

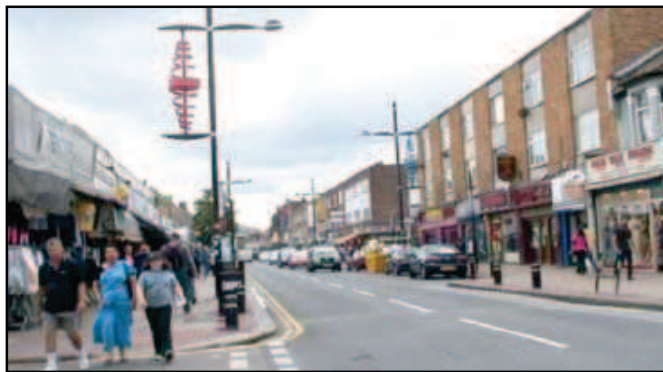
# CONTEXT: Newham

## The Borough of Newham, in East London

At one time Newham in the East End of London was two separate council districts called East Ham and West Ham – one of which still has a famous football team. They were combined into the **borough** of Newham in 1965. Green



Street, which features a lot in the *Belonging* films, is the boundary between the two (and also home to West Ham's stadium).



Traditionally it's an area where the Cockney accent of English would be spoken.

Though it's hard to believe when you see it today, the area used to be mainly farmland.

Big changes came when the Royal Docks were built in the 1850s to make space for the new steam ships, which were larger than the sailing ships they were replacing.

Other industries then grew up around the docks, these were linked to the railway system, and in time the docks became the largest in the world. The existence of jobs triggered **migration** from other parts of Britain to the parts of London near the docks, as well as from other parts of the world – Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland and Russia. In the early 1900s Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe also moved to the area, escaping **persecution** in their home countries.



After the First World War, sailors from the British Empire in the Caribbean and India, as well as some ex-soldiers from other colonial countries sometimes decided to stay. By 1930, the area had the largest number of Black settlers in London. After the Second World War and into the 1950s, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean families moved to the area, responding to the government's campaigns to get people from the Commonwealth to come and work in England.

So Newham has been home to both refugees and economic migrants.

This map gives some idea of the size of the British Empire and how far around the world it spread. An immigrant to Britain once said 'We are here because you were there.'



A lot of these migrants and their descendants are still there, part of the 260,000 people who live in what has become the most culturally diverse borough in the UK: there are more than 30 different ethnic groups and more than 300 languages are spoken.

Newham has the lowest percentage of white people of any London borough, with 61% of the population drawn from Mixed, South Asian, Caribbean, African, Chinese, and other groups. The borough has the second highest percentage of Muslims in Britain



(24.3%). In recent years, some Eastern Europeans from new member countries of the European Union have also settled in Newham.



It is also a 'young' borough: the population has increased a lot in the past ten years and the proportion that are young increased by 23% in that time. It has the highest proportion of people aged 0-24 in England (41%), but also the lowest proportion of people over the age of 65.

In 2007, a Channel 4 television programme branded Newham the '4th worst' place to live in the UK.

[http://www.channel4.com/4homes/on-tv/best-and-worst/newham-3rd-worst-place-to-live-in-the-uk-08-06-05\\_p\\_1.html](http://www.channel4.com/4homes/on-tv/best-and-worst/newham-3rd-worst-place-to-live-in-the-uk-08-06-05_p_1.html)

The next door boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets came in as the worst and second worst.

The study took into account crime rates, school results, pollution, economic activity and property prices. Crime went up there by 5% during 2004-5 while it went down 4% in the rest of London. The unemployment rate was 6.7% in 2008, the second highest rate in London, with the rate among women of working age at 17.3% (the national average at the time was 4.8%). In terms of people's earnings, it's one of the poorest places in London. It is also **densely populated** with over one quarter of households classified officially as 'overcrowded'.

Some of the young people who live there objected to this programme and demonstrated outside Channel 4 headquarters (see [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)), and some of the films in this *Belonging* collection also respond – suggesting their experience of Newham is more positive. *My Street*, *Veins in a Body* and *Being Here* are very positive. *Confuzzled* explicitly takes on the public image and tries to counter it. *A Taste of Asia* is an introduction to the area from someone who clearly likes it very much.



It's a centre of UK urban music. *Kano* and *Plan B*, two top selling artists in the grime scene live there, so do the *Mitchell Brothers*, two rappers signed to *The Streets* record label, whose music features what many think of as important in working class East End life: drinking down the pub, football, clothing styles such as Fred Perry, unemployment, drug dealing and crime. Canning Town, part of the borough, is the birth place of the 'Oi! Punk' band *Cockney Rejects*, known for their violent and aggressive lyrics focusing on topics like pub brawls, gang fighting and crime in general. Actor Danny Dyer was also born there, as were several people who have acted in *Eastenders*.



Several athletes and sports people were born there too. Newham is going to be hosting the 2012 Olympics in part of the borough called Stratford, where an Olympic village is being built. As part of a plan to **regenerate** the whole area, local authorities have highlighted the change in opportunities for the local residents because of the Olympics and the possible rise in their standard of living. However, some local people have wondered whether the Olympics will bring any lasting benefits to the area and the people who live there.

Googling 'Newham London map' will take you to:

[http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1T4DKUK\\_enGB307&q=newham](http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1T4DKUK_enGB307&q=newham)

If you zoom in, Green Street, where the Newham films are centred, is just above the red marker flag (it's the B167, crossing Barking Road).



## GLOSSARY

<b>Borough</b>	The area covered by a local council in an urban area. In London there are 32 boroughs, though one, Westminster, is technically a city. Smaller towns might be complete boroughs in themselves; if they're bigger they are cities.
<b>Migration</b>	Movements of population, sometimes within one country and sometimes to another country.
<b>Economic migrants</b>	People who move and live in another part of the country, or a different country, so they can get work.
<b>Persecution</b>	Being treated badly by others, possibly by government or government authorities, often because of belonging to a particular ethnic, racial, religious or political group.
<b>Colonies</b>	Countries 'owned' or controlled by another richer and more powerful country. A country with many colonies has an empire. France, Portugal and Britain all had empires until their colonies gradually became independent between the 1950s and 1970s.
<b>Commonwealth</b>	Most of the former countries of the British Empire now belong to the Commonwealth. They have something in common through historic trading links, and the widespread use of English.
<b>Refugees</b>	People who migrate from one country to another, escaping serious danger from being treated badly by others, possibly by government or other people with power, often because of belonging to a particular ethnic, racial, religious or political group.
<b>Cultural diversity</b>	Instead of everyone having the same culture – language, food, religion and traditions – there are different sub-groups.
<b>Ethnic groups</b>	Groups who might be seen, and see themselves, as different from others in terms of language, religion, customs and so on. They might, or might not, be physically different, so Italians, Scots and Bangladeshis are all ethnic groups.
<b>Population density</b>	The number of people who live in a square mile (or kilometre). It's a way of measuring how crowded an area is.
<b>Regenerate</b>	To improve, renew, bring new life and opportunities into an area.

## More about Newham

There's useful stuff at:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/gangs/projects/newham/index.jsp>

[http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1750\\_scalway/blog/?p=19](http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1750_scalway/blog/?p=19) gives a vivid impression, with photographs, of walking down Green Street and what the buildings look like. *'Since the beginning of last year I've been walking frequently along Green Street in East London and around the streets which form its hinterland, looking at the shop displays and also at the houses in the surrounding area, the blocks of flats, the vehicles and street furniture...'*

**West Ham United's** stadium is in Green Street: <http://www.whufc.com/page/Home>

While British people with roots in the Caribbean or Africa have been present in Premier teams since the 1980s, Asians have not. One organisation says:

*'Recent additions may have bolstered the number of British Asians in the professional game to record levels, but are there really just seven with the talent to play football at the top level? The small number of British Asian players at professional level has been an area of concern for Kick It Out and the British Asian community for a number of years.'*

West Ham has a scheme to encourage footballing talent amongst Asian young people.

*West Ham United, in partnership with Sport England, are making a proactive, ground breaking contribution to encourage Asian people to participate in football. The project operates across the London Boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Redbridge. The scheme assists Asian people to gain access to football...'*

There's a schools PE programme, extra training for teachers, a coaches development scheme, talent spotting and Technique Development Performance Coaching and Summer Play Schemes at local parks.

They're also interested in developing girls' and women's football, with girls-only sessions provided in Newham and other nearby boroughs in order to develop young females to come into football as both players and coaches.

They also have a link on their website to **Let's Kick Racism Out of Football**:  
<http://www.kickitout.org/>