

# This is England (2007)

## TOMATOMETER

### ALL CRITICS

# 93%

Average Rating: 7.7/10  
Reviews Counted: 89  
Fresh: 83  
Rotten: 6

### TOP CRITICS

# 93%

Average Rating: 7.7/10  
Reviews Counted: 30  
Fresh: 28  
Rotten: 2

Critics Consensus: A moving coming-of-age tale that captures the despair among England's working-class youth in the 1980s.

## AUDIENCE SCORE

# 90%

**liked it**  
Average Rating: 4.1/5  
User Ratings: 54,241

## MOVIE INFO

It's 1983 and school is out. Twelve-year-old Shaun is a lonely boy growing up in a grim coastal town in northern England, whose father died fighting in the Falklands War. Over the course of the summer holiday he befriends a group of local skinheads. With his pent-up rage and frustration, Shaun finds exactly what he needs in the gang-mischief, mayhem and brotherhood. He also meets the volatile and boorish Combo, an older skinhead who sees himself in Shaun. Adopting Shaun as his protege, Combo leads the gang down a hate spewing path that culminates in an irreversible act of violence.

**Rating:** Unrated  
**Genre:** Art House & International, Drama  
**Directed By:** Shane Meadows  
**Written By:** Shane Meadows  
**In Theaters:** Jul 27, 2007 Wide  
**On DVD:** Nov 13, 2007  
**US Box Office:** \$95.8k  
**Runtime:** 1 hr. 42 min.  
IFC First Take - Official Site

[[www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)]



Theatrical release poster

Wikipedia

# ***This Is England***

[from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia]

***This Is England*** is a 2006 British drama film written and directed by Shane Meadows. The story centres on young skinheads in England in 1983. The film illustrates how their subculture, which has its roots in 1960s West Indian culture, especially ska, soul, and reggae music, became adopted by white nationalists, which led to divisions within the skinhead scene. The film's title is a direct reference to a scene where the character Combo explains his nationalist views using the phrase "this is England" during his speech.

## **Plot**

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In 1983, 12-year-old Shaun gets into a fight at school after a classmate makes an offensive joke about his father, who died in the Falklands War. On his way home, Shaun comes across a gang of young skinheads led by Woody, who feels sympathy for Shaun and invites him to join the group. They accept Shaun as a member, and he finds a big brother in Woody, while developing a romance with Smell, an older girl who dresses in a new wave style.

Combo, an older skinhead, returns to the group after a prison sentence, accompanied by a knife-wielding moustachioed man called Banjo. A charismatic but unstable individual with sociopathic tendencies, Combo expresses English nationalist and racist views, and attempts to enforce his leadership over the other skinheads. This leads the group to split, with young Shaun, the belligerent Pukey, and Gadget, who feels bullied by Woody for his weight, choosing Combo over Woody's apolitical gang.

Shaun finds a mentor figure in Combo, who in turn is impressed by and identifies with Shaun. Shaun goes with Combo's group to

a white nationalist meeting. After Pukey expresses doubt over their racist and nationalistic politics, Combo throws him out of the group and sends him back to Woody. The gang then engages in racist antagonism of, among others, shopkeeper Mr. Sandhu, an Indian man who had previously banned Shaun from his shop.

Combo becomes depressed after Lol, Woody's girlfriend, rejects him when he admits that he has loved her since they had sex years before. To console himself, Combo buys cannabis from Milky, the only black skinhead in Woody's gang. During a party, Combo and Milky bond while intoxicated, but Combo becomes increasingly jealous when Milky shares details of his many relatives and comfortable family life. Enraged, Combo beats Milky into a coma while Banjo holds down Shaun, who watches in horror. When Banjo desires to hit Milky as well, Combo violently beats him and evicts him from the apartment. Horrified at what he has done, Combo weeps over Milky's body. Shaun and Combo later take Milky to a nearby hospital.

The film cuts forward to Shaun in his room brooding about what has happened, with his mother Cynthia assuring Shaun that Milky will be all right. Shaun is then shown walking near the beach and throwing his Saint George Flag, a gift from Combo, into the sea.

## **Cast**

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- Thomas Turgoose as Shaun
- Stephen Graham as Combo
- Jo Hartley as Cynthia
- Joseph Gilgun as Woody
- Vicky McClure as Lol
- Andrew Shim as Milky
- Rosamund Hanson as Michelle "Smell"
- Andrew Ellis as Gadget
- Perry Benson as Meggy
- George Newton as Banjo
- Jack O'Connell as "Pukey" Nicholls

- Kieran Hardcastle as Kes
- Chanel Cresswell as Kelly
- Danielle Watson as Trev
- Sophie Ellerby as Pob
- Kriss Dosanjh as Mr. Sandhu
- Michael Socha as Harvey
- Frank Harper as Lenny
- Charlie Smith as Mickey

## Soundtrack

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1. "54-46 Was My Number" – Toots & The Maytals
2. "Come On Eileen" – Dexys Midnight Runners
3. "Tainted Love" – Soft Cell
4. "Underpass/Flares" (*Film dialogue*)
5. "Nicole (Instrumental)" – Gravenhurst
6. "Cynth / Dad" (*Film dialogue*)
7. "Morning Sun" – Al Barry & The Cimarrons
8. "Shoe Shop" (*Film dialogue*)
9. "Louie Louie" – Toots & The Maytals
10. "Pressure Drop" – Toots & The Maytals
11. "Hair in Cafe" (*Film dialogue*)
12. "Do the Dog" – The Specials
13. "Ritornare" – Ludovico Einaudi
14. "This Is England" (*Film dialogue*)
15. "Return of Django" – Lee "Scratch" Perry & The Upsetters
16. "Warhead" – UK Subs
17. "Fuori Dal Mondo" – Ludovico Einaudi
18. "Since Yesterday" – Strawberry Switchblade
19. "Tits" (*Film dialogue*)
20. "The Dark End of the Street" – Percy Sledge
21. "Oltremare" – Ludovico Einaudi
22. "Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want" (The Smiths cover) – Clayhill
23. "Dietro Casa" – Ludovico Einaudi

24. "Never Seen the Sea" – Gavin Clark (of Clayhill)

### Additional music from the film includes

1. "Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 in D. OP 39/1" (Edward Elgar) – performed by Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
2. "Maggie Gave a Thistle" – Wayne Shrapnel and The Oi Stars
3. "Let's Dance" – Jimmy Cliff

## Production

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Much of the film was shot in residential areas of Nottingham, including St Ann's, Lenton, and The Meadows, with one section featuring abandoned houses at the former airbase RAF Newton, outside of Bingham, Nottinghamshire. The opening fight was filmed at Wilsthorpe Business and Enterprise College, a secondary school in Derbyshire. Additional scenes such as "the docks" were filmed in Turgoose's home town of Grimsby, which is also the opening scene for *This is England '86*, episode one.

Turgoose was 13 at the time of filming. Turgoose had never acted before, had been banned from his school play for bad behaviour, and demanded £5 to turn up for the film's auditions. The film was dedicated to Turgoose's mother, Sharon, who died of cancer on 29 December 2005; while she never saw the film, she saw a short preview. The cast attended her funeral.

## Setting

The film is set in an unidentified town in the Midlands. Although much of the film was shot on location in Nottingham, a number of scenes feature the town's docks, which precludes this inland city being the setting for the action. Similarly, the accents of the main characters are drawn from a wide geographical area.

## Reception

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On 5 January 2008, the review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes reported that 93% of critics gave the film positive reviews, based on 82 reviews. Metacritic reported the film had an average score of 86/100, based on 23 reviews — indicating "universal acclaim". This made it the tenth best reviewed film of the year.

The film appeared on several US critics' top ten lists of 2007; it was third on the list by *Newsweek's* David Ansen, seventh on the list by *The Oregonian's* Marc Mohan, and ninth on the list by *Los Angeles Times's* Kevin Crust.

In Britain, director Gillies Mackinnon rated the film the best of the year and David M. Thompson, critic and film-maker, rated it third. The film was ranked fourteenth in *The Guardian's* list of 2007's Best Films and fifteenth in *Empire's* Movies of the Year.

### Accolades

The film won the Alexander Korda Award for Best British Film at the 2007 British Academy Film Awards. It also won the Best Film category at the 2006 British Independent Film Awards, Turgoose winning the Most Promising Newcomer award.

## TV miniseries

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*Main article: This Is England (series)*

In 2010, a spin-off series set three years after the film, *This Is England '86*, was shown on Channel 4. A sequel to the series set two and a half years later, *This Is England '88*, was broadcast in December 2011. A third installment, *This Is England '90*, was originally due in late 2012, but in July 2012, Meadows announced that the production had been put on hold in order for him to complete his documentary *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone*. The first episode was shown on 13th September 2015.