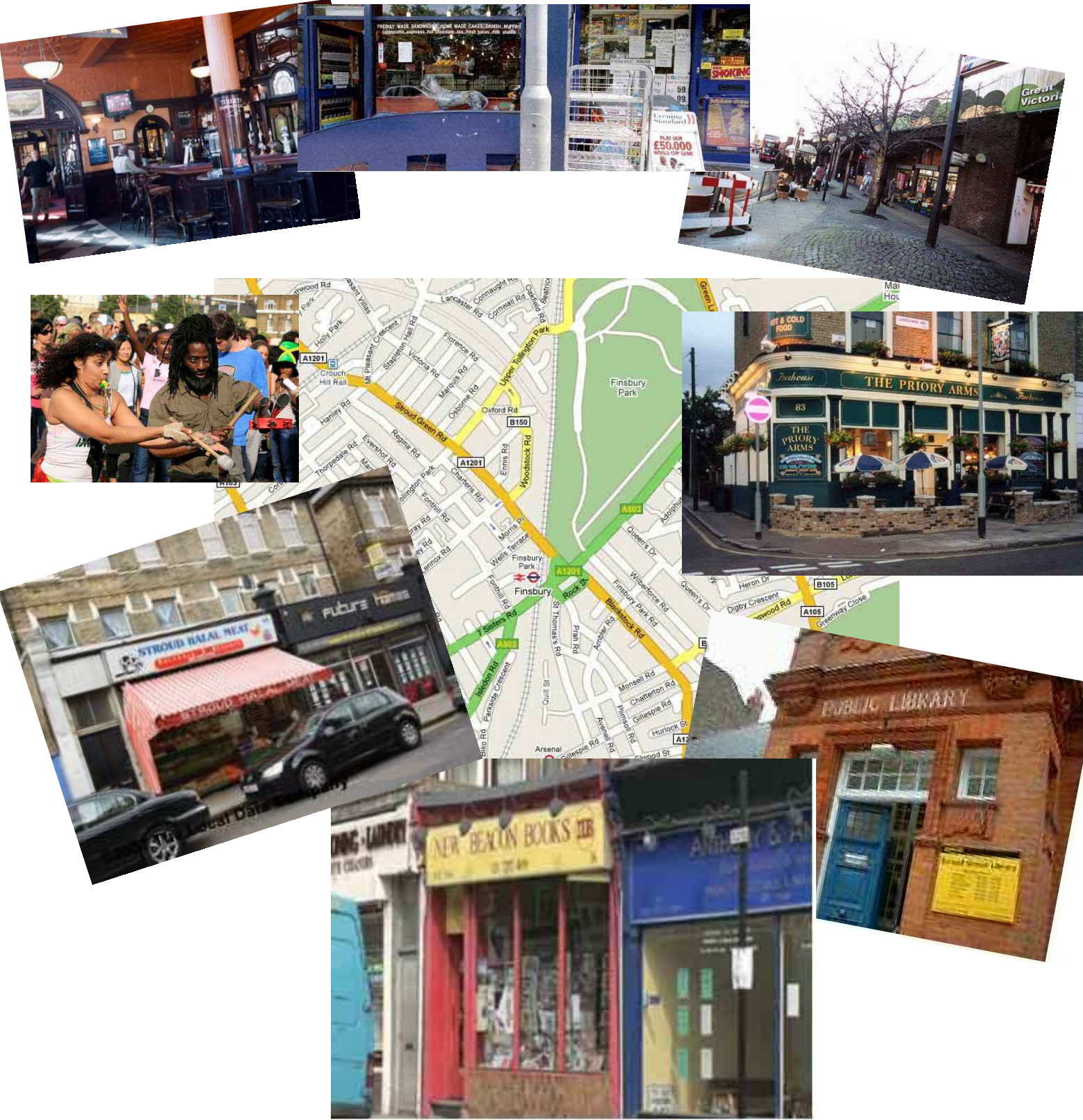
There are many small and medium size workshops and factories in Finsbury Park. Fonthill Road, near to Finsbury Park station, has over 200 small fashion shops, both retail and wholesale, and the Florentia Clothing Village in Vale Road is a maze of small workshops open to the public at weekends.

Perhaps the best known site in the area is at the extreme south, Highbury Stadium, the home ground of Arsenal Football club since 1913 (they were originally founded in Woolwich in south east London.) Just a few metres from the roar of the stadium and you can be in the tranquility of the Gillespie Park Nature reserve, a wildlife area on the site of former rail sidings. Parkland Walk, which runs 7km along the route of the now closed rail link to Alexandra Palace, is another nature reserve in the area.



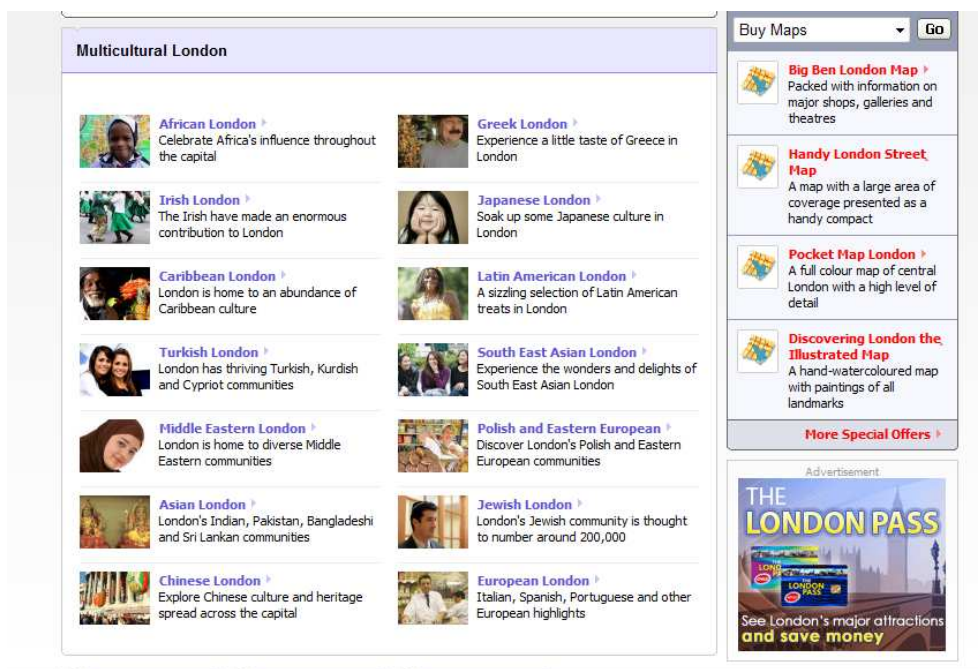
Activity 1

Here is a map of the area around Finsbury Park. First locate one of the streets mentioned in the story. Second, look at the pictures and decide which ones might have a reference in the story. Explain your choice.



Activity 2

Webquest. Here is a screen shot from www.visitlondon.com showing links to various communities that make up London's rich cultural mix.



Go to http://www.visitlondon.com/maps/multicultural_london/ and find which London community will offer the following:

1. With which community is Hubble Bubble club night most strongly associated? Where is it held?
2. With which community would you most associate the Boleyn Cinema?
3. Which community has its bands and DJ sets featured every 2nd Thursday of each month at Viva Viva?
4. What will you find at 51 Pimlico Road, SW1?
5. Which community can offer you Poor Man's Black Velvet and Black Maria?
6. If you found yourself eating custard tarts in Stockwell Road, which community would you most likely have visited?
7. With which community will Londoners associate August and Notting Hill? Why?
8. With which community is Golders Green most strongly identified?
9. Which community has its own film festival at the Rio Cinema in December?
10. If you started a walk at 8.00 at Fitzroy Square, which community would you be exploring?