

# Around the World

Me father arrived in England, I was telling one of the girls, he arrived when he was sixteen year old and he pitched a tent up on the deck of a ship. And he arrived in England when he was just sixteen. I believe he met my mother when he was seventeen and to my knowledge I think it was just three or four days days after they met, they got married and lived together 'til me father died and had three sons and three daughters. But there's only me and the younger daughter left. I was the youngest boy and I've got one sister younger than me that's alive.



Steve and his sister in Hollywood.

Margot: Do you know what circumstances brought them to, to the States from Europe in the first place?

I'm just surmising this, you know ... Obviously you can go to some parts of Europe now and it's like a third world country. I know me grandmother was Russian and me grandfather was Greek. But that doesn't mean to say that that because he was born there ... it doesn't mean to say that he was brought up there. So the point is he could have [been brought up] anywhere because you just travelled up and down. And ... what does come to mind is he must have been a very game person to leave Europe and go to the 'States and then from the States like ... he must have went through a lot of different countries before he got to the 'States and then from the 'States to Canada and then from Canada to England and then different parts of Europe again and then South Africa. And that's where me grandfather passed away was in South Africa. And me grandmother is buried in London.

So but to give you some sort of inkling of why, I don't know. I suppose, like you see on the pictures, when they say 'land of opportunity' or that. Maybe that's what it was.

## Being a Wrom

Margot: You're known as Steve the Wrom. Is that right? What does that mean to you?

That's what I am a Wrom ... And being a Wrom is like , I know the language, right, because like I say, I am a Wrom. I know the culture.

Margot: You learned Romanis from being a child?

You just speak English and Romanis so you just learn the two languages from being a child. How I see it is both are me first languages. It's unfortunate because some of the people .. some Wrom which I know has lost the language because of being separated from .. What I mean by separated is more or less they've stopped moving up and down because of the hassle of everything. They've had to change the lifestyle, how they live. Some of the young people like they say to themself, Maybe it might be a better thing if they didn't speak the language. And then they could see that it's not working. And it's a shame. And they know they're different to the other people. A lot of people regret now that they've lost the language. And they have their own songs, type of music. It's different key notes ... Their own type of dancing. And it's things like that that sometimes I miss because you don't see it that much. Like when I was a kid you'd be outside. You'd be outside, outside the trailer. You'd have a stick fire. You'd hear the old men telling old stories that would last two or three days. They'd have bits of parties and they'd play the music, singing and dancing.



Stephen's parents at Barry Island.



Extract from oral history interview, June 2008