



15. Rita Green: King Street, Raven Yard, music making, Music House

I visited King Street with my father before the war; my father was head maltster at Youngs Crawshay & Youngs. He used to have to come and check that everything was OK when the barley was being roasted. I loved the atmosphere of King Street.

We came to live at Raven Yard at the end of 1969. The day we moved, we had Hadley & Ottaway, who were the best people for moving pianos. I wanted the piano upstairs, well if you could have seen the look this funny little man in charge gave me: "Won't go up them stairs for a start!" and next day they had to bring a huge vehicle in, take the window out and use ropes and pulleys. As soon as we got started, we heard the whine of two fire engines who wanted to come past but fortunately it was only a practice exercise. I then found the action had jammed and had to get someone in from Cookes to fix it and the man in charge said, "Well, all I can say is, if you move again, don't send for us!"

Living in an old house with thick walls was an advantage to me as a musician and singer - my husband and sons also play instruments. Our grandson was staying with us once and boasted to his friends about his grandparents having an old historical house but he did ask me about it being haunted. However, it's a very happy house. It's a friendly street, as city streets go. They have done a lot to make King Street better. They have tried to make the new houses blend - they can't build 1550s houses. We don't get disturbance from the football crowds walking past and Prince of Wales Road people don't come along here. The Waterfront was a bit of a problem at first, people were being woken up at 2 o'clock, but the residents had a meeting with them at City Hall and now there are notices reminding people it is a residential area.

The Music House was like a little concert hall, with a platform and I used to sing there at charity concerts, with Eileen Last or Kenneth Ryder accompanying me on piano.

Rita Green