

Who Is Rosie Rooke?

ROOKE, Rosie (Muswell Hillbilly on MH): the singer makes his farewells to her prior to his being moved to Muswell Hill as part of the council's rehousing programme. He's going miss her. In the liner notes to the re-mastered MH Ray says his mother actually had a childhood friend of that name. In an interview that was part of February 2006's Episode 203 (featuring Ray's new 'Other people's lives' lives CD) of the wonderful Little Steven's Underground Garage web radio show Ray further elaborates her importance to the Davies family: "[My father] worked in a market industry. He worked in Smithfield Market and my mother met him when one day she was walking down the street with Rosie Rooke, her best friend, and someone threw a bag of dog, no ... horseshit at Rosie Rooke, and knocked her hat off. And my father ran to Rosie Rooke's aid and met my mother and that was that.. That was kind of a romantic introduction. Her best friend was hit by a pile of horseshit and my father saved the day. That's where that romance started." The version given in Dave's 'Kinked' is more prosaic (she was working as a waitress in a coffee shop) and doesn't mention RR.

- *Compiled by Dave Quayle*

Rosie Rooke, who's in the last song, she really existed," Ray said, still intent on his drawing. "She used to be my mom's friend when they were about sixteen. They used to walk up Holloway Road, and all of the boys whistled at her because she was very big and well endowed and nice and shapely. She had a very sad life, drink and all of that, and she never felt fulfilled as a person. On the original demo for the album there was a whole song called 'Rosie Rooke.' Leaving Rosie Rooke behind is like leaving everything behind. She symbolized all that for me. She was what it was like and I didn't actually know here."

Another member of Ray's family is present and accounted for on 'Muswell Hillbillies," Ray said: "Uncle Son was an uncle of mine who worked for the railway. Most of the people I know in life are just ordinary people like Uncle Son. They're not extremely talented. I can't remember talking to him but he came to see me when I was young, just before he died. He had TB from working on the railway, and he died because of his job. He drew me a picture of a train. He couldn't draw, but he thought he was giving me something by drawing a train for me. I never really spoke to him, but like Rosie Rooke, he symbolized something to me."

- *Janis Schact, Circus Magazine, February 1972*