

## History

The area formerly known as the south Durham coalfield has been the site for many documentaries, mostly filmed in black and white and often grainy. Over time inhabitants have become used to images of themselves being addressed by roving film crews with an eye for the postindustrial and disenfranchised.

It was shortly after the film *Billy Eliot* was released that the residents of a small village, which had been used as a location for that film, found themselves being approached.

One man, out of work since the mines had been closed and big in every sense of the word, was asked how he would react if his son came home from school with the ambition to become a ballet dancer.

He rubbed his cheek slowly as the mike was held expectantly to his life hardened face, and turning to make the most of this whilst speaking to camera, he replied that he would let them in on an historical fact that had been kept secret from outsiders up till now. That male offspring born of mining families were traditionally sent to ballet classes and he would be chuffed to bits if his son would follow in his forefathers steps. That in his youth he himself had been the best ballet dancer in the region. He then pirouetted down the street to the cheers of the rest of the village who were by then all congregating to view the response of the crew.

