

London Life *From City to Sea*

Jackie: Hello, I'm Jackie Dalton. Have you ever wanted to escape your everyday life and go and do something completely different? If you live in a house in a big noisy city, like London, perhaps you could sell it and go and live on a small boat. Well, one man has and he now lives on his boat just off the southern English town of Brighton. We're going to hear from Brian Bessy – well, that's his real name. But he also has a nickname – an affectionate name used by people who know him. What's his nickname?

Albert

Anyway, my name is Brian, Brian Bessy. That's the real name, although I'm sort of affectionately known as Uncle Albert.

Jackie: Did you catch Brian's nickname? He said he was affectionately known as 'Uncle Albert'. How long has Uncle Albert been living on the boat and why did he move there?

Albert

I've been down here now for the best part of 12 years. I used to live in London. God knows what London's like these days, but I ended up on this. The family had grown up, the wife had passed on and I had this big house... cutting grass and decorating... and I thought who for? I'm going to go and live on the boat.

Jackie: Did you get those answers? Uncle Albert says he's lived on the boat for the best part of 12 years – which means nearly 12 years. 'For the best part of...'. So why did he decide to move there from London? Because his

wife had died, his children had grown up and he was left on his own in a big house – which seemed silly when it was just him.

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Is Albert glad he decided to leave London and live on a boat in Brighton?

Albert

Best decision I've ever made. Put years on me I think. I often look back and I think 'If I'd have stayed up there I'd have probably put my head in the oven.'

Jackie: Uncle Albert says it was the best decision he ever made. So he's pretty pleased he moved. But, surely, after life in a big house in London, it must be a bit uncomfortable living on a boat. Does Albert agree? What can you do on a boat that you can't do in a house? Listen to find out.

Albert

All these boats have got all the comforts that [are] required for living on board: microwaves, televisions, fridges, you name it. If you don't like your neighbours, you can go and park somewhere else or wander off to another harbour.

Jackie: Uncle Albert says on a boat you have all the comforts you need – a television, a microwave and so on and, perhaps best of all, if you don't like your neighbours, you can go somewhere else or park in a different harbour – a harbour – a place where boats are kept. Albert thinks it's a great lifestyle and, as he's about to tell us, he doesn't understand why more people don't do it...

Albert

One of the things that always strikes me is the fact that, this being a lovely way to live, you'd think there would be more young couples... instead of trying to raise a mortgage, which is hard for them, a boat is a fraction of the cost and the life itself is ten times better, you know, so...

Jackie: Well, he's got a point, hasn't he? A mortgage is a legal agreement when you borrow money from a bank to buy a house and you have to pay back that money over a period of time. And I can tell you, living in London at the moment, if you want to buy a house here you've got to have a pretty big mortgage as housing is very expensive. So, as Uncle Albert argues, why get a big mortgage when you can go and live on a boat?

Albert

One of the things that always strikes me is...

Jackie: 'One of the things that always strikes me is...' that's a nice phrase. It's a way of saying 'Something that I find interesting or surprising...'

Albert

One of the things that always strikes me is...

Jackie: Let's listen to Albert again. What are some of the other things he likes about being on the boat?

Albert

There's a lot going for living on board. I love everything that's down here. I love these lovely nights, the lovely sunsets. People pay for this, you know, they ask me silly questions like 'Where do you go for your holiday?' and I look out here and I look at them and I think: 'Every day is a holiday!'

Jackie: Albert loves the nights and the sunsets, and when people ask where he goes on holiday he thinks it's a silly question. Every day is a holiday! And how right he must be. In fact, I'm almost feeling tempted myself. Perhaps when London gets all too much, I'll go and ask Uncle Albert for some advice on the best model of boat to buy.

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