

Big Muff 2

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So, here we go. This is what issue one would have been like if I'd spent a bit longer doing interviews and less time chopping them about. This time I've just written down everything, and taken out the superfluous bits (apart from the second one which has been completely chopped about to make it shorter and less repetitive). Talking of repetition, you might think the questions get repeated too often, but the point is that the answers don't. And it's nothing to do with the fact that I'm too thick to think up original questions! Anyway.

Someone once asked Danielle Dax how she learnt to play so many instruments, and she replied "anybody can make sound with an instrument, and it's musical if you like what you do". Maybe Th' Faith Healers would disagree that they fall into the "making a sound" category, but as Alex Taylor so neatly put it: "You'd know if you'd seen Th' Faith Healers". What she meant of course was, not that they play nice little pop songs, but that you can't help be moved by, and move to, the noise and atmosphere they create with their driving bass and drums, and screaming guitar and vocals. Anyone who saw Silverfish on Snub will remember that. So to get straight to th' point.

Do you try to rip off Silverfish?

Joe: No, we don't try.

Roxanne: We are Silverfish. It's just a pseudoname really.

Tom: They're ripping off us. The thing we've got in common with Silverfish is basically the attitude.

Roxanne: The go-for-it attitude.

Tom: They're a bit more...

Joe: Organised.

Tom: I dunno. Yeah, I suppose we place importance on rhythm as well as being loud, same as they do. Yes we do, we do. We are ripping them off.

Joe: We rip them off so bad. We're trying to copy their set eventually.

Would you like to make a one-off record to try and get into the Top 40?

Roxanne: What, you mean go commercial, and do a really naff record?

Tom: I was discussing this the other day. I would. But if the money was right. I don't think to tarnish the name of Th' Faith Healers, but maybe if someone asked us to write a song...

Joe: Use our name, and we just mime along to it.

Ben: Like they will!

Like Primal Scream?

Ben: We'll look silly on Top Of The Pops.

Tom: I think I can see us selling out in the near future. You do need a job, and it's a nice thing to do.

What do you think of bands like Lush and The Sundays and The Primitives, and that kind of thing?

Joe: We like Lush.

Ben: You like Lush.

Joe: I like Chris.

Ben: I like Emma.

Joe: I fancy Chris actually.

Ben: That Sundays record was shit.

Roxanne: I like The Sundays, cos I like the girl's voice, but I find them a bit boring. I think we're more interesting to watch.

Joe: Actually, The Sundays asked me to play drums for them, but I turned them down. When they were first starting they asked me to drum for them, but it didn't sound like a good prospect at the time.

Do you regret it now then?

Joe: I better not say anything had I? It would've been nice. I could've done that stuff. Primitives haven't got any soul. It's too calculating. Whatever you think of Lush, at least it's them doing it, it's what they want to do. The Primitives seems really calculating, and cold.

Roxanne: I don't like criticising other bands.

Joe: We love them all!

Tom: Hey, we love everybody, cos we're hippies, we are, really!

Could you do an acoustic set?

Tom: We did 'Delores' in the tube station didn't we?

Roxanne: Yeah, we did an acoustic version.

Joe: They go busking. Tom and Roxanne.

Roxanne: We've been busking.

Tom: You need a double bass and a pair of bongos.

Roxanne: I'd love to do an acoustic set.

Tom: Yeah, we could do it. Have to change the resonance a bit, I play some pretty funny chords and stuff.

Roxanne: Have you heard of the Magic Mushroom Festival in Wales?

Tom: Yeah, I go there every year!

Roxanne: We've been asked to play. We could do an acoustic set there. There's our opportunity, because nobody would be able to tell the difference.

Joe: Do we get free drugs?

Roxanne: There's mushrooms growing around in the hills.

Tom: Graze!

Are you well known outside of London?

Roxanne: Well, I know quite a lot of people in Edinburgh.

Ben: Maybe Reading.

Joe: We did that tour with Lush, so there's one or two people in each town that like us and loads of people who hate us.

Roxanne: We got a lot of exposure through the Lush tour.

Did you go down well at Lush?

Roxanne: Yeah, suprisingly well, yeah.

At Subterania you said "stop throwing glasses", and they all stopped.

Joe: She's really cool.

Ben: Not like The Unbelievers, who throw glasses at themselves.

Why do you take your shoes and socks off on stage?

Roxanne: So I can feel, like, the earth pulsating through my body. No, it's just more comfortable. It's easier to dance, it feels comfortable. I like wearing bear feet. I'd rather not wear clothes at all.



Tom: Fine. Go ahead.

Roxanne: But people start to talk, you know.

Ben: That could be a good one for the single. Roxanne will take her clothes off on stage. Up on the sales.

Roxanne: I may do eventually.

Do you ever get a sore throat?

Roxanne: If I smoke too many roll-ups, yeah. I used to, but I think I develop some sort of resistance to screaming.

Joe: I get a sore throat as well actually. Do you get a sore throat Ben?

Ben: I've got mad cow disease.

Tom: It's all that Whiskas you've been eating.

Have you always wanted to be in a band?

Joe: Always have been in a band.

Tom: I guess so, yeah. It's quite nice. I haven't been out of a band since school days.

Roxanne: Since I came out of my nappies. I used to stand in front of my mirror at home with my hair brush. Singing along to AC/DC. It worked well, in years to come.

What would you want your epitaph to say?

Tom: Bye.

Ben: Oh well.

Joe: See you in Hell.

Roxanne: I hope the next world's a better one, or something like that. I don't want to come back here.

Tom: Sure you do. I'm sure it would be much better the second time. You'd know exactly what to do. Who to kick in the face.

Roxanne: What do you mean, the second time? You've probably been here more than twice.

Joe: Still haven't learnt anything.

Tom: It's bad the way you have to behave on this planet.

Roxanne: What do you mean, the way you have to behave?

Tom: You always have to behave yourself, otherwise you get thrown in jail.

Roxanne: You just think you have to.

Tom: No, you do. You can't do what you want, or people hate you, and you get thrown in jail. I want to do all these nasty things.

Roxanne: Do you? Mutilate people. It's dangerous boy.

If you believe in reincarnation, what would you come back as?

Tom: Pele.

Ben: Joan Collins.

Are the lyrics important?

Joe: Yeah! Bunch of crap!

Tom: Even though you can't hear them.

Roxanne: Nobody wants to use any of mine.

Tom: Surprised?! Bloody hell.

Ben: I didn't know you'd written any.

Tom: Yeah, 'Guess what Mag'.

Ben: Oh, that's alright. Apart from that line.

Roxanne: That doesn't get used any more anyway.

Tom: The thing is Roxanne's the hippy of the band and all the lyrics are really hippyish.

Roxanne: I'm just a prop, you know.

Tom: Lyrics are important. We're not very good at them, but they are very important, and that's our big thing that we want to conquer. What do they call it? Our pillar of salt? Our Mount Rushmore? That's the thing we want to get over anyway, lyrics.

Are you going to print the lyrics on the sleeve of the single?

Tom: No, because that destroys them. The whole point of a lyric is that it's within a song, and it's not poetry.

Do you pay a lot of attention to what's written about you in the press?

Tom: Drooling over it! Ooh, that's me. I got mentioned 3 times last week.

What group had the biggest positive effect on music in the 80s?

Ben: Public Enemy.

Joe: I'd say My Bloody Valentine, personally.

Tom: I'd say Velvet Underground. Well, they do, don't they?

What were your favourite subjects at school?

Tom: Being bullied.

Ben: He got an O level in it.

Joe: I think football was my favourite subject.

Roxanne: English and Biology for me.

Tom: It depends on the teachers though, doesn't it?

Ben: Yeah, for History I had a really good teacher at first and I got into the O level class and had this mad Hungarian bitch.

Tom: I had a Finnish lady. She couldn't tolerate me at all.



Tom: I'd like to come back as a mountain.

Roxanne: I don't believe in all that shit, right.

Joe: When you're dead you're dead, right. Live fast, die young.

Tom: It'd be nice to be a bird though, cos then you could fly about.

Roxanne: Yeah, I'd like to be able to fly, but I wouldn't want to come back as an aeroplane.

What song would you most like to do a cover version of?

Tom: I was going to suggest to you boys actually, 'Come up and see me sometime'.

The Wedding Present did that.

Tom: Oh did they? Oh no.

Joe: We can do it better than that.

Ben: No, we'll do 'Play that funky music'.

Tom: Silverfish do 'White lines' now.

Ben: So?

Tom: So we can't do 'Play that funky music'.

Roxanne: What about this Kenny Rogers number I thought we were going to do?

Ben: Oh yeah, well we didn't get that together. Too many chords.

Tom: Bastard. Dave Gedge. I'll kill him. I ought to buy that album. I can buy that instead of paying my Poll Tax. They played the Lush song at The Borderline.

Ben: Oh yeah. I bet they're really embarrassed about that as well.
 They've taken all their clothes off and done a shit cover. Brilliant.
 Middle Of The Road. They should have done 'Tweedle Dee Tweedle Dum'
 Roxanne: That was Ben that said that.
 Joe: The rest of us love you Miki. Give us some more support.

Tom: Do you want us to do a flexi for you? The first demo's really good.
 Joe: You can't put that out. No.
 Tom: It's brilliant. It has to be heard.
 Joe: It hasn't got Roxanne on it for a start.
 Tom: She can sing over on the Walkman or something.
 Roxanne: I hate you.
 Joe: You're so slimy.
 Tom: I'm the real singer in this band anyway.
 Roxanne: You've got a real chip on your shoulder about singing.
 Tom: Of course I haven't. I've got a chip on my shoulder about not being
 able to sing, but that's all.
 Roxanne: You get to sing a song.
 Tom: I know, but I can't sing. It's really annoying. I'm a frustrated
 singer.

Roxanne: You can. Anybody can sing.
 Ben: Tom can't sing.
 Tom: See, he always backs me up.
 Roxanne: Even you can sing.
 Ben: I can't sing.
 Tom: No he can't. He can't even read. How do you expect him to sing. You
 can't play the bass.
 Ben: I know, that's why I'm in the band.

What's your favourite junk food?

Joe: Houmous kebab.
 Roxanne: That's not too bad actually. Oh, you mean with meat in it?
 Joe: No, no.
 Roxanne: Oh, well that's terribly healthy.
 Tom: That's not junk food. That's Hampstead Heath that is.
 Joe: You can get it down the road here.
 Roxanne: Yeah, but it's fairly healthy.
 Joe: Okay, it's not junk. Falafle. That's pretty Hampstead as well.
 Tom: I tell you, never buy houmous. You should buy a big box of chick peas,
 bung it in the Moulinex. I made some yesterday. Marvellous.
 Joe: I haven't got a Moulinex. Stick it in the dog.

What's your favourite and your worst sandwich?

Joe: BLT.
 Roxanne: I like avacado and Brie.
 Tom: The worst has got to be dog poo and rabbit puke.
 Roxanne: Peanut butter.
 Ben: And dog poo.
 Roxanne: Peanut butter is the best. Peanut butter and bananas and honey
 in a sandwich is the business.
 Joe: Welsh mushroom festivals.
 Roxanne: Magic mushroom sandwiches. No. I didn't say that. He said that.

What's your favourite money-off offer?

Roxanne: Does it have to be food? Cos the last money-off thing I got was
 buy two get one free from Holland & Barrett. That was massage oil and
 lavender essential oil and tea tree essential oil. Tea tree is brilliant
 stuff. It comes from this tree in Australia, Captain Cook discovered it,
 and it's got this natural antiseptic, and I put it on my spots.
 Ben: Doesn't work though, does it?
 Roxanne: It does. It smells good.
 Tom: How about buy one Buckingham Palace get one free.

What's Th' Faith Healers philosophy?

Joe: Turn up late.
 Tom: Tune out, drop up. Never take drugs, kids. They really screw you up.
 Ben: Th' Faith Healers philosophy is um.
 Roxanne: The grass is greener in front of the Falcon.
 Joe: Drink loads and try not to pay for it.

So Th' Faith Healers could have been The Sundays, but chose to be
 Silverfish. A wise move.

Vicious Kiss could have been Transvision Vamp, but chose to be Vicious
 Kiss. Well, maybe not, but comparisons are the order of the day when
 trying to describe what a band sounds like to someone who's never heard of
 them. It's all there in Vicious Kiss, but then again, it's not. Although
 the comparisons are valid, I happen to agree with their defence of them.
 They've been watching and thought "we can do better than that", and taken
 elements from not necessarily the music, but the concept, of the bands
 mentioned. Another comparison I could have made, but I didn't think of it
 until later, is with Ride and The Sundays. Nothing to do with the music,
 but the fact that they play the same set every time, so if you've seen it
 once, you've seen it all, but you should at least see it once.
 So, Comparison City, here we come.

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This is not an advert. I'm just pointing out that this is the happening album from a happening venue at the moment (if you can still say "happening") and also the money is used to save the world or something, and it quite neatly mentions Th' Faith Healers single, which is also disgusting. Three tracks, 12 inches, available from all good record shops.

Blondie, The Primitives, Westworld?

Paul: I think that comes down to the guitar pop with a girl singer. I think that's where the comparison starts and ends.

Tanya: There happens to be a girl singer, and it happens to be pop songs. I think we're a lot heavier though, especially than The Primitives, not that I've seen The Primitives live. We're quite a bit harder than that, I would like to think. I really like Westworld, but I saw them live and they were crap. Blondie you can't really compare us. We're nothing like Blondie. We construct songs totally differently to Blondie. Don't sound anything like them, so that's foolish.

Simon: I accept that people need a reference point if you're trying to get people to come and see us.

Tanya: I'm quite happy to be called a pop band. That's what we are. Apart from that, I can't think of any other comparisons.

Birdland never made it that big did they?

Tanya: No, I like them. It's unfortunate because I really like them. I know they're a bit of a joke.

Simon: I think it's a bit early to be talking in the past tense.

They were really hyped just on the image rather than the music.

Simon: Yeah, but 'Hollow Heart's a good single, and so was the last single.

Tanya: 'Sleep with me', I like that. I like the whole thing.

Simon: This is a problem a lot of people have. They see a hype and as soon as they smell hype they run for cover, and they don't stay a little bit longer to see whether the band's actually got the goods or not.

And Sputnik were just hyped with loads of money.

Paul: But they had an idea.

Tanya: It was Tony James's vision though, he didn't have to change his vision, that was what he wanted, and the record company went along with it.



Birdland, Sique Sique Sputnik, Transvision Vamp?

Tanya: We all love Sputnik. I love the way they look. The way they looked was a bit over the top because it wasn't street enough, so people couldn't identify with it, and it put them off.

Steve: I think they were too clever for the general public.

Simon: The thing with Sputnik that we've taken on board is that it's extremely colourful, flamboyant, and entertaining.

Tanya: Yeah, flamboyant and loud. It's not everyone standing looking dour.

Simon: I don't like the idea of people being apologetic about what they do, which a lot of people do.

Tanya: I went to see Blur. I thought they were rubbish. They were like the same old thing really. Did nothing for me at all. Yeah, so the singer leaps up and down a bit, so what. They were really boring. You've seen someone jump up and down once, you've seen the lot. Stupid hair cut, stupid jeans, what more can I say?

Birdland are quite big on that as well, aren't they?

Simon: Yeah, but they have songs. This is a thing which a lot of bands miss.

It sounds like an obvious thing, but there are a lot of bands who've got everything else but no songs. I'm sure you should start with the songs.

It's all very good having the right feel, or the right groove, but at the end of the day a groove ain't enough.

Simon: Perhaps they were one of the most honest bands to come out of the last ten years, because they nailed their flag to the mast and saluted it every single morning without fail.

How come they only made two records then?

Simon: Because, where the hype went wrong, unfortunately, was the first album was, by and large, rubbish, and by the time the second one came along no-one was interested. But they weren't that unsuccessful, you've got to bear in mind, that first album did about 85 000 copies in this country and the single went straight in at number one. That's not bad. I wouldn't be ashamed.

But did they actually appear on the record?

Tanya: Yeah, I went to see them live, and they were brilliant live. It all came across very well. They weren't talentless.

Paul: The only thing that let them down was they didn't have enough good songs. If they had they'd've carried it off a lot longer.

Simon: The second album, if that'd been the first album, I think they'd still be with us now, and possibly be the stars they always said they were.

Tanya: I think it was over-hyped. People are too cynical about hype, which is fair enough, and I am too, and they went over the top.

Simon: There's a difference between hype and letting people know. There's a difference between hype and information.

Tanya: They didn't have any credibility at all, and I think you have to retain some of that, in this country anyway, which is why I hate it, things have to be so credible.

Paul: Bands have got so boring though. Bands don't smash up hotel rooms any more, or so rarely, I don't know.

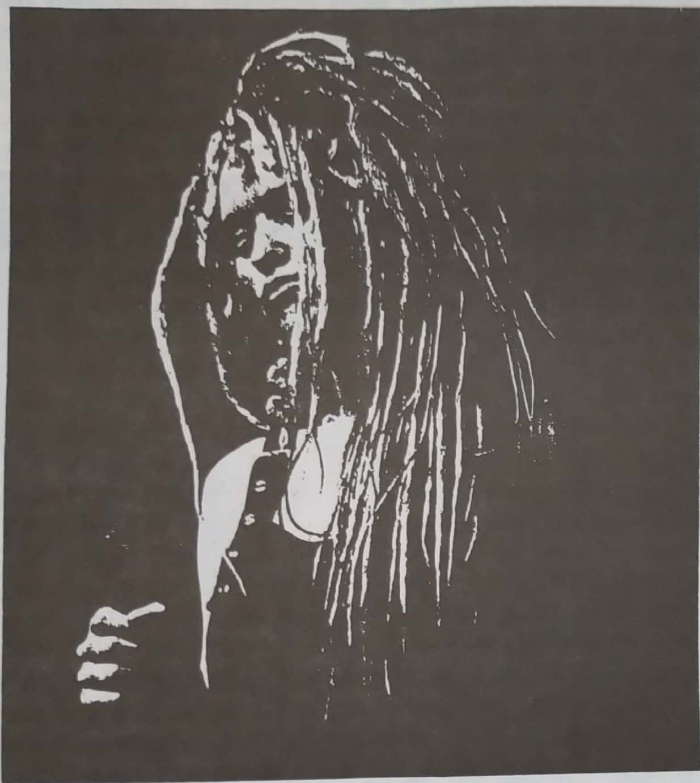
Tanya: But I wouldn't either.

Simon: I sleep in hotel rooms. Call me old fashioned.

Tanya: I don't like that because the poor men have to come and tidy it up, and it wastes a lot of money, and I don't think that's very nice. I don't think it's big, funny or clever.

Simon: The Inspirals smashed up a hotel room recently, apparently, but they were good enough to tidy it up in the morning, which I think was very decent of them.

Tanya: I'll tidy it up in the morning, yeah. It's not nice. I don't like offending people, unless I don't like them.



You've got a song called 'American disaster'. Is that about how...

Tanya: No, it's not. I wrote that. No. I'll tell you what it's about. What happened is, I went on holiday to America and I shagged this bloke, right, and it's about that basically. And it's a true story, so you have to listen to the words. And so it's no deep meaning. I knew people would think it was some deep statement.

Steve: The good thing about those lyrics is, I actually work with this guy from LA, and as soon as I heard 'American Disaster', I immediately thought, that's exactly like that guy.

Tanya: Yes, you see, so it was quite astute, wasn't it?

Are the words important?

Tanya: Yeah I wouldn't sing anything that I thought was funny. I'm really fussy about that.

Simon: I've been censored in the past.

Tanya: Simon and I write the words and if he comes up with something I don't like I say no.

Steve: What was the one "spit when you talk"?

Tanya: "I love the way you spit when you talk", which I liked, but I didn't feel comfortable singing it. So yeah, words are very important.

Simon: Inordinately proud of our songs. I could take criticism at absolutely any level with bad grace, but someone criticises the songs and it's a punch in the face for them I'm afraid.

Tanya: Thing is, with this band, I don't care if anyone criticises us because I feel so confident that what we're doing is good, and I love it, so if people criticise, I think that's their opinion, it doesn't worry me.

Simon: I suppose ultimately, with that confidence in the band, if people don't like it, then fair enough, you don't have to like it, but you know it's nothing you've done wrong.

Tanya: I can understand if people aren't keen on what we're doing on this circuit, I can understand, because it's not really their sort of thing.

It's just there's so few gigs around at the moment to play. It's mostly your indie type gig. No-one goes to gigs any more.

Simon: Not in London. That's a very polarised view. London is the worst place in the world now, ironically, to start a band. Absolutely the worst place in the world. You stand more chance if you're a goat herder in Urdu land of being discovered by Andy Kershaw than you do in London.

So have you been out of London?

Tanya: No, I'd love to. I'm dying to.

Simon: We've just signed up with an agency and hopefully, come September, we should be out gigging.

Tanya: I want to go to play Brighton because my Mum's from Brighton and she can come and see me. I'm dying for my Mum to see me, and she won't come up to London. The one thing we're not is an indie band. A lot of people put us down as indie, as a type of band, not as in record companies, and we're not at all, we're a pop band, and we find we're playing to indie audiences at the moment and we're not going down terribly well with them. We get away with it just, sometimes, but not much. We want to be marketed as a major band. In fact I don't even like this market, Britain, I'm not even bothered about cracking it, however it's still considered as an important market, which is unfortunate. I want to go to America more than anything, and Europe, because they seem to appreciate music for what it is, they don't go on trends and fads, which they really do over here. I really want to crack America because all the bands that have come up over here recently like Vamp, Primitives, they haven't done too well in America yet, and so I really want to crack that market. Not just the college radio circuit, the whole thing.

Simon: What it's all about at the end of the day is getting your music out to the maximum number of people, that's the thing. We're not twee about it. We don't want a cult following, we don't want to maintain trendiness, we want to get to as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

Tanya: We want mass appeal, and I think we have mass appeal.

If you sign to a major label, they would want to change you, would they?

Simon: I wouldn't have thought it would be necessary. When Johnny Major record company signs us up, he doesn't just sign up four people and a band name, he signs up a complete strategy.

Tanya: I mean, soundwise, we can probably say what producer we want in anyway, so I think that will be under our control, and lookwise, I think we look basically how they'd want us to look anyway.

Paul: The thing is, we've thought about it. We know what we want.

So have you set out to create an image that people would want, the record labels would want, or have you just done what you wanted to do?

Tanya: No, this is actually how we would dress and the music we like anyway, and it just so happens that I feel it would fit into a major record company's roster, but I personally haven't changed at all.

Simon: We've created our own pop vision, from top to bottom.

Tanya: It's definitely from the heart and not from the head, I'd say.

Paul: You can't dress a certain way if you don't feel comfortable like that, otherwise you look a prat and you feel a prat.



What should the perfect pop song be like?

Tanya: There is no formula for a perfect pop song.

Simon: Yes. There is. Three minutes long. Verse, chorus, chorus to fade.

Tanya: No, no, no, no, no, no! Cos, come on, I think Pixies 'Monkey gone to Heaven'. That's brilliant, and that isn't a formula.

Simon: A perfect pop song is something that acts as a perfect backdrop for what's happening at the time.

Tanya: It's when it all gels. When you've got the whole atmosphere of a track working. I dunno what it is. You put it on and you think this track works, there's nothing I'd change on this track, and that's probably the perfect pop song for me.

Don't you start off with a structure?

Simon: I think the structure comes automatically. When we write it's basically on auto-pilot.

Tanya: Yeah, our structure, but then it doesn't count for everybody, like, as I say again, The Pixies, I think they write some brilliant songs which are pop songs. They're catchy, you can sing them.

Paul: But a very different structure from our songs.

Tanya: Very different structure, so there is no particular structure at all.

Paul: There isn't a formula to write a pop song. No matter what Pete Waterman says there is not a formula. He has found a formula for his pop songs, and The Pixies have found theirs for theirs. You find the way you write best and then that's it, you sort out your own formula.

Tanya: And we can all learn by his mistakes.

Simon: Pete Waterman hasn't made any mistakes.

Tanya: No, he hasn't, that's quite true.

What do you think about SAW?

Simon: I think it's not an illness, it's a symptom. Like when you have chicken pox, you have a rash, but the rash isn't what's wrong with you, the rash is simply the visible signs, and I think Stock, Aitken, Waterman are the visible signs of what's wrong, not what's wrong.

It's not wrong, is it? It's what everyone likes.

Simon: No, this is where I take great issue.

Tanya: There's enough choice now for people to choose something different, and they're still choosing him.

Simon: Wait. People, and this is the great unwashed, not the educated few who come to gigs, and read what-have-you, the great unwashed don't know what they want, they are told what they want.

Tanya: Simon, which is what I'm saying, there's a choice now for them.

Simon: One of the big problems with the way music is done at the moment is that no-one will put their hand up and say "hullo, I lead fashion", everyone says "I follow", and they use that as an excuse not to take risks, they use it as an excuse not to expand what's happening, and constantly you get this, from promoters to record companies to papers, they're all saying "we follow", and somebody's got to be leading, or nothing's going to happen.



Tanya: So why do people still buy Stock, Aitken, Waterman?

Simon: They buy it because they think they want it.

Steve: They've got a market for it. Their market is the younger generation.

Simon: There is no division of market, there is a market, full stop. Who gives a monkey's anyway? Basically we've got nothing against Pete Waterman. Good luck to him.

Tanya: Yeah, I've got nothing against it, I just don't like it.

So are you making background music?

Simon: It's not background by its nature, it's too abrasive. Let's use the expression backdrop.

Tanya: Yeah, it's a backdrop to life really.

Simon: You put it on and you have your first snog to it, and you remember it for the rest of your life. That's what I want my records to be. I want small girls and small boys to have their first sexual encounter to my records.

Tanya: You think back to when you were young and there's one record sticks out, even if it's a crap record, because it reminds you of something.

Paul: You remember it at all stages through your life. Songs remind you of holidays and shagging.

Simon: 'I'm not in love'. What a crap song. I love it. I tasted my first girl's tonsils to that song.

Tanya: If we've made the record and we're happy with it, I don't care what people do with it. They can shove it up their bottoms. I really don't care, so long as I'm happy with it.

What song would you like to do a cover version of?

Tanya: We do one. You were there when we did it. We do 'Are friends electric'.

I didn't recognise it.

Paul: That obviously shows how differently we've done it from the original.

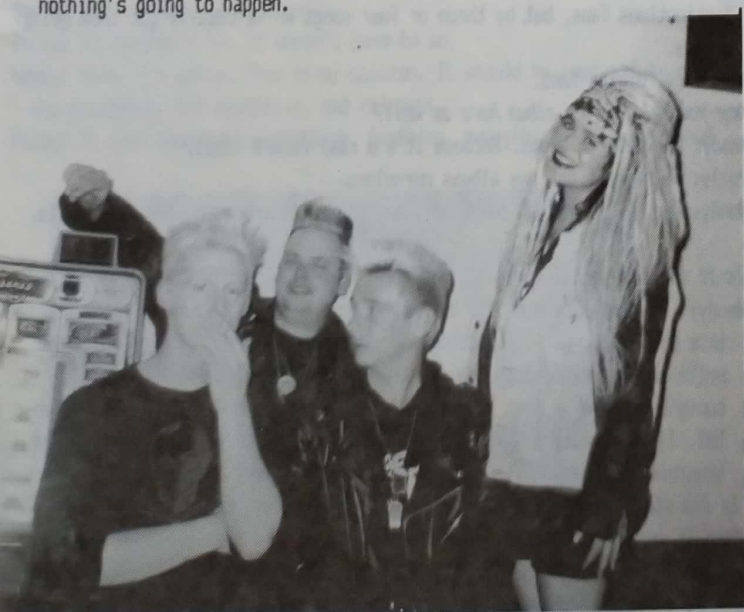
Simon: The integrity of our version.

Wasn't that really electronic, with synthesisers?

Tanya: Yes, yes. The point of doing a cover is to do it completely different.

Paul: So we decided to do it with loud guitars.

Simon: You've got all these aah-yeah bands nicking perfectly good songs and destroying them so we thought we'll nick one of theirs.



Tanya: Have you heard The Waterboys - they've done a dance version of 'Whole of the moon'? It's the saddest and most horrible thing. That's one of my all time favourite songs. You couldn't get better than that.

Steve: Anyone who puts aah-yeah in that is a wanker.

Paul: They've done the same with 'Nothing compares to you'.

Simon: There you go. Sinead O'Connor takes a really good song, she treats it with care, and she does something really nice with it, and someone whips along with a two-a-penny sampler and puts aah-yeah all over it. And people tell me it's creative.

Tanya: It's like 'The Whole of the moon'. That was the last straw for me.

Shall we get off music now?

Paul: Oh, yes let's!

Tanya: Please!

If you could be anyone in the world, who would you most like to be?

Paul: Natassia Kinski's geonacologist.

Tanya: I've got no-one, I just want to be me. Just very rich and well known really. Me in a few years time, that's who I want to be.

Steve: It would've been, off the top of my head, someone out of Depeche Mode, because I nearly joined Depeche Mode. If I'd been born three years earlier, and lived in Basildon at the time, I'd have been in them.

Paul: Steve, that is pathetic. That is really pathetic.

Steve: You know how I feel. I feel quite close to them, in that sense.

Tanya: You are at one with Depeche Mode.

Simon: You'd better skip along before we discover that I could have been the Ayatolla Komeini. If only I'd have been from Iran.

If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

Tanya: I hate these questions, I really do.

Simon: Actually I wrote a book once, well, I got halfway through it. The main thing it lacked was a story. It had everything else.

Tanya: Is that the one that got nicked out of your car?

Simon: Yeah. Oh no, I've written two books.

Tanya: Oh no! Why? Why?

Paul: I would love to write one of those trashy, steamy novels. I would get great satisfaction out of writing two hundred pages of complete crap and seeing it go to number one in the best-sellers.

Simon: Steve's going to write a biography of Depeche Mode, I think.

Steve: My life and times with Depeche Mode.

Simon: I could have been there, but for Basildon.

What's your most prized possession?

Tanya: I'm very proud of my 14-holes. My Dr Martins. I'll not wear them on stage because I look foolish in them with my shorts on.

Simon: It's my car. It goes up and down when you start it. It's got pneumatic suspension. It's just like Star Wars or something.

Steve: We went down to Wiltshire pretending we were in a spaceship.

Tanya: We went down to Wiltshire, meant to be going down to write songs and work out the things and stuff.

Simon: But we took a video camera.

Tanya: It's so funny, we did lots of different things. We did Rapunzel, Evil Cred, and we did a porno. The porno was really funny, because for a knob we had a big red draught excluder, you know those snakes?

Simon: And you can do a good effect. What you do is shoot the draught excluder for a bit, and you cut and you spray it all with shaving foam, and turn the camera back on.

Steve: This is when we learnt the art of editing.

Simon: So we spent a week, basically, shooting pointless films.

Tanya: We weren't even drunk because we couldn't afford any drink, so we did this sober. It's really frightening.

Simon: The attack of the killer duck. That was a masterpiece.

Steve: That was our first attempt at animation, using a plastic duck.

Paul: First attempt at movie making.

Tanya: We thought it was good to practice for our videos.

Are you superstitious?

Tanya: No, not at all. In fact I walk under a ladder on purpose.

Paul: I laugh in the face of it.

Simon: Tweak the nose of destiny!

Steve: I'll always say "touch wood". That's the only thing I actually do.

Paul: I'll usually make a point of walking under a ladder.

Tanya: That's what I just said.

Simon: Probably why we're not successful yet.

Tanya: I know. There's all these people walking under ladders.

What would you want your epitaph to say?

Tanya: I'd have "bloody typical" on mine.

Paul: I can't think of one. I'll wait until it actually happens.

Steve: Don't touch my bass amplifier or else.

Bibbie asked you "what's your philosophy?". That's quite a good question.

Simon: I don't think he asked that question. What he did was engaged in conversation and made the question up to fit the answers, which is quite intriguing.

Do you have a philosophy?

Tanya: No, there's not one, just make it up as you go along and hope it becomes successful, I suppose. Always be yourself and be true to what you believe in, or else it won't come off, people will see through it.

Is this the real world, or is this just fantasy? Can Vicious Kiss really conquer the world? Probably not, but that's no reason to not try.

Vicious Kiss prove that you can add indie and pop and not get indie-pop.

You've probably seen a lot of interviews with The PopinJays following their tour with The Kitchens Of Distinction. You may also have noticed Wendy's picture on the back page and the leaflets for issue one. The PopinJays play cheery pop tunes, and they also run The Pop Club, but I expect you know that.

How long have been on the tour for so far?

Wendy: This is day seven.

Is it tiring?

Ann: It's pretty exhilarating, but you wish you had more sleep.

Polly: It's tiring when you get chucked out of a bed & breakfast at 8 O'clock in the morning.

Wendy: And you didn't go to bed til 4. But no. More exhilarating than tiring. *Are people coming to see you as well as The Kitchens?*

Wendy: No, probably not because there's a lot of people there, and they may have heard of you, but they haven't heard much by you, or anything by you. It's really hard work to win them over because they're mostly Kitchens Of Distinctions fans, but by three or four songs we've usually got them going for us.

Ann: They're nice fans.

Are you selling the album here as well?

Wendy: No, only in shops. Because it's a real record label.

Polly: We haven't got any albums ourselves.

Wendy: One Little Indian don't sell anything outside shops. Not allowed to.

Is it the same set I saw last time, or have you got a lot of new songs now?

Wendy: That was only a couple of months ago. Yeah, it's the same set because it's our album. We're promoting our album. We haven't had much time to write new songs recently. We can't write a song yesterday and do it tonight because we have to program stuff on computer and get it onto our DAT. It's not like a normal band with a drummer, they can just jam songs together. It takes quite a lot of organising to get one of our songs.

Is the stuff on the tape off the album, or recorded specially for live?

Ann: It is the pieces that were from the album, and eventually we want to have it mixed more specifically for live. Because we've only just had the DAT, just the day before the tour started, we're just learning how to use it. Before it was reel-to-reel.

Does having the DAT mean all the performances are the same?

Wendy: No performances are the same.

What's different about them?

Ann: Putting as much energy into the show as we can. What's on the tape doesn't change obviously, but what we put into it is going to vary. Some places you're going to have more of a laid-back mood when you play, some places are going to be really ecstatic as you're playing.

Wendy: And the talking between songs is every time different, and the way people respond to you changes maybe the way you're going to do the next song. So of course it's the same, but with the DAT we can decide we don't want to do the next song that we were going to do, we can decide to skip it. Before when we had reel-to-reel we were stuck. If we had a set list it was that way, no way of changing it, unless we stood there rewinding and fast-forward each song and that looks pretty stupid.

Is this One Little Indian giving you all this money to buy your DAT?

Wendy: They bought us lots of things actually. Guitars, Portastudio and stuff. But it's not a present, we had to earn this money, it's just upfront, a loan. Like a bank really. Ha ha. I don't think they'll take us to court if we don't sell records though.

What other bands do you like?

Wendy: Go on Polly.

Polly: They Might Be Giants.

Wendy: And.

Polly: The Beatles.

Wendy: And. Begins with P.

Polly: PFatima Mansions. Oh Po! Yeah, they're good in the van. They're a jolly good band. We like them a lot. I've only got three tapes with me on tour, and that's one of them.

Wendy: I like The Church. 10000 Maniacs. Mary Margaret O'Hara.

Polly: We quite like The Kitchens Of Distinction as well.

Ann: Yeah, we're all Kitchens fans now.

Have you got to like them since you've been on the tour?

Wendy: I liked them before, but the other two...

Ann: I hadn't heard them before, but I love it now.

Wendy: But I only listened to the album when I knew we were going on tour with them. Ha ha ha.

Do the bands you like influence you as well?

Wendy: Lyrically, I suppose some people would say they did, but I'm not conscious of it really. We all really, really like The Beatles. Their songwriting is really strong on writing what we call a proper song.

Ann: Perfect pop.

What should the perfect pop song be like?

Ann: The Beatles. Or The Popinjays.

Polly: 'Birdhouse in your soul' was a perfect pop song.

Wendy: It should be loud, lively.

Polly: It shouldn't be. It doesn't have to be.

Wendy: Yeah, I'm sorry. This is my opinion. It should be loud and lively and energetic, but sensitive, and relevant.

Polly: It just should be everything. Anything, everything. It's just good.

Are you doing what you want to do, or what you think people will like?

Wendy: Oh God, what we want to do. If you ran around trying to do what people liked you'd have to change your music every day. Stupid. A lot of our songs are about not doing what people want. A lot of them are about doing your own thing, and if you don't then you do it at your own cost. If we were doing what we thought people wanted I don't think we'd be doing this, would we?

Is London important for you?

Ann: I don't know if it's really any more important than the other shows.

But we'll have more fans here. Up until now we've only had maybe one or two people in the audience we personally knew, but tonight it's going to be a different story, so in that way. It's more exciting. But we had a great time up north.

Wendy: Yeah, in Scotland we had a great time, and in Leeds last night was brilliant as well. It's just got better every night. We started off okay, Edinburgh we had a brilliant gig, Paisley we had a really diabolical, awful gig, but so did Kitchens Of Distinction, the audience was just dead. The next night, Dundee, was hard work, but we got them, by the end. We sold loads of T-shirts. And then Newcastle was okay on our part, but there weren't many people there. There were quite a lot of people, but it was a huge place. It wouldn't have mattered if you'd had a thousand people, it wouldn't have felt full. And the window of the van got smashed. Somebody threw a breeze-block in the window, so that sort of spoilt things a bit. Every gig's an important gig. It's great to do gigs every night. Much better than doing one-off gigs. Because we've never done a tour before, and it's great to every night do something, and you might make a mistake one night, and you can think "oh great, I can do it better tomorrow". You don't have to go home and think "oh shit, I did that wrong".

Didn't you do a tour with What? Noise?

Wendy: No, we were listed as doing it, but we didn't.

Polly: Well, nobody actually asked us until we saw a poster. Somebody who knew us saw a poster.

Wendy: An agent cock-up kind of thing. We didn't do it.



Have you always wanted to be in a band?

Ann: Since I was born.

Wendy: Before I was born in fact. Ha ha. You have, haven't you Polly?

Polly: Yep.

Wendy: Tell us the story then.

Polly: I was little and I thought I wanted to be in a band.

Wendy: Who did you see on the TV?

Polly: The Be-Atles.

Ann: The Beatles for me too. I saw The Beatles and I said "right". I was 12.

Wendy: No, it was The Bay City Rollers for me.

KoD: You saw the Beatles? You were 12?

Ann: On TV. I saw The Beatles. Shay Stadium concert. I saw it. I don't remember it, my brother said I was jumping up and down on the couch to 'Dizzy Miss Lizzy'.

KoD: So you're 36 now?

Ann: That's right. I didn't want to say! I didn't want to be the oldest one.

KoD: You look young for your age.



If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

Polly: Probably The Beatles and The Giants.

Wendy: I'd like to write a book. I think one day I'll be an authoress.

Ann: I don't think I'd write a book. I might write children's books, I love children's books. They're great.

Wendy: I'd write a book all about sadness, I think.

What annoys you?

Wendy: Bad soundchecks. Reggae music in the van, when everybody else wants to listen to it but we don't. Getting up first thing in the morning and the cats are desperate to be fed and we haven't got any cat food, and you really just want to go back to bed.

Polly: Yep, that's what annoys us.

Wendy: Mostly we're just calm, happy, serene people.



Do you believe in reincarnation?

Wendy: Yeah, this is my third time round. I'm getting better every time.

Polly: I don't know today.

What would you want to come back as?

Wendy: I'd like to come back as a cat because they really have a good time, but somebody said awful things happen to cats, somebody shattered my illusion completely, said people kill cats for fur and make hats out of them. Wouldn't happen to me if I came back as a cat. I'd live in luxury.

What would you like to come back as? A Beatle?

Polly: I'd like to come back as your owner.

Wendy: She's got it in for me. How about you Ann?

Ann: I think one life is enough for me. Not interested in another one.

What's your favourite advert?

Polly: The IrnBru one.

Wendy: Pretending to be like Coca-Cola ads. Really crap.

Polly: And the one with the cat that comes out the box. That's a good one.

What soap opera would you most like to be in?

Wendy: I don't know that I'd like to be in a soap opera, but I'd like to be in thirtysomething actually.

Polly: I want to do Blue Peter. I think I'd be good at that.

Wendy: I want to vandalise the Blue Peter garden.

Polly: Well that is nice, isn't it?

What was the last thing you built? Or made.

Polly: Half a Dalek. It didn't get finished. It was taking up too much room in the hall and I had to dismantle it and put it away. It was going to be jolly good, but I'll do it one day. Got the official Dr Who instructions.

Wendy: Last thing I made was pasta with an onion sauce for everybody at lunch today. It weren't very nice though.

Polly: I made a mess in my bedroom as well. I made that quite recently.

What's your favourite item of clothing?

Polly: My boots.

Wendy: Doc Martins. She's a skinhead really. My sports bra I think. It enables me to move about on stage without fear of... losing my... cool.

Were you ever a member of any fan club?

Polly: Yeah, I was. I was a member of The Osmonds fan club.

Wendy: You liar.

Polly: I've got the card at home.

Wendy: You've never showed it me. She's lying.

Polly: I'm lying then.

Wendy: No, she probably isn't lying. I think I was probably in the Adam & The Ants fan club. Ha ha ha ha ha.

Polly: That's a bit late wasn't it?

What's your favourite sandwich?

Ann: Jesus! So many to choose from.

Wendy: What's that thing you tried to buy in Edinburgh?

Ann: I tried to buy a rubin in Scotland. It's a big sandwich in America.

Big, popular, lovely sandwich.

Wendy: What does it have in it?

Ann: It's suppose to have corned beef, Swiss cheese, sour crout and French salad dressing, on rye. They didn't have any of those things.

What's your favourite junk food?

Ann: Twinkies. You don't have them here.

Wendy: What are they?

Ann: They're little spongy things with bits of sugar stuff in the middle.

Polly: Like all things from America.

Ann: That's right. They're wonderful. I lived on those while I saved up money to buy my first guitar. I had Twinkies every day for lunch because it was cheaper than buying a proper meal.

When was the last time you got an electric shock?

Wendy: The last time we rehearsed. I often get them on my lips from the microphones, for some reason. I don't understand why. She probably knows why. Why do I get an electric shock on my lips?

Polly: It's only static, nothing more serious.

Wendy: Feels like an electric shock.

Polly: I got a mains shock about three years ago which nearly killed me, so I'm jolly careful with electricity these days. I touched a chorus pedal. There shouldn't have been mains voltage going through it.



What was the first record you bought?

Ann: Mine was definitely one of The Beatles. Actually I bought Paul McCartney, because I didn't know any better, and he was crap. Then I bought The Beatles.

Wendy: My first record that I actually bought with my own money was 'Muthering Heights' by Kate Bush. Ha ha. A long time ago.

Polly: I can't remember.

Wendy: I know the first record I ever got was 'Teddy bears picnic'. My mum bought it for me. And I also got Pinky & Perky album, same birthday, when I was 8. That was my first introduction to vinyl. You can't remember?

Polly: No, I used to buy lots of records.
 Wendy: Yeah, but I'm sure you once told me the first record you bought.
 Polly: I think it was probably one of those Woolworths 'Top Of The Pops' LPs
 Wendy: I had one of those as well once.
 Polly: I had lots of them. I used to buy those all the time.
 Wendy: I had one on red vinyl.
 Polly: Did you? What, Woolworths? Pickwick. I had loads of those. That's what I used to buy.
You can buy them outside junk shops for about 50p, can't you?
 Wendy: Yeah, awful. They're rubbish.
 Polly: I recognise loads of them.
 Wendy: They're not even sung by the original artist are they?
 Polly: I never used to be able to tell, actually.

Do you pay a lot of attention to what the press write about you?

Polly: No.
 Wendy: We used to when we first got reviews. Our first ever review we blew it up to the size of the wall, and pinned it on and read it every day for six months. We did an interview, a feature for Melody Maker the other day in Newcastle, and we're doing one for NME on Friday. We've got to go to Blackpool and mess about around the fairground. Fairground attraction.

Do you like all of your songs?

Wendy: I'm a little bit tired of 'Mr Spacecase'. Not because I don't like the song, but because I think it's really underdone on the album. When I hear it it really pisses me off. But I like it live. I just think it lacks a lot of energy on the album. But yeah, I love our songs. But I'm gonna love our new ones even more.

Are you writing some new ones then, now you've got the album out?

Wendy: Well, we've got a Portastudio which is going to make it easier for us to record at home. Yeah, because we're going to record another album this year. So we have to write more songs.

The Popinjays then went on to win lots of fans and sell lots of T-shirts to a brighter than usual London audience. If you can't conquer the world, conquering someone else's audience is a good second best.

Screening Custard are managed by someone who writes for Melody Maker and Number One. Perhaps this explains the complete lack of musical direction. Or perhaps it doesn't and they have got a direction. The only way is up. Abbie stands motionless between the cool guitarist and sweaty bassist, singing in a Gosh-esque style, letting out little squeeks from time to time. This is getting desperate. I think I should stop describing the indescribable and just get on with it.

Did you see your T-shirt on Carter in NME this week?

Pat: Too right.

Rob: We heard a rumour that Fruitbat had bought it, which we didn't believe, but then suddenly opened up the NME and there it was. Yeah, a bit suprising.

Pat: We weren't sure whether he bought one or not, but Rob had a cheque off of him and it had "Fruitbat Esq" on it.

Is it true that Chic are suing you for doing 'Le Freak'?

Rob: It's a vicious rumour.

Pat: And The Corn Dollies, because it's certainly better than their one on 'Alvin Lives In Leeds'. Their version is pretty similar to our arrangement of it, which annoys me a bit. I wondered if they'd seen us do it.

Would you say that you're a CB6 band?

Pat: No. We're too young to be CB6. Stuff has moved on from CB6 anyway. I think anyone can see that. The Mighty Lemon Drops were about the most aggressive band that did that, weren't they? And The Wolfhounds were on CB6 and they're still playing around. I wouldn't say we are.



Are you more like the bands that followed CB6, like Talulah Gosh?

Pat: Talulah Gosh were pretty weedy, weren't they? I don't think we're as weedy as Talulah Gosh. I'd like to think we're more in Carter's league, or Family Cat.

Rob: We're not a twee indie band. That's what I think when I think of CB6.

Pat: The trouble with CB6 was everybody saw it as being pressure to be wearing anoraks and having a jolly good time in their bedrooms while their mum was out.

Are the lyrics based on reality, or do you just make it all up completely?

Abbie: Well, yeah. I think about experiences, but then I build on them. Make it so no-one can recognise who it's about?

Abbie: I think maybe with some of the songs, if the people they were written about actually listened to them, which they don't because it's not their sort of music, maybe they'd recognise themselves, but I don't think there's much chance of that because they're not likely to be buying the record.

Do you think indie music gets a disproportionate amount of publicity?

Pat: What do you mean by that, first of all?

The papers are full of it and not a lot of people are interested in it.

Pat: I think that's wrong. I think the problem is the term "indie".

Indie-type then? Like The Darling Buds and The Primitives are not actually on indie labels.

Pat: I wouldn't say The Darling Buds were indie any more. Not that 'Pop Said' album. I wouldn't have said that was an indie album. It's very well produced.

Rob: It's difficult to tell. A lot of people still consider The Wedding Present indie, yet they themselves have said they're not. They're now signed to a big label, but what's the difference? They still play the same songs.

Pat: I think they see it as a bit of a stigma don't they? You start off as an indie band and all of a sudden you're there. You're on the majors and you're a real band. I wonder whether there is the interest out there, and every now and then I go and see a band, like I went to see Cud last night, and there were loads of people there, and they all obviously knew the songs, and they were all obviously well into it. They've not really done very well in the papers.

How well do they do out of London?

Rob: We supported them in Leeds over a year ago now, and it was absolutely packed, mayhem. They had to shut the doors at 9 it was so packed.

Pat: Cud are better outside London. All these bands are better outside London. Inside the M25 you're in a real insular zone. There's lots of indie bands playing every night. Just about every week you can probably go out and see a band you really like without too much trouble, whereas you go and live in somewhere like Leeds, or even Manchester or Birmingham, it is pretty difficult. You really do have to pick and chose.

What group has had the biggest positive effect on music in the 80s?

Pat: It's got to be The Wedding Present, hasn't it? Out of all the bands.

Rob: I suppose we're supposed to say The Smiths or Morrissey.

Pat: A lot of miserableness come out of Morrissey.

Rob: Even The Primitives and people like that were on indie labels and they're breaking through and getting into the charts. Any groups like that possibly helped. Paved the way.

Pat: I don't think Johnny Marr's ever had an independant attitude, has he? He's always been "I'm a big rock star", wears his sunglasses round Tesco's.



What's the worst thing about being in a band?

Pat: Gloucester gigs. Get back at half 6 in the morning, get two hours kip and have to get up to take the van back.

Rob: The amount of money it's costing us. Because we're on our own label, put out the last single, and recorded the second one now. And not being able to get pissed when you're driving.

Abbie: And when you're playing, but I'll make exceptions.

What book are you reading at the moment?

Pat: English book of football grounds.

Abbie: I've just started reading Nick Cave again, and I'm going to finish that and start reading 'Stark' again. Ben Elton. It's brilliant. I was really into it when we were recording our first single. While they were playing I was reading it all the time and they got really pissed off, and I got to the last page, and Rob had ripped it out. Bastard. I said "what a shitty ending", because it actually ended on a proper sentence.

What soap opera would you most like to be in?

Rob: Brookside, so I could meet Sammy. Oops, didn't say that!

Abbie: Coronation Street.

Rob: You're not going to answer that. Too old!

Pat: Too old?! You're old before your time. Bingo boy, you are.

What game show would you most like to be on?

Abbie: Anything with Bruce Forsyth.

If you were on Mastermind, what would your specialist subject be?

Pat: Crap venues around the country.

Abbie: Gymnastics. Or underwear.

Rob: Blokes underwear?

Abbie: 'scuse me! Womens underwear.

What's the best technical innovation of recent years?

Pat: Fuzzbox.

Rob: What? The group?

Pat: Not the CD.

Rob: Video.

Pat: I like mini-LPs.

What was the last thing you made?

Rob: Shirt, out of a curtain.

Abbie: Christmas card.

Pat: Our press pack.

What's the worst journey you've ever been on?

Abbie: Gloucester.

Rob: Or Leeds, supporting Cud, in the back of a van and the exhaust was in the back with us.

Pat: There was a hole in the floor, and it was just above the hole in the exhaust, it was awful. No windows on the van at all, we just had to breathe through the grille in the top, so we had to take it in turns to get some air.

What's your favourite item of clothing?

Abbie: Underwear.

Rob: My new shirt made out of a curtain.

Abbie: No, my Proclaimers socks. A picture of each of them on both sides.

What's your favourite junk food?

Rob: Spicy bean burger.

Pat: Wimpy.

Rob: That's the best technical innovation.

What's your favourite sandwich?

Pat: Marmite and tomato sauce with a bit of sandwich spread on top.

Abbie: Banana.

If you believed in reincarnation, what would you come back as?

Rob: My guitar. My pelvis.

Pat: What, just the back of your guitar? Rubbing against your pelvis?

What annoys you?

Abbie: Our drummer. When you're trying to talk in rehearsal he keeps banging his drum all night long.

Rob: Thatcher. Colin Moynihan.

Pat: Cranky Colin! Government going green, that really annoys me. Charlton still playing at Crystal Palace's ground. Inspirial Dickheads.

What's the strangest thing that's ever been said about you, or to you?

Pat: A lot of the Spanish were strange when we were out there.

Rob: We toured in Spain, we got some funny comments then. We couldn't understand it, so that was strange.

Pat: People say we're like Talulah Gosh.

Abbie: "Excuse me, are you a woman?". That was two weeks ago.



How do you see yourself as different to similar groups?

Pat: Name the bands.

Talulah...?

Rob: They've split up, we're still going.

Pat: You mean what have we got to offer that these other bands haven't got to offer? Or why do people have so much trouble differentiating? I think the unusualness of our band is that it is quite strong with the guitars. It's not quite as strong as Dinosaur, but it's still quite a strong guitar sound

What do you think of Lush and The Sundays?

Rob: Lush are brilliant and The Sundays are the most over-rated band ever. One brilliant song, crap album.

Pat: I don't even think that song was that good.

Rob: I really liked the song, but the album wasn't very exciting. Lush I think are excellent. They've had a great single and a great album.

Pat: The trouble with a lot of them is that bands with girls in tend to get quite good media attention, whether they deserve it or not.

Abbie: Except us.

Pat: No, we get good media attention. You get good media attention.

Rob: Every review has had you mentioned by name.

What's the venue and the line-up you'd most like to play?

Pat: I'd most like to play the Lyceum in London. I always wanted to play there. Or a small Scottish island.

Rob: Town & Country Club. Carter headlining, then us.

Abbie: And The Wedding Present supporting.

Rob: Lush and The Wedding Present.

Pat: Inspiral Carpets on bottom, with no soundcheck.

Abbie: Without a minder and without a dressing room.

Rob: No soundcheck and a 20 minute set.

Watching Screaming Custard's soundcheck at Camden Falcon a few weeks later was quite entertaining. They spent hours adjusting the volume of everything because the vocals were too loud, or the guitars were drowning each other out, or something. There's more to being a hard rock noise band than just turning the guitars up and the vocals down, but, to misquote The Groove Farm, it's just indie-pop, but I love it.

A band who really know how to create a much harder sound, but who also have some good, even classic, songs are The Joyce McKinney Experience. I heard of them a long time ago, but always imagined that the name was going to be better than the music. However, popular opinion persuaded me to go and see them at Camden's nastiest venue supporting some bunch of grebos. They were so good I bought the singles. The second single was so good I went to see them again. I thought they were going to be the main band at The Venue, but it's Irish band week in the NME, and Power Of Dreams have stepped in to be the main band. Consequently, when I arrive at 8:30 JME are still soundchecking, and when they finish that they go out for some food, and then come back and do their thing, and then I decide to wait until Power Of Dreams have been on, and then they're too busy shaking their thang to Happy Mondays records to do an interview, so I forget the idea. Anyway, the long and short of it is that they said if I sent them a list of questions, they would send the answers. I hate postal interviews.

What's your most prized possession?

Pat: I've got some Laurel & Hardy soap I'm pretty proud of.

What was the last record you bought?

Abbie: England/New Order, yesterday. Have you seen the video? Brilliant

Rob: Cud's last one.

Pat: First My Bloody Valentine album. Sounds like The Damned. German one.

How important is playing live?

Abbie: It's the only time I go out.

Do you think your sound is better live or on record?

Rob: Better than the last single.

Pat: We never have enough time on record, so we need someone to pay us lots of money so we can go into the studio and not have to worry too much about it.

Rob: The last single sounded very hurried and very cheap production because it was.

What band would you most like to support?

Pat: Buzzcocks.

Rob: Carter. They're South London boys. They come from our area. The only thing I worry about is they're just so good live we'd be a bit second-rate compared to them however well we played I think.

What was the last gig you went to, apart from one of yours?

Pat: Cud last night at The Venue.

Rob: Carter and Cud at Brixton Academy.

Abbie: Cud at The Powerhaus.

If you could be anyone in the world, who would you most want to be?

Rob: First bass player from New Model Army.

Pat: I'd quite like to be Paul Gascoigne just going into the World Cup.

Abbie: Bobby Robson, I would, with all them girls.

Pat: Thatcher, so I could shoot myself.

Did you ever have music lessons? Apart from the ones you have at school.

Rob: I did, I had about four. The guy taught me the scales and that was it.

He tried to start to teach me to read music, which I wasn't interested in, so once I'd learnt where a D was and where a C was I left, basically.

Abbie: I've got a vocal tape. I played it for the first time the other day.

The following evening is another busy schedule trying to interview another Decoy band, The Bollweevils, in the 15 minutes between 22 men kicking a ball one way and kicking it the other way.

The Bollweevils did 'Turn your head' on the Corrupt Postman tape, and immediately found a place in my heart between Nine Steps To Ugly and Strawberry Story. Now I've heard the record and seen them live, that's not quite the right place to put them, but maybe when I've seen those two bands, they'll move sideways a bit anyway.

'Talk to me' is a very good single, which has four tracks, including the title song, which is The Bollweevils at their almost poppiest, and the uncharacteristic 'It cheers me considerably', 'a fine acoustic tale with a sting at the end of it'.

Live, The Bollweevils make a very pleasant racket. The highlight is definitely 'Turn your head', when Mark plugs in his acoustic guitar, presses the pedal and lets out an almighty din. This unrestrained, yet controlled, feedback continues underneath a perfectly balanced pop ditty. If you're wondering why none of these photos show Mark playing the acoustic guitar, it's because I got so carried away that I forgot to take a picture. There's not much to see anyway.

Did you not release 'Turn your head' just because Decoy said you can do what you want, or did you not want to release it anyway?

Sarah: We thought it might be worth saving actually.



and be as good live as you possibly can. I wouldn't not do something in the studio because we shouldn't do it live if I thought it would make the record better.

Mark: I don't think our live sound's much different to the record. I think bands in general tend to experiment more as they go along. If you listen to early stuff by bands they probably sound like that live as well, but then once they start being able to spend months in the studio then they start adding loads of extra stuff on it. So maybe when we do the next one there may be a few extra bits on it that we wouldn't be able to do live, but it wouldn't change the actual songs.

Do you know what your next single's going to be?

Steve: Probably 'Turn your head', we think. There's other songs. We've got a new song called 'Mouth' which seems to be really popular. We sort of made a sort of decision. We demoed some tracks for it and 'Turn your head' was the one at the time we thought was going to be the next single. I think we can safely say it will be.

Mark: It's a four track EP again, so it's not a case of having one song. 'Talk to me' was supposedly the song on the last single and John Peel played 'All the same'. I prefer that anyway.

Steve: We're just going to give the 12inch a title so you can pick your own song off.

What made you think about doing an acoustic guitar with all that feedback? Why use the acoustic guitar?

Mark: Well, it happened by accident. I just plugged it into the amplifier one day and this massive feedback came out of it, and it's a different feedback to what you get out of an electric guitar. It's more full-sounding, and it just sounds better on a couple of the songs. I wouldn't use it on all of them. People seem to like it. As far as I know we're the first band to do it. I don't think it's any big deal, but I'm surprised no-one's done it before. I think it's quite a good gimmick actually, because everyone thinks you're going to do a quiet song.

Mark: Yeah, the idea at the time was, if you stick out your best song as your first single, and it really stiffs massively, you'll be a bit depressed about what you were going to follow it up with. Every other record company we spoke to said if they sign us they wanted that to be the first single.

Sarah: It isn't necessarily the best song, it's probably just the most commercial, I think.

Do you get nervous when you're on stage?

Mark: Not really any more.

Steve: The only time I've been nervous is the last time we played here when it was the first gig in London. It was really packed and it was the first time Decoy had ever seen us, and it was really important and stuff, that was the only time I've ever been nervous I think.

When you play live do you try to recreate the sound of your records, or the other way round?

Sarah: They're two different things really.

Steve: There's no point saying we won't do something in the studio because we can't do it live. You go into the studio to make great records and try

Steve: And Sarah fools them by saying "this is our quiet one", and it works every time, doesn't it?

Sarah: That one's wearing a bit thin actually. I don't think I'll be using that one any more.

What was the first record you ever bought?

Sarah: '7 Teen' by The Regents.

Steve: I can tell my story! The first record I ever bought was 'Sound and vision' by David Bowie, but that was no stab at credibility because the second record I ever bought was 'Kung Fu Fighting'.

Mark: I think it's probably '24 Carat Purple', or something like that. My heavy metal days.

Chris: Actually, the first record I ever recieved was 'Dominique' by Singing Nun. That inspired me to play the drums. No, it didn't. Blondie did.

Are you an indie band?

Sarah: Only because we're on an indie label.

Mark: I don't like any indie bands. I never listen to them. I just listen to REM and Husker Du and bands like that. Just because we've got a girl singer everyone links us in with the shite bands.

Steve: I like Kit.

Chris: Lush, My Bloody Valentine.

Sarah: Kitchens Of Distinction, they're good.

Mark: It's when you get compared to the old ones like Shop Assistants and The Primitives. I've never even listened to them. I think it's a bit hard to understand why people think we sound like them. I wouldn't know if we sounded like them or not.

What other names did you consider for the band?

Sarah: For a while we were called The Big Push, but then Bros called their tour Big Push, so we've had to drop that and go back to the original one.

Steve: Crap name anyway. Names are really hard. No-one likes them. Someone came to see us last week and was really annoyed when he discovered we weren't a folk band. The Kinks used to be called The Bollweevils as well.

Mark: They thought better of it though.

What book are you reading at the moment?

Steve: 'Claudius The God' by Robert Graves. Seriously I am.

Chris: Jeanne Paul Saches. And Viz

Steve: Nice balance.

Chris: I like to have a broad spectrum.

Mark: I don't read books as a rule.

Sarah: I did read a bit of that Ian McEwan book. 'First love last rites' it's called. Short stories. Very twisted and sick.

Mark: Very, very pervy actually.



What gameshow would you most like to be on?

Steve: I always wanted to go on Paul Daniels Every Second Counts because I used to watch that before I went out every Friday, and I used to get all the questions right. My girlfriend refused to go on with me.

Sarah: What's that shite tennis one? Assassinate Angela Ripon.

Mark: 3-2-1 is good. With Dusty Bin. I'm a fan of Dusty Bin.

If you were on Mastermind, what would be your specialist subject?

Mark: History of magnets.

Steve: Mark's a world authority on magnets.

Sarah: He designs magnets for a living. He's got a really stiff job.

Mark: I work for a magnet company. I'm a magnetic design engineer. You have to be thick as shit to win Mastermind. I can't imagine wanting to know that much about anything really.

What's your favourite item of clothing?

Sarah: My singing trousers.

Chris: My leather jacket.

Sarah: Your leather jacket's shite.

Chris: I've got an original 50s James Dean jacket.

Steve: Original Burtons 1977.

With skidmarks?

Chris: No, that's my underpants.

Sarah: I don't believe you just said that.

Steve: My favourite item of clothing is actually Mark's lambskin jacket.

Mark: It's artificial, I should add for any animal rights people.

Were you ever a member of a fan club?

Steve: I was in the Uriah Heap fan club. I used to get this quarterly magazine called 'Heap News' and photos of the band and stuff.

What's your favourite Madonna record?

Sarah: 'Like a prayer'.

Mark: That one with the pervy video. It's not because of the pervy video, I just really liked it. 'Respect yourself' was it?

Sarah: 'Express yourself'.

Mark: It's got nothing to do with the video. 'Vogue' is my least favourite.

Were you glad The Smiths split up?

Sarah: No.

Mark: I wasn't heartbroken.

Steve: I think they were past their sell-by date when they split up.

Sarah: I was vaguely pissed off. I did like them. They were really good.

Chris: Easily the most influential band of the 80s. They were. I saw them three times. Really great band.

Steve: It's easy to slag them off now, but you've got to remember what they were up against at the time. They were a breath of fresh air I thought. I remember seeing them on Riverside that first time when they did 'This charming man'. I watched it with my brother. Just put the Subbuteo away actually, and it really impressed me. Really made an impact on me.

So what do you think about Morrissey now?

Sarah: He's become a bit of a parody really.

Steve: He's ridiculous. Someone should tell him. He's embarrassing I think.

Chris: I think he's still riding...

Steve: On The Smiths? No! I think if he brought all those records out on his own, just came from nowhere, he'd be just as successful!

What should be banned?

Steve: The Poll Tax.

Sarah: Racist organisations.

Steve: And the British National Party.

Chris: Manchester.

Mark: It would make it difficult to get to Liverpool on the train from Sheffield though, wouldn't it?



After all that rushing around, I go to interview Blur at Camden Palace. There is lots of high jinks during the soundcheck, which kind of gives me the impression that their stage antics are not merely acting up for the audience. Blur usually do their interviews "over some light tea", so the three frontmen and one roadie do their Beatles Abbey Road bit across Camden High Street, except the traffic didn't stop because there was no zebra crossing, and ended up in a burger bar. While they fill their faces with chip butties, I throw a few questions at them. Due to the timing of things, I get time to go to another two venues before Blur come on stage.

Most of the questions were answered by Damon, so you can assume they all were.

Are you serious about this band, or are you just doing it for a laugh?

That's a very silly question. Yes we are.

Serious?

I don't know what we are, but we certainly are.

When was the last time you got an electric shock?

Mark: Doncaster. I got an electric shock off the microphone.

Steve: The best one I had was in my bedroom though. I was trying to fix my Scalextric.

Chris: Funnily enough. A week ago. My mate, Dave, has got an electric fan.

It's an old one, a 1960s fan. It didn't have a base, and I put my hand under to pick it up.

What's the biggest problem facing the world at the moment?

Steve: Greenhouse effect. It's definitely getting warmer.

Mark: Religious fanaticism.

Sarah: Religion's shite basically, I think.

What was the last thing you built? Or made.

Steve: Battery powered lifting device!

Mark: That was at work.

Steve: He might make the world's first battery powered lifting device.

Mark: I made a mouth-organ holder out of Mechano once as well, so I could pretend to be Bob Dylan.

Sarah: I don't make things. I'm really shit at things like that.

Steve: I made my girlfriend very happy!

What's The Bollweevils philosophy?

Chris: Big dogs cock!

Steve: Do what you want, be happy, don't let drummers get you down.

Mark: Actually, in my spare time I'm secretly building a robot that can play the drums so we can get rid of Chris.

Steve: I think we all like to think of ourselves as left wing.

Oh dear, the footie's started again. It's tough being in a band at World Cup time. They try to delay their set until the match has finished, but end up having to miss the end. Shame.

Is this the first time you've headlined?

No. We don't do support gigs any more. Last one we did was with Jesus Jones, which was done because it was a Food bash. We're not going to support anyone from now on.

Is this the biggest place you've played?

No. Brixton Academy.

Is this the biggest place you've headlined?

Yeah.

Where was your best gig?

Best gig is gonna be tonight. We haven't had a best gig. Worst gigs are best gigs usually. Falcon last time wasn't bad. It's not that important really, good gigs and bad gigs. If you take it on audience reaction then I suppose we've had lots of really good gigs, but that's not really a good gig. Our best gig was when there was virtually nobody there. So it's not a thing that can be judged in reactions by people, it's more of an internal reaction, when the chemicals start mixing properly.

How long have you had the harmonium?

About two weeks. We're going to be using those sort of things quite a lot.

What else?

Lots of different, interesting sounds.

Like?

Things that interest us.

Is it to surprise people?

No, it's got nothing to do with that. We all play lots of instruments so occasionally we like to play some of the other instruments we can play.



Do you think you sound like any other bands?

No. We don't sound like them, we're not interested and we're not bothered. It's just not really something that even comes into our mind, what other people are doing.

So where does your sound come from?

Just what we do. Purely a result of us four and our little ideas forming into one group of ideas, and that's what the sound is.

How would you like people to react to your music?

With enthusiasm, and mistrust, and total apathy. Apathy's always an interesting one. Any reaction is interesting.

Do you do better in London or out of London?

London audiences tend to be quite dull, generally speaking. You're gonna have regional differences. People speak differently, they're going to react differently. That's just a fact of environment really, not much to do with the band. If the band are going to be right in that environment then they're going to get a good reaction, it doesn't mean anything really.

What do you think of Lush and The Sundays?

I don't know anything about them. The Sundays rehearse at The Premises. They're never in the bloody cafe though. They work too hard, all of them.

What band...

Anything to do with bands just forget it.

Do you think you're an indie band?

No. We're not an indie band really. Can't be. It's not possible. How can you be an indie band when you're signed to one of the biggest record companies in the world? You've just got to be the biggest band in the world to fit your record company, that's all. Just the same like an indie band with one person working in the office, they can fill that office, but if you're with the biggest record company in the world, you've got to be massive before you can start to make any impact on them. It's all relative.

So are you going to make an impact on Parlophone?

We already have made a big impact on Parlophone.

In what way.

Just being what we are. It's impossible to be specific about what you are. It's completely contrived if we say what we are. We're nothing except what we are.

Do you think your sound is better live or on record?

We haven't made a record, so we wouldn't know that.

Haven't you recorded anything?

No.

Nothing at all?

No.

Are you going to?

No. Yeah, we are going to next week, possibly. We're starting to record next week. It's the beginning.

What's the worst thing about being in a band?

Interviews.

Have you ever had music lessons?

Yes. Dave's had lessons for everything, he's had karate lessons, piano lessons, rock climbing lessons. The three of us are classically trained. Play jazz, we can do what we want really.

Do you think that affects your music then?

It gives you a hint of what to stay clear of and what to head for. It means we're not limited to four instruments, or four chords, or four ideas. But obviously if you've got three classically trained musicians in the band it's going to be there somewhere, isn't it?

Does managing the band make it more of a business?

Well, I would hardly call it business. It makes it more of a nonsense. It is a nonsensical thing to do, but at the same time it cuts out a lot of middle-men, lots of 20%'s which would go to other people. But we're all piss-broke, we got clamped today so we're piss-broke for probably weeks now. It's not very economic really. All you can say is that there's four people and there's not a big mastermind behind it. The fact that we've got onto a mega label, okay we're on Food, but the fact we've got all those resources behind us and we're managed by ourselves is quite funny really.

Do you want to do these silly questions?

Go on then. We're not very good at them. We're not funny people unfortunately.

Were you ever a member of a fan club?

No. Not interested. Really not interested. Not even The Beano.

What should be banned?

People who can't spell sandwich.

What was the last thing you made?

What? In what sense?

Put something together.

I made myself dinner last night, while watching the football. I made spaghetti.

Heinz spaghetti?

Wholemeal brown spaghetti.

What soap opera would you most like to be in?

We're in one right now.

What book are you reading at the moment?

I haven't got any time for any books except the dictionary any more. Collins Concise. It's very good.

Are you superstitious?

No, not every day.

Are you going to pay your Poll Tax?

No. I shouldn't hope so. If I've got money to pay it I'll pay it, but if I haven't I can't pay it can I? I'm not that bothered.



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17 / **BLUR**



What's your favourite sandwich?

Hilary special. Cheese, fried egg, pickle and onion. They're really nice.

What's your favourite junk food?

Chips. I don't even like junk food that much, but I do like chips.

I then went to The Borderline to see See See Rider, but it was cancelled because one of them was involved in a motorbike accident. Very rock'n'roll! So I went back to the Bull & Gate to see Sun Carriage and Milk, and bumped into Joe and Roxanne from Th' Faith Healers. Well you would, wouldn't you? Sun Carriage were remarkably good, but Milk went a bit off when a girl in the audience decided to become a girl singer, and refused to leave the stage until she'd sang a Buzzcocks song. By then it was 11:30 and I dashed down the road to Camden Palace, and the queues went right round the corner. The arriving-at-7:30 ploy paid off, and I had to wait inside for 40 minutes instead. By now Blur are rather more excitable, and when they come on stage, I find it hard to believe that the band who are throwing microphone stands around and kicking people in the front row are the same people who were being so demure just four hours earlier.

By this time I'm beginning to think that by arriving early I can get in free, until I try it at The Powerhaus. A guest list of five people isn't all that generous, is it? And there's no sneaking in while no-one's looking either. But after The Charlottes historic performance at The Falcon four weeks earlier, I wasn't going to miss them again for the sake of a fiver.

Flashback.

Wednesday 23rd May 1990. A historic day. Melody Maker was quite good.

Friday 18th May 1990. A historic day. The Heart Throbs supported Thee Hypnotics at ULU. I was under the impression that The Heart Throbs were quite good on account of I saw them last year and they were quite good. On this particular night I was expecting to see a brilliant, improved Heart Throbs, and stay for a mediocre main band. But The Heart Throbs weren't just bad, they were depressingly bad. So, not wanting to stay there any longer, I rushed to The Falcon, knowing that whatever happened it wouldn't be as bad as what I'd just seen and felt. I got there just as The Charlottes were coming on for what turned out to be my best gig since Pauline Murray almost exactly a year ago (really), and The Darling Buds just over a year before that (really!). The Falcon wasn't really designed for stage-diving and crowd control, but it's not very often the audience get excited into mass frenzy, especially when there are music journos present. It was so good that The Charlottes were seen to smile on more than one occasion. I consequently bought the T-shirt, the album and the single. The T-shirt shrunk because it's made of top quality cotton, the album is only 22 minutes long, but it's only £5 and side two is extremely good, and the single is even better and is more representative of the kind of stuff they do now.

Just as The Telescopes looked too small for The Bull & Gate, The Charlottes looked too small for The Falcon. Which is why I wasn't going to miss them at The Powerhaus. But first, the interview.

I hear you did an interview with Number One.

Petra: Yeah, it should be in any week now.

What do you think they'll say about you?

Petra: I don't think Number One they'll go either way.

Graham: They'll say we're ideal stuff for young girls going through the problems of puberty and adolescence. The guy said our music was relaxing for their teenage angst.

Petra: It was quite weird really because they cater for teeny-bopping audiences, but all over the offices there's posters of Jason Donovan with "fuck off we hate you" on it and stuff like that, so I think they totally hate the music they're writing about. And we're not getting a centre spread with our lyrics on either, which is a damn nuisance.

Melody Maker said you had "a lack of a stage presence". Is that true?

Petra: Well, we're there, what more can we do really?

Graham: It depends what you mean. We're not the sort of people who jump around. We're not Van Halen or anything. We just play guitars. We don't set ourselves up as clowns or street entertainers or anything.

Petra: I don't think anyone expects me to stage-dive off the speaker stack.

Graham: It's just supposed to be a categorisation of standard indie bands, just stand there strumming.

How do you think you've improved since the band first started.

Graham: I think our haircuts are better, aren't they? I think it's got a lot heavier and a lot more intense, which is what we wanted to do.

Petra: It's got a lot better since we did the Ride tour because playing every night for two months really makes you tight. Musically tight!

Graham: We don't give away money!

Was the Ride tour a turning point for you?

Simon: There was a lot depended on that because we were thinking, if it doesn't go down very well we don't know what's going to happen to The Charlottes, but we went down well virtually every single night, which was quite suprising really, because we thought there'd be the odd night where people just would not get into it at all, but every night there was a certain amount of people getting into it. A lot of people hadn't even heard of us because we haven't had any press attention.

Graham: It's really reassuring for us that a band would take us, and are as nice as them, without any of the ego crap. They're really nice guys.

Was it packed out every night, because that was just as they made it big?

Graham: Just as the tour began their single went in at 32, because they were off to support The House Of Love and The House Of Love were 39.

Petra: So the type of audience changed dramatically. It sold out every night.

Graham: Not every night, but a lot of them sold out.

Petra: Bournemouth didn't, but that was quite a very big place.

Do you think you could ever be bigger than Ride?

Graham: No, I don't think we would, because they're slightly more commercial than us, not desperately trying to be commercial, but I think their songs have got a slightly bigger crossover appeal.

Petra: I think they've got what it takes to be pop group, as it were, more than we have. We're not aiming to be really big anyway, that's not the ultimate thing on our list.

Graham: They had a lot of young girls come to their gigs.

Simon: Star struck.

Petra: Mark touched my hand as if he was from Bros or something. It was really weird watching it. It's quite funny.



Are you still on Subway?

Graham: No, we're on heroine now, aren't we? No, we're not. The record label closed down and so we thought we'd make the last record the best one they ever released, so we let them release 'Love in the emptiness'.

Do Subway owe you money?

Graham: Well, it depends what you mean. Basically yeah, but the thing is, we were aware when we put out the mini album that he was in debt to something like £25 000 anyway, and we didn't expect the album to go into profit. He was always honest with us and he doesn't get any profits from it at all.

Petra: I think we got treated quite well though really.

Graham: It was because that album got a good review in NME and got reviewed in Melody Maker, and got a couple of features, we started to do a bit better. It doesn't matter that much to us anyway, money, you know, it's not the main priority. We probably would have paid the money that we would have got from it to get the exposure from it anyway. If you can understand that.

Do you do well abroad?

Simon: I picked up a couple of girls while I was in Jamaica last year.

Graham: We get loads of letters from abroad.

Petra: I got one from Holland the other day, they sent me a load of Dollars, but I don't know what for because he wrote in Dutch. Sent a wedge of American money but I don't know what he wants from me. Probably a record.

How important is playing live?

Graham: Really important. Essentially we're a live band, until we do a bad gig, then essentially we're a studio band.



If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

Simon: It might be about the way to keep pets healthy. Because I really like pets. Dog food. I don't know, why?

Graham: I think even if we were writing a novel, our publishers would make sure we kept it under wraps anyway, so I think probably the best bet is not to answer the question.

What annoys you?

Simon: Hangovers.

Graham: Engineers at venues. Sounchecking. Having to go into the job centre and persuade them you do really want to get a job, and then them ringing up the Little Chef and trying to get you a place in there and you really not wanting to do it but having to seem like you do otherwise you lose your benefit. That annoyed me more than anything.

What's your favourite advert?

Simon: The Milka one.

Petra: The Samaritans. It's only been on a few times, it's really good.

Graham: I don't watch adverts. Just the whole idea of advertising I find amazing anyway. If all the advertising was destroyed, things would be so much cheaper.

Petra: But you wouldn't know what beer to buy, would you really?

Graham: The whole idea of it though, I just find nasty. Persuading people to buy things. Making people think their lives aren't as good as they could be by painting this kind of ideal.

Petra: The Samaritan one's not like that.

Simon: The Milka one's not like that at all.

Graham: I think it's sadly hilarious, the way adverts become part of culture.

What soap opera would you most like to be in?

Petra: Well I actually like soap operas.

Graham: I violently disagree with them.

Petra: I like them. I think Brookside.

Simon: Neighbours.

What character would you want to play?

Petra: I'd like to be Jason Donovan's new girlfriend. Oh shut up. He's quite cute though.

Graham: I wouldn't be in a soap opera.

What gameshow would you most like to be on?

Simon: Opportunity Knocks.

Graham: Mastermind, answering questions on My Bloody Valentine.

Petra: I don't like gameshow actually. I like soap operas but I don't like gameshows.

Simon: The Price Is Right would be really good.

Petra: You have to shake your body down though, don't you? I wouldn't be able to do that in public.

Simon: That's the best part about it.

What was the last thing you made?

Petra: What, you mean stuff out of Cornflake boxes?

Graham: Last thing we made was a song, last night. Our new song which Petra hasn't written any lyrics to yet, and which hasn't got a title, but which, amazingly enough, we're opening the set with tonight.

Petra: I have. I know what I'm singing. It's true, man. Everything I say is true.

Have you got a claim to fame?

Petra: I'm Duane Eddy's lovechild. My Mum had an affair with Duane Eddy when I was born, so no-one knows if I really am Duane Eddy's lovechild.

Graham: Judging by her guitar playing we know that she's not, but we don't tell her that.

Petra: You know Soda Stream? The milk shake equivalent, Milk Stream, when I was 8 years old, I was the model on the box of that. I was on the Soda Stream adverts in Germany. So I was a media product by the age of 8 really. And I sat on Val Doonican's lap, but that's already been in House Of Dolls, so you won't want that. And lots more besides.

What's your favourite Madonna record?

Graham: There was one I really liked that she did, but I can't remember what it was called. It was a real slow one.

Petra: 'Into the groove', I suppose, because I like Ciccone Youth's version.

Simon: That one she did on Top Of The Pops. She had these really nice electric blue stockings on and a pink wig. Stylish lady.

What band would you most like to support, apart from Ride?

Petra: Mudhoney. I don't know if we'd go well with them, but I like Mudhoney.

Graham: I'd quite like to support Lush, well, Miki in particular.

What other names did you consider for the band?

Petra: It was actually meant to be The Charlatans but I couldn't get it out.

Do you like The Charlatans?

Petra: I liked the first one.

Simon: I like the new one.

Graham: I like them, but I think they're a bit derivative. If I was going to get a band that was going to do really well now, that's exactly what I'd do. I think it's brilliant that a band that are that young and that energetic can get into the top 10. The Stone Roses are about 27, 28.

They've got two records in the charts haven't they?

Graham: No, that's how old they are.

Who would you like to cover one of your songs?

Petra: Mudhoney doing 'Are you happy now'.

Do you like all of your songs?

Petra: The ones we've got at the moment.

Graham: We're ruthlessly efficient when it comes to songwriting. We'd rather do a short set than play for longer and put something we're not happy with. The earlier stuff we did, we don't like very much now, but I think that's inevitable really, you've got to live with it. It's like going out with a girl when you're 14, and when you're 19 think "God, did I really go out with her?". It's past isn't it? It's done.

Simon: Everything I'd want to hear in a song is what we're doing at the moment. All my favourite things in all my favourite bands are in The Charlottes.

So what bands influence you? As a group.

Graham: I think the main band that we all like is My Bloody Valentine. I think they inspired a real lot of bands.

Petra: I suppose you can't avoid it really because it's in your head when you writing, and I'm sure it comes through somewhere.

Graham: We're not influenced by Lush. When our album came out we were heard of a little bit, and then their 12inch came out 4 or 5 months later, and we were being compared to them.

What other band would you like to be in?

Graham: If I wasn't in The Charlottes I'd like to be in Ride. I'd like to be in a band that was doing well enough to not have to worry about being on the dole or stuff. I'd like to be in a band where I could get £60 a week wages.

What's your favourite junk food?

Simon: Fishcake in a roll, without butter, with sesame seeds on the top.

Graham: I don't like junk food. I don't like soap operas. I don't like adverts.

Petra: What a clean-living guy. I like pizza. From Vesuvius, St Ives. I might get a free one for that.

What's your favourite sandwich?

Petra: Does it have to be sandwich? Could it be toast? I like toast better.

Simon: We're all favourites of cheese on toast.

Petra: We're not. I don't like cheese on toast. Mine's Taramasalata on toast.

How would you describe yourself?

Simon: Noisy and sexy.

Graham: And very, very intense and oppressive.

Simon: Haunting.

Graham: Music to do ballet dancing to.

Simon: Music to listen to in the middle of the night if you can't get to sleep.

Have you always wanted to be in a band?

Graham: Andy always wanted to be in Dire Straits but he missed the boat.

Simon: I wanted to be a footballer.

Petra: I wanted to be an actress or a film director. I still want to be a film director.

Are you going to direct your videos then?

Petra: I had planned to, but it turns out that I can't do them. It's all some stuff to do with unions.

How would you like people to react to your music?

Petra: It'd be nice if they... No.

Graham: I like the thought of people screwing to 'Lovehappy'.

Petra: It'd be nice if they went home and had a big shag. That's what I was going to say. It'd be nice if we could get some sexual feeling between their legs. But we won't know, will we?

Do you pay a lot of attention to what's written about you?

Petra: The first single review, I got really upset because they called me a "God-awful Andrea Bud songstress", which really humiliated and pissed me off.

Graham: But now she's got used to being a God-awful Andrea Bud songstress.

Petra: No, I think it's quite funny actually, now. Which is suprising, because people don't like to have nasty things said about them.

Graham: It's a shame the power the press have got. We were well aware that some good press would totally change our standing. And if the press told people to come and see us and that we were good, then people would.

What questions would you like to be asked?

Simon: Will you go to bed with me please, by Emma, Lush. No, not really.

Do you object to the subliminal Americanisation of the British culture?

Graham: Yeah. No, I can't stand it. I despise it. I don't think it's subliminal even, is it?

Subliminal is spelling 'realise' with a z, that kind of thing.

Petra: I spell realise with a z.

That's subliminal Americanisation.

Petra: It's cos I can't spell actually.

Graham: I'm not that over keen on traditional England, but I don't think America is the way forward.

How would you categorise your music?

Petra: I wouldn't.

Graham: There isn't a term. It's so fragmented that it doesn't seem to have any bearing. It depends who you're talking to. If someone who's 40 asks I say "The Who with Sandie Shaw singing".

Petra: It's terrible. Around where I come from, the neighbours know me as the Kylie of Needingworth, because that's all they can comprehend, and I just can't be bothered to tell them it's nothing like that.



Are you superstitious?

Petra: I read tarot, and I believe it.

Simon: I read my horoscope all the time.

Do you believe that?

Simon: It depends what paper I read it in. If it's the Sun I don't, but if it's Russell Harty, the yearly annual I always get for Christmas, then I do.

What's the worst thing about being in a band?

Petra: Waiting around.

Simon: Eating McDonalds all the time, because we always end up with a burger in our hand.

Graham: Suddenly realising that your whole life is revolving around standing on a little stage in front of a couple of hundred people, playing a bit of wood with wires on it.



Did you ever have music lessons?

Petra: Yeah, I learnt how to play the violin, but I gave it up because everyone took the piss out of me at school.

Andy: I had drumming lessons for five years.

Graham: He's a guitarist who had drumming lessons who now plays bass.

Simon: I had three drum lessons, and I had guitar lessons for about a year.

Did your parents ever tell you what you'd have been called if you'd been the opposite sex?

Petra: Yeah. I'd have been Peter. I was born on my Dad's birthday and he's called Peter, so they thought it was rather witty to call me Petra, but I didn't.

Graham: I would have been called Geraldine.

Simon: I would have been called Veronica.

What would you do if you weren't in a band?

Graham: Be a full time dreamer. I'd probably be a writer I think. Trying to be a writer. Working in some shitty job.

Petra: Be following on my education in film studies.

Simon: And I'd be cooking frogs legs, because I was a chef cooking frogs legs and snails.

What's the best technical innovation of recent years?

Petra: Silky Peel. No, I don't know.

Graham: We don't really keep up with the scientific journals and the British Patents Act. Tomorrows World I suppose we watch quite a bit.

Andy: Superconductors.

Simon: Soda Stream.

Petra: No, Milk Stream.

Graham: I think the worst one's CD, for destroying records.

What's The Charlottes philosophy?

Graham: Probably just see what happens. We're not ruthless careerists like some bands are. We just shamble along.

Petra: My personal one is follow your heart, not your head, but I fucked that one up recently, so it's now follow your head, not your heart.

The Charlottes played another blinding gig with people dancing and stuff. You may have got the impression that My Bloody Valentine had an influence on The Charlottes, which is true, but that doesn't mean that they are just imitating them. My Bloody Valentine and The Marychain, and lots of other inspirational bands have all been accused of copying other bands, but they are still original. The Charlottes play their own brand of hazy guitar tunes, with crashing cymbals and dreamy vocals.

The Charlottes were followed by The Edsel Auctioneer, a band who represent the reason why I used to think that all London bands were crap.

While I was watching them, a red-haired, half-Chinese girl came bouncing to the front to say hi to a mate, and then bounced back again.

"Aren't you Miki out of Lush?" I ask later. "Too right" she says.

So, between swigs from a big bottle of wine, I ask her my burning questions.

Your name keeps cropping up in these interviews. How do you feel about that?

How do I feel about it? I don't know the context.

As in fanciable person.

Fanciable person! Leave it out! Jesus! You must have some desperate people in your fanzine.

Are you glad to see your picture in NME again?

Oh yeah, I'm really pleased about that!

You regret doing that then?

Yeah, yeah, actually. I won't be doing that again very quickly.



What do you think about the progress of Lush so far?

It's quite funny really, isn't it? We're crap.

Really?

Yeah.

What about 'Chirpy chirpy cheep cheep'?

It was a joke, and people keep bringing it up. It was a joke. I don't even want to think about that song ever again.

Is there any similarity between you and The Sundays?

No, not really. I don't think so. She can sing at least 150 times better we can and her songs are probably ten times better than ours, but they're a bit contrived. I think we have a bit more fun really.

Why do you think people like Lush?

Well, bit of a laugh, innit? I think. I have a good time. People want to buy the records it's up to them.

Is that all there is to it? Selling records and having fun?

Yeah. I have a good time. That's all it is.

So there you have it. Lush are crap and The Sundays can sing. The reason I asked, of course, was because I've been asking what people think of Lush and The Sundays, and no-one said they were unrelated. And they're not. The connection is they're both what Mark E Smith would call "student bands".

I wasn't going to go and see The Groove Farm, but I thought I would go to see what The Fountain was like when it was full. I guess that'll have to wait until another time. The Groove Farm are one of those bands that no-one actually likes in advance, but quite likes when they're on. They went down remarkably well at The Wedding Present bash for the release of the Airspace II album, but still no-one goes to see them deliberately. They would have you believe that this is entirely due to the press, but who can say?

Is this the smallest place you've ever played?

Andrew: Second smallest, I reckon. The smallest is in Clevedon, where The Driscolls live. Equal smallest probably.

You advertise yourself as "the band everyone loves to hate". Do you thrive on that, or is it accidental?

Andrew: No, I'd like everyone to love us, but it just doesn't seem to happen.

Jez: We have had a lot of criticism recently, and I think that sort of thing does make you a little bit paranoid about it. But it's funny, because the people that we think are important like us, but the people who are influential don't like us, like the music papers slag us off.

Andrew: I certainly don't like being the band that everyone hates, but it looks like that's the way it is at the moment.

Are you still suing Martin Subway?

John: We're not actually suing him. He's agreed to pay a certain amount, so it's not going to have to go to court.

Isn't it costing more to sue him than you're going to get off him anyway?

John: No, because you can get legal aid if you're really poor, and we're really poor.

Andrew: But he has promised to pay the money, so it should all be okay.

Would you consider 1990 to be a good year for The Groove Farm up to now?

Andrew: What we've done has been brilliant. Getting on The Wedding Present tour was brilliant. Getting to do Blue Aeroplanes, although it ended in a bit of a disaster, people fighting and things like that, cos they were so horrible, but doing it was good fun. The new record that's just come out this week is the best thing we've ever made yet. So yeah, it's been really, really good.

John: I think the best bits have been the best bits and the worst bits have been the very worst bits.

Andrew: Just being completely ripped to pieces by everybody in the music papers. It seems that they've not just decided to treat us badly, but to kill us if possible. Wipe us out.

Jez: By saying that we're trying to sound like other people, when the bands who are being raved about at the moment are extremely unoriginal and who are copying other stuff anyway.

Do you think the press have a lot of power?

Andrew: I really do believe that if for the next month we were written about in Melody Maker and NME, a piece for about a month, then people would say "God, this band are so good". It's sad that it happens, but people do take their word for things. That's all that's happened with bands like Ride.

What is it about being in a band that makes it all worth it?

John: I sometimes ask myself that same question.

Jez: I think it's nice to be able to create something like records. It's actually something that you've created. And it's really nice to know that you've made an impact over such a large area, no matter how small it is.

John: Playing to an audience that responds.

Andrew: For me it's just playing the sort of songs that we want to play, and receiving letters. When you read Sounds and realise you've just been completely ripped to pieces and the very same morning you're just had three letters come through, one from Australia, and they're all just saying "I really like the record and I think you're really good", you realise just because the media isn't leaping about with enthusiasm about us, there are some people who've got minds of their own, and I think that's really flattering for people to write to us.



Who would you most like to sit down for a cup of tea and a chat with?

John: Madonna. And the girl with the black jumper who was at the place last night.

What made you start the group?

Andrew: Boredom, and there was nothing good on TV that day. That's it.

Do you like The Stone Roses?

Andrew: I kind of heard something by them ages ago, before they became huge, and I thought that was quite good, and when the LP came out I bought it, and then we went to see them and I didn't realise how big they were becoming. I must have been walking around with blinkers on or something, cos I went to see them, expecting the place to be half full or something, and it was packed out, and I thought "blimey, what's happening", and before I knew it, it was Stone Roses mania, and I must admit, I've gone off them a bit now, not because I've gone off their music, I still think that's great, it's what I've been reading about them, they seem to be going down the old rock'n'roll road again. It seems to be getting really boring, cliché type things all over again, and I can't see why bands have to fall for that old routine.

What's the best and worst things about living in Clevedon?

Andrew: We don't live in Clevedon, we live in Bristol. Clevedon's next door to Bristol. The best thing about living in Bristol is that people think we live in Clevedon, and the worst thing about Bristol is Bristol itself. It's just a really boring place to be, basically. Dull, dull, dull. There's nothing good about it. Everything about it is bad. All the bands from there are boring and rubbish. It's full of really boring, dull people that can't be bothered to even do a thing about when bands are playing, nobody wants to go to them. It's just rubbish.

Jez: People go and see bands who are being raved about, basically.

Andrew: No they don't. They go and see bands that play pub rock cover versions. I suppose the best thing is that it's not London.

What's your favourite footwear?

John: These.

Andrew: I think that goes for nearly everyone.

Do you think it's a shame Terry is out of The House Of Love?

Andrew: No, I couldn't care less because they've gone really boring as well recently.

Malcolm: John was hoping to replace him.

Jez: Replace him with what?

Andrew: They're another band that have completely sold out. Bland. They were so good, and now... they've gone.

Malcolm: Maybe it wouldn't have happened if Terry Bickers hadn't left.

Andrew: No, I don't care whether he left or not. He probably did a wise thing actually.

If you wanted to impress someone who'd never heard of The Groove Farm, what song would you play them?

Andrew: Something by The Smiths probably.

Jez: 'Never going to fall in love again' is a nice one, and I really like 'Just a silly phase I'm going through'.

Andrew: Anything off the new EP. Preferably 'Basil'.

Jez: I think 'Basil', yeah.

Do you consider yourself to be politically active?

Andrew: I feel I ought to be more, but I'm just too lazy. It's a terrible thing to admit, but it's true. To a point, but I don't really do enough. I'm too shy to make my voice heard. I'm not very much of a spokesman.

Jez: When you get bands who sing political songs...

Andrew: He didn't ask if we wanted to write political songs.

You could write political songs.

Andrew: We could, but I don't want to. I hate songs that go on about...

Sara: Most of Andrew's songs are about the politics of love, I reckon.

Andrew: I write songs about any old garbage that I want to write about.

Jez: John wrote one about the housing benefit office.

Big Big 2

A double-sided flexi from Big Muff

Th' Faith Healers - Domehead. More vinyl from these trash merchants. You can also buy the 'Now thats what I call Disgusting music' LP/CD, which has two live tracks by Th' Faith Healers; and Th' Faith Healers' own 12inch single, which has three studio tracks. Both of these are on Too Pure records and distributed by Southern. 'Domehead' is one of four songs recorded for the single. It was originally intended to be given away free with something else, but it's now being given away with this.

Who Moved The Ground? - Pretentious. This is probably not the best song on the demo, but it's definitely the shortest. You can get all six tracks for just £2 from Sid, 29 Andover Way, Tices Meadow, Aldershot, Hants. This includes the seven and a half minute epic 'Tear me down', and the well-worded quest 'Last stand for the topical bore'.

The Love Buttons - Banging my head. One of four tracks from the recent demo. You can buy a tape with these four and their previous demos on it, for £2 from Richard, 27 Cromwell Road, Southampton, Hants. You can also buy the single from the same address, or, if you want to spend some more money then send for Steve Biscuit's list which has loads of other goodies on it too. His address is Three Gables, Paven Close, Purton, Wilts, SN5 9DD.

Screaming Custard - Ashtray. Preview of the second single, or, more likely, postview. The first single is all sold out now, so grab the second one while you can. There are four other tracks on it as well as this one. I expect it's distributed by Southern or SRD.

I need to fill this bit of space, so I can remind you of these things. Th' Faith Healers have got a single out, and they play The Falcon and The White Horse most months.

Who Moved The Ground? have got an extremely brilliant demo tape, and they are will be playing in a pub nowhere near you soon.

The Love Buttons are the best band from Southampton not signed to Ambition, and they will probably play at Deptford Fountain on October 27th.

Screaming Custard are dead good.

Don't say I didn't tell you.

Play it.

Andrew: Yeah, but that's about as political as we've got. There's really no point in thinking "goodness me, isn't this government awful, we really ought to go and write a song about it". It's not really the best way of changing anything. It'd be much more sensible to say "isn't this government completely useless, let's build a bomb and throw it in 10 Downing Street when she's in there". I'm also not encouraging the use of bombs here by the way.

If you recognised any of those questions, that's because I lifted them from The Groove Farms' fanzine, 'The Fine Art Of Shoplifting', hence the Clevedon reference. There are lots of good bands from Clevedon, like The Driscolls and Mousefolk and Rodney Allen.

Things went a bit quiet on the interview front for a couple of week, which gave me a chance to catch up on the big pile of tapes on the floor. Two demos which stood out were The Blobels and *Who Moved The Ground?* More from The Blobels later. *Who Moved The Ground?* are from Aldershot, which means that they're a local band, Fleet and Aldershot being the same place really. They were playing at The Cricketers in Tongham, near Aldershot on an otherwise dull Friday night, so I decide to sample the 'local scene'. I arrived at 9 O'clock, thinking I would have time to do an interview before they go on, but the sign says "Live Music 8pm-Who Shook The Earth". I asked the barman where the band is. "Out there" he says, pointing to a large crowd outside. "Which ones?" I ask. "All of them" he says. He's right, of course. Although only four of them actually make the music, everyone else is just as much a part of things. They play for 45 minutes, which was more than I expected, and then have an interval! A normal occurrence apparently. They come back on for another 45 minutes, but after 25 minutes, the power goes off. *Who Pulled The Plug?* This is the landlord's subtle way of telling them to finish. The crowd sing a few Pogues songs while everyone else wanders around holding cigarette lighters. *Who Moved The Ground?* have got a guitarist who looks like David Essex, but calls himself Sid, after his hero, Sid Vicious. Hmm.



Do you always do 90 minute sets?

Rich: In pubs yeah, because it's what the landlord expects.

What happened to make you think of the name for the band?

Rich: Me and John sat down at John's house to think of some names. Got loads of books out to think up all these words, and we took them to college and asked people what they thought the best one was, and *Who Moved The Ground?* came out the tops.

What inspires you to write songs?

John: Can we say that in public?!

Sid: Recently we've had a lot of trouble writing songs. They've been very hard to find.

Rich: Lyrics are no problem, it's just the music.

Sid: The tunes. Because we've all got such varied musical taste. What inspires you to write lyrics?

Rich: Anything. I was talking to Paul about being famous when I wrote one.

How would you categorise your music?

Rich: Post punk new wave.

Lez: It's also classed as 70s garage punk.

What's the music scene like round here generally?

Rich: Terrible.

Sid: No, it's not terrible. There are quite a lot of really good bands.

John: There's us, The Sack, that's about it really. It's really hard finding different places to play round here. We must have played about 19 different places now, different pubs. We've hardly played anywhere twice.

Rich: Especially the sort of music we do because it's pretty loud and pubs don't like it.

What places would you rather play?

Sid: Small halls.

Rich: Big clubs.

John: Clubs where they've got their own PA, so we can get a decent sound.

What's your favourite local band?

Sid: I would say Frantic. A band called Frantic from Farnham. There used to be some really good bands that have split up, such as Blue Velvet and West One.

Rich: I'd say Frantic and The Sack. It's hard to choose between the two because they're so different.

John: They're the only bands we'd actually bother to go and see.

Would you say you're original?

Sid: Some of it you can tell it's been influenced by certain types of music, some of it you can't.

Rich: We just write it, and if it sounds original it sounds original, and if it doesn't it's tough luck.

How would you like people to react to your music?

Rich: Throw themselves around.

Dance, make lots of noise and have a good time.

If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

Rich: I think I'd write a book about how I'd be famous.

Sid: I'd write a book about somebody's life. A type of biography.

John: You'd find a bloody mass murderer and write a book about them.

Sid: I'd write a book about a mass murderer.

Rich: I'd probably write a book about me.

If you could be anyone in the world, who would you most like to be?

Rich: Me, except more famous.

Sid: I couldn't picture myself as anybody but myself really.

What annoys you?

Rich: People who stand right at the front and just look at you. It's alright if people stand at the back or the sides, but if someone stands right at the front and just looks at you and does nothing it's really annoying. I hate it.



What soap opera would you most like to be in?

Sid: Eastenders.

Rich: Neighbours because it's got some nice women in.

John: I'd rather be in Eastenders than Neighbours.

Rich: Neighbours is more famous though. In Neighbours people become popstars.

Would you want to be Kylie Minogue though?

Rich: I'd have to change my hairdo.

If you were on Mastermind, what would be your specialist subject?

Rich: Me, my life and what I've done.

Sid: 1977 style punk. Sex Pistols.

What's the biggest problem facing the world at the moment?

Sid: It's got to be the ozone layer.

Rich: And the new 5p's.

What was the last thing you made?

Sid: Love.

Rich: I designed a recording studio, which didn't go down very well, but didn't make it. I made it to the bus this morning.

What's your favourite item of clothing?

Sid: Bandana.

Rich: My boots. Dr Martins. Lez's has got to be a sweatband.

Lez: Yeah okay. A sweatband.

John: My jeans I'm wearing now because I've been wearing them for 3 weeks.

What's your favourite Bananarama record?

Rich: 'Venus'.

Sid & Rich: "Robert De Niro's waiting, talking Italian". I like that one.

What's your favourite Mel & Kim record?

Sid & Rich: "Take or leave us only please believe us, we ain't ever gonna be respectable". That one.

What's your favourite biscuit?

John: Jaffa cakes.

What was the first record you bought?

Rich: Madness 'Wings of a dove'.

Sid: 'God save the Queen' by The Sex Pistols.

John: I got a Wombles record when I was about five.

Lez: The Muppets. Nearly as bad as The Wombles, not quite.

John: Wombles are better than The Muppets. Muppets haven't got Orinoco in.

I stongly urge you to buy their 30 minute demo containing six unbelievably good songs from Sid at 29 Andover Way, Tices Meadow, Aldershot, Hants.

Word gets round that Screaming Custard are playing at an open air festival in Lewisham. Should be good. They had to delay their set for half an hour until the dog obedience class finished. Using a PA that any Sony Walkman would be proud of, Abbie's vocals cut through the rather thinner than usual guitar backbone, giving a rare opportunity to hear the terse lyrics. During a guitar change, several small children took up the free-badge challenge by jumping off the stage. By the time they're 17 they'll be stage-diving off speaker stacks at Mudhoney concerts. The set ended as the PA fizzled out after the penultimate song.



Later that same evening I went to Box Hill to see Who Moved The Ground? again. A truly freaky affair. I bump into their smoky Transit on the top of one of the steepest hills this side of London. They were lost too. They eventually find the shed where they are playing and find out the details of the gig. They start at 10 O'clock, there are three bands, are there is no time limit. I had no intention of staying to see three 90 minute sets that didn't start until after the England Cameroon match, so I watch another dazzling Who? set and sod off home. A few more covers this time, to keep the yocals happy, including a very passable 'Pretty in Pink'.

Back in the real world, I'm off to see Bleach again.

The first time I saw them was in April, supporting The Charlottes at The Bull & Gate. It was their first London gig, and they certainly made an impression, not just on me, but also on the guy who signed them up to make a record after seeing them. Salli stalks up and down, singing in a voice not dissimilar to Annabella L'Win (remember her?). This idea is extended when Steve stands up to drum for possibly their best song, 'Wipe it away'. They play six songs with short titles, long timings, and a lot of feeling.

11 days later they play at The Falcon and play the same six songs with a little less emotion on account of their disappointment at how small the place is, a bad soundcheck, and supporting Bark Psychosis. Despite these hindrances, the songs are still just as good, but a little less violent. I watch that and then nip up the road to see Beef playing to a packed Bull & Gate.

Their third London gig is at The Venue, supporting The Charlottes again. Lots of people surged to fill the huge dance floor of The Venue to witness another rampant set. Afterwards, as Steve wanders off to look for a first aid kit, the rest of the band and me go to look for the dressing room. When we eventually find it, Graham Charlotte is sitting there reading a thick, grubby paperback.

Are your songs violent?

Steve: Not always, but it was tonight.

Salli: Some of them are. It's all very personal. It could go either way. It depends how we're feeling at the time. If we're feeling mellow and happier, then the delivery's different, but I think the songs themselves are just about raw emotion, and the same words can mean two completely different things. How's that for a non-answer. I should have been a politician!

Is the name Bleach a piss-take of all the blonde bands?

Neil: Yes, that's right. That's exactly what we meant.

Steve: That's irony, readers. I'm not quite sure where we came up with it.

Salli: It's a good word.

Neil: It's a crap name for a band. It doesn't mean anything.

Steve: It's important, we thought, to have one word, make it monosyllabic.

Neil: There's a whole section for us in Tesco's.

There's a lot of swearing in your lyrics. Do you do that just for effect?

Salli: There's not that much really, it's only occasional.

Neil: It's like your general language, when you talk you swear, when you're in a pub with your mates you swear.

Salli: It's all just words. It's a way of expressing yourself.

Nick: If it offends anybody, it's tough really.

Neil: And you don't let your mum come anyway.

Salli: Yeah, that's true. I won't let my mum hear anything that we do because I think it'll upset her.

Steve: It's not done for effect. They're just lyrics. Salli mellows out sometimes, and doesn't swear so much.

How would you like people to react to your music?

Neil: We'd like them to clap once in a while. I always fear, when you finish a song and there's just silence. And sometimes there's five seconds silence, then a few people clap.

Steve: I'm not truly bothered. If one person comes up and says "have you got any records out?" or "could you send us a tape", that'll do me. And every gig we've done, we've had at least one person come up.

Have you got any records coming out?

Steve: Plug, plug. Yes. Three track EP, called 'Eclipse', that'll be on Way Cool records, distributed by Southern, catalogue number Way 8, and it'll be released on September 26th. We're recording it next weekend in Burton-on-Trent. The producer is Richard Fornby, who has recently done work with The Telescopes, Pale Saints...

Salli: Sonic Boom. Is going to be in Sonic's new band.

What's on it?

Steve: 'Decadance'...

Salli: That's a bit dancy and then it has the thrashy bit at the end.

Steve: 'Wipe it away' is when I stand up and drum. And 'Crimson O', which is the one that goes on forever. That'll be a long track on the B-side. About 8 or 9 minutes. And it's going to have a smart cover, but we're not telling you what.



How would you categorise your music?

Salli: Sonic Youth after eight pints.

Neil: It's different each gig.

Salli: Sometimes we're a hardcore bastard band.

Steve: There's lots of bands that give you references, but I think every one would mislead. We're obviously in that indie-rock.

Do you think you sound like Bow Wow Wow?

Salli: That's really funny.

Steve: We've been compared to Bow Wow Wow before. I think there's two



reasons for that. Firstly, there's the tribal tom-toms. Secondly because we've got a female vocalist who isn't a girlie singer. Salli: We're being compared to Silverfish for the same reason. I think that's ludicrous.

Steve: I think we're nearer The Fall in the type of sound it is.

Neil: That sort of question's like asking who are influences are, really.
Who are your influences?

Neil: Well, that's it, there aren't any. You can't not have influences because we all listen to music, and we all have favourite bands and favourite songs that we listen to, and whether you like it or not, it goes in you. In a way you want to sound like it.

Salli: It's all subliminal.

Steve: There's lots of inspiration, but no influence.

Salli: What I do at work is influential, the books and paintings and stuff.

Neil: One of the best EPs I bought this year is The Charlottes one. I do like that. I listened to that and thought it was brilliant, and the next song you do, you sound like The Charlottes.

Salli: Is it?

Neil: The guitar did.

Salli: Yeah, but you go off and listen to that, and I listen to Public Enemy, and somewhere in the middle it clashes.

Neil: But it's not deliberate. It's what goes in and then comes out.

Are you superstitious?

Neil: No.

Salli: I used to be.

Neil: Was that the 13th question?

What song would you most like to do a cover version of?

Nick: None. We won't ever do a cover version.

Steve: In another band, in another time, there's lots of things I'd like to take off. Charlottes do 'Venus', but they bastardise it, and it's brilliant. I don't think we've got the skill to do that. I like the drum beat that Simon kicks it off with. That really freaks me out. Do you still do it?

Graham: As an encore, so we don't.

Salli: I'd like to do a Motown track, 'Band of gold', which is brilliant.

Steve: So you'll be doing a solo track.

Who would you like to cover one of your songs?

Salli: Anybody!

Steve: It's the ultimate accolade. That hasn't even featured in my wildest dreams.

Salli: He's going to say The Charlottes in a minute, isn't he?

Steve: I'm not going to mention The Charlottes Charlottes Charlottes again. They're one of my fave bands.

Do you support The Charlottes a lot?

Neil: We hope to! No we don't. We've played with them twice now.

Steve: Salli and I promote in Ipswich, and we put them on a couple of times in the early days, and we supported them that once at the Bull & Gate, and we seem to get on pretty well, don't we?

Salli: What he means by "we get on fairly well" is we don't argue with the bands like everyone else does.

Steve: The music's in the same sort of area, possibly.

Neil: I wouldn't say we're the same as The Charlottes.

Steve: I'm not saying we're the same, but I don't think that we clash.

Salli: We've done gigs with The Telescopes as well, we've played with them four times now. And we've only played 14 gigs.

Steve: We've played with Silverfish a couple of times, and on paper that shouldn't work, but we still get a good reaction.

Salli: And they like us as well, which I could never work out.

What soap opera would you most like to be in?

Neil: Coronation Street. That is one big comedy. Brilliant.

Steve: I hate soap operas.

Salli: I'd like to be in Dallas.

Steve: What would you be then? One of these tarts?

Salli: I don't know. I'd be JR's illegitimate daughter that was sent over to northern England to work in the mills, and come back and say "JR you're my father and I want wedges of cash off you, bastard".

That'd be really good. I want to be in Dallas because they get to wear expensive frocks and drive big cars.

What gameshow would you most like to be on?

Neil: None of them. They're awful.

Steve: I'd like to be on Blockbusters. "Can I have a P please, Bob".

Salli: Wheel Of Justice on Vic Reeves Big Night Out. He bought me a drink once for Christmas. He's from my home town.

Were you ever a member of a fan club?

Steve: Yes, I was. Tufty.

Neil: Yeah, I was as well. The Wombles.

Salli: I was in the Puffin Club. I tried to join My Little Pony club, and they wouldn't let me because I was too old.

Neil: Well, you are now 22 Salli.

Salli: You saw my Little Pony, didn't you? I'm 23 now.

Neil: I've seen your Little Pony. That's another story.

Steve: We went round her Mum and Dad's, and it's there in her bedroom.

Have you got The Sugarcubes last album?

Steve: Yes.



What is 'A day called zero' about?

Steve: To be honest, I've only played it twice. I was so disappointed with it. I'll send you a reply by post.

Don't bother.

Salli: He'll only go on about Charlottes anyway.

Steve: I've shut up about The Charlottes now Simon's come in.

Who's the most fanciable person in pop?

Simon: Now you can start talking about The Charlottes.

Nick: Wendy James.

Neil: Ten years ago, without doubt, was Debbie Harry's top lip. It was so perfect. It was so sexy.

Steve: I must admit that I've got a little soft spot for Clare Grogan.

Neil: You might as well like Bonny Langford for Christ's sake!

Salli: Toss up between Kirk Bane from Nirvana and Thurston Moore from Sonic Youth. But I'll probably think of someone else in 10 minutes.

What was the last film you saw?

Steve: 'The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and His Lover'. It's one of the most mind-blowing films you're likely to see. You come out stunned. The whole thing is really nauseating.

Salli: The last thing I saw was either 'If' or 'The Terminator'.

Steve: We watched 'Terminator' while we were on tour with The Telescopes.

What film would you like to have written the music for?

Steve: Some of the better American brat-pack movies like 'Pretty In Pink', have a lot of incidental music. I'd love to take songs that I really love, from the indie scene, and put them with a film, and if one of ours gets incorporated into something like that, it's really good.

Neil: I'd like to do a film about British music.

Steve: I don't think there are enough films about bands, or football clubs. There's a great scene. It's really dirty, isn't it, rock'n'roll?

Salli: I'd like to rewrite the soundtrack for 'Right side of my brain', Lydia Lunch, because I think her keyboards and ranting over the top is really tedious. You could make it really hard.

If you could wipe one memory from your mind, what would it be?

Steve: Sheena.

Neil: Have we met her? Did she have a hit in the early 80s? We need time to think about these questions.

Nick: Saying Wendy James just a minute ago.

Have you ever written to anyone at the BBC?

Nick: I wrote to someone at ITV because I wanted a Dangermouse T-shirt.

Salli: I wrote a fan letter to Nino Firetto when he worked on 'Splash', but I didn't get a reply. But that was on ITV. I work for Anglia.

What do you do?

Steve: She does sod all.

Salli: Run up the phone bill hassling for gigs. And kind of research.

Neil: "Is that two sugars or one?"

Salli: "So what do you want? Coffee or tea?"

What did you want to be when you were 7 years old?

Nick: 8.

Neil: A journalist.

Salli: I wanted to be a jockey.

Neil: I know about you and ponies.

Salli: Nick probably wanted to sell insurance. Be a world class golfer.

Nick: Sportsman, yeah.

Neil: We probably all want to be footballers when you're 7. You think you can still play because you don't get tired.

What do you think of Bob Geldof's new single?

Neil: Brilliant.

Salli: Crap.

Steve: Between Newcastle and Leeds we had Steve Wright on, and he did this skit. They had Geldof phone in, and he said "I really take exception to this, it's right out of order", and every other word was beeped. It was such a good joke. And from that I thought it was brilliant.

Salli: I think he's alright, but you can't get away from the fact the song's crap.

Steve: Next week I'm going to buy two records, and one is The Telescopes, and the other is Bob Geldof. The guy is just brilliant.

What's your favourite newspaper?

Neil: Evening Star.

Nick: Telegraph. The sport in there is brilliant.

Neil: The Sunday Sport. The stories in there are classics.

Salli: Better than The Beano, isn't it? I like The Sunday Correspondant because the magazine's really good, it's always got good photos.

What's your favourite place?

Neil: That's a bit rude really.

Salli: It's just about right here, isn't it? (right earlobe)

Steve: Bath.

Neil: Melrose in Scotland I like. I stayed there for holiday.

Steve: Salli's is Whitby.

Salli: Whitby, yeah, you're right. Whitby's cool. Whitby's nice

Who's your favourite politician?

Neil: Bernard Manning.

Nick: The Liberal bloke at Cambridge with the push-bike and the basket.

Salli: Ken Livingstone, he's alright. I like Harriet Harman.

As well as their 3-track EP which is coming out in September, Bleach will also be supporting the wonderful Beef on one night of their rumoured 7-night stint at the Bull & Gate. If you go along to that you just might get a free album with Bleach on it.

The Justified Ancients Of Mumu are an organisation (or disorganisation) who are at least as old as the Illuminati. They represent the primeval power of Chaos. As such they are diametrically opposed to the order that the Illuminati try to oppose on mankind and on mankind's understanding of the Universe.

If you haven't been following the progress of The JAMs then none of this will make any sense. It is the first paragraph of Information Sheet Eight from KLF Communications. It goes on to describe how they adopted another alias, The Timelords, had a number one record, and signed The Contract with Eternity.

In the first term of The Contract they were required to make an artistic representation of themselves on a journey to a place called The White Room. The medium they chose to make this representation was up to them. Where or what The White Room was, was never clearly defined. Interpretation was left to their own creativity. The remuneration they are to receive on completion of this work of art was supposed to be access to The "real" White Room.

Driving down the Marylebone Road on a wet September afternoon in 1988 in their infamous U.S. Cop car, they decided to make a film. The making of a "Road Movie" had always figured in their vague plans for the future. With money coming in from all over the place for their Timelords record maybe now was the time. Or at least they thought so. They made plans, put budgets together, worked on storyboards. Six weeks from that September afternoon they were filming in the Sierra Nevada region of Spain (Spaghetti Western Country). Things started to go wrong immediately. The weather, guaranteed to be blue skies of epic proportions until well after Christmas, was low and drizzly. On their return to the U.K. in December 1988, they viewed all the uncut rushes that had been shot. They knew then that they had just thrown away the best part of £250,000.

In January 1989 they found a get out clause, The Liberation Loophole. It was decided that the signing of the contract and the discovery of the Liberation Loophole should be dramatically reconstructed, filmed and respectively used at the beginning and end of the film. Summer '89. The film was finished. It was only a disappointing 52 minutes long, but it was all there.

Late one Monday evening in late July 1989, after their debut live performance at the London club, Heaven, they met a young down and out.

For the price of a meal he unveiled to them a classic plot gone wrong. It was agreed that it should make the basis for the real plot of the film. Here was the dramatic tension they needed. The finished film will contain both an Inner Film and Outer Film. There will also be a Third Strand which will consist of scenes plotting the tensions and predicaments that they experienced while attempting to make The Inner Film. All three plots will intertwine with each other telling one simple story.

The story of Men out of their Depth.

It will cost a further £1,000,000 to finish the film. They have six months to raise the cash. Can they do it? Accept the contradictions.

The JAMs. The interview. Postal.

A couple of years ago you said that you were in the red from day one. Now that you've had a certain amount of success, is the situation better or worse?

We will always be desperately in the red. It is the way things are.

With the Depeche Mode record, did you make your own track and add a bit of Depeche Mode into it, or the other way round?

We stripped their track down and then added a few of our own.

Now that you've remixed Depeche Mode records are you popstars?

Remixing Depeche Mode was a days work, not an exercise in becoming pop stars.

Do you regret anything you've done?

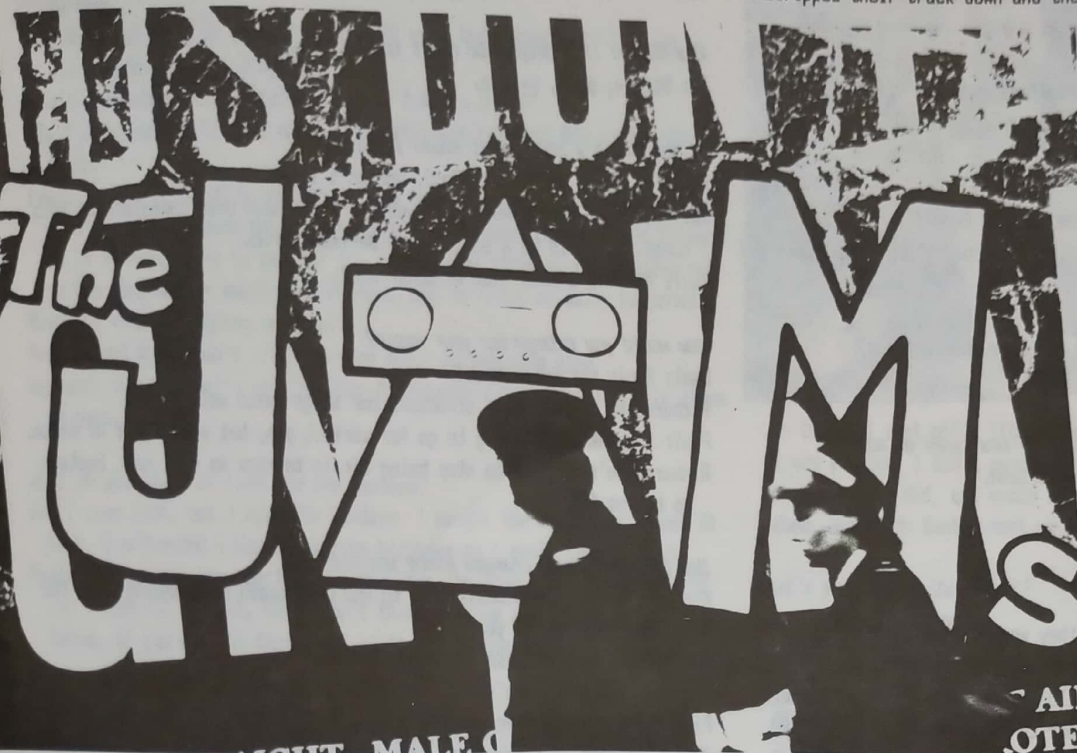
No, but we always hate what we do after we do it for at least a few months.

Do you think that you could be ruining someone's favourite song by stealing the hook from it to use in one of your songs?

Not thought about it.

Are the samples that you use the best bits from your favourite songs, or just something that fits the record?

Sometimes a favourite bit, sometimes something that just fits, but mostly just accident.



The JAMs. The history. Partial.

Jan 87: Sampling with a conscience? 'All you need is love' sampled the AIDS advert and Sam Fox. 500 pressed.

Mar 87: 'All you need is love' Sounds single of the week.

May 87: 'All you need is love' NME single of the week.

The original undoctored version is already selling for £30.

'1987' album recorded in 6 days. Samples include The Monkees, Abba, Julie Andrews, MCS, The Fall, Sex Pistols, Top Of The Pops.

Jun 87: '1987' released.

Aug 87: The KLF release a one-sided 12inch 'Whitney Joins The JAMs'.

Sep 87: Abba force '1987' to be withdrawn. The JAMs go to Sweden to "reach a level of mutual respect for each other's artistic integrity".

Oct 87: '45 Edits' released. '1987' with all samples removed except The Fall '1987' selling for £50. Five available for £1000 in Face advert.

Nov 87: Release 'Downtown' single with The London Community Gospel Choir. Hired a video camera. Switched it on. Drove to The Chart Show.

Took the tape out. Got it shown on TV.

Dec 87: The JAMs record their second album 'Who killed The JAMs?'. aka LP2.

Feb 88: 'LP2' released.

Apr 88: 'Burn the bastards' 12inch released.

Jun 88: The Timelords 'Doctorin The Tardis' released. Highest new entry, highest climber, number one, in consecutive weeks.

1989: 'Shag Times' compilation LP.

'The Manual (How to have a number one hit the easy way)' book.

'What time is love?' 12inch, LP.

'Kylie said to Jason' 7inch, 12inch.

'Jam eternal' 12inch, LP-ish thing.

'Last train to Trancentral' 12inch.

1990: 'Chill out' LP.

Are there any records which you would not consider sampling?

"Consider" is a concept we don't entertain.

Was 'Chill Out' a joke that happened to work, or were you serious about it?

We are overtly serious about what we do, but we do recognise that our work encompasses all emotions.

At what time was music at it's best?

Always now.

Was 'Kylie Said To Jason' supposed to be another number one? Why wasn't it?

Not a number one, but Top Thirty. Radio One didn't play it and it was not a dance record.

Where are Disco 2000 now?

Back where they belong.

When is 'The White Room' being released?

In the future.

Do you think any ambient house record will ever get in the singles or album charts? Or has it already, and I missed it?

Not the sort of thing we would know about.

Have you got any new projects coming up?

Too many.

What did you think of the Fierce rip-off?

Never heard it. But it is nice to know some people made an effort at debunking us.

Which of your records is worth the most money now?
We don't go to record fairs.

Have you still got any copies of the 'Deep Shit' flexi? If so, could I have one please?
Yes & no. It would be too dangerous for you to own.

What's your favourite form of music?
Whatever we heard when we were last off our heads.

Did you sell the last five '1987' albums through The Face advert?
We sold three of them and gave one away as a prize. We have one left.

Did anyone buy any of the more expensive items from the '1987' merchandise list? Is the JAMs car still for sale for £3000?
The car is still for sale.

Has anyone claimed against the guarantee in 'The Manual'?
No, but a number have had hits, the last being "Loaded" by Primal Scream / Andy Weatheral.

Is it flattering to have people sample and copy your records?
Yes.

Who do you think have been the innovators of new types of music?
"Innovate" is also a concept we don't entertain.

Is house music dying or diversifying?
Passing. All music passes.

The first time I saw The Love Buttons they were called The Buttons, and it was one of those nights where the bands came on in the wrong order, ie The Buttons came on first and were the best band, followed by Jane Pow, and then The Field Mice. The next time I went to see them in April I bought one of the best singles I own, which is 'You can never have it all' + 'Jon you bastard' + 'Some kind of man'. Three brilliant tracks on one 12inch single for only £2, on Southampton's Ambition Records.

The band pictured on the single is Hugh Sunfish on guitar, Pete on drums, Jo on guitar and vocals, and Richard on bass. Hugh has now been replaced by Paul. There was a rumour that The Love Buttons signed to WEA after they heard the single, but that's not surprising since Richard started the rumour. They are in fact unsigned. I went to interview The Love Buttons at Southampton Joiners and it was another wrong order night. The first band was The Fire Kites, who Jo sang with for a while, while they were looking for the singer they've got now. Next was Blair 1523, and then Jane Pow.

Why did you change your name from The Buttons to The Love Buttons?
Jo: Because Richard's a saucy bastard. The Buttons sounds like a 6 year olds' magazine that you can buy in WHSmiths, which in fact it is, as I discovered today. And it also sounds like a bit of a three years ago kind of thing. So we've added a raunchy element to it. We changed the name to The Love Buttons when we made the record sleeve, then we changed back to The Buttons.
Richard: It's both anyway still.
Jo: Nobody calls us The Love Buttons.

Who did the painting on your record sleeve?
Jo: Richard's ex-lodger, Dave painted it. He lives in a co-op house now.

Are you still on Ambition records?
Jo: Not really. We just use his name to make it look good. It's better than not having a label. It's also doing a bit for Southampton.

What's been your biggest gig so far?
Jo: That was a Halloween disco we did at one of the University halls of residence. There were 800 people there. Well, 800 tickets were sold.

What's been your best gig so far?

Richard: Supporting The Family Cat last time. That was pretty good.
Jo: That was just so ace. Someone knocked the microphone down dancing when I was singing. That was really exciting.

How many bands are there in Southampton?
Jo: Two.
Paul: The Buttons and The Love Buttons.

How many venues are there in Southampton?
Richard: One. We're sitting in it.

How do you like people to react to your music?
Jo: Scream, pant, gyrate.

If you wrote a book, what would it be about?
Paul: It would be Mills & Boon, wouldn't it Jo?
Jo: Yeah. All my failed relationships, which have been consolidated into songs. It would be a songbook of Buttons lyrics.
Paul: A Mills & Boon book in other words.

How would you categorise your music?
Paul: Sonic cathedral sound.
Richard: We just try and structure our songs quite well.
Paul: I think just trying to go for perfect pop, but with a bit of noise.
Richard: We're trying to stop being afraid to rock as well now. Guitars up to the front.

How has your sound changed since you started?
Richard: We were absolutely sick to the back teeth of sounding like The Buttons for about a year.
Jo: And The Darling Buds and The Primitives.
Richard: Since then we've started to be a bit more radical, haven't we Paul?
Paul: It's because I've joined really, isn't it?
Jo: Oh alright, I suppose so. Paul's got a drum machine and a massive keyboard with lots of samples on it.
Paul: We don't use it.
Jo: And we've got a tambourine. The tambourine has made the biggest impact on the band. We only bought it about a month ago.

What should be banned?
Jo: Jane Pow. Unrecycled paper. Beefburgers. Coloured toilet paper.
Paul: And hard toilet paper.
Jo: That greaseproof paper stuff. It's just useless.

What song would you most like to do a cover version of?
Jo: 'Temptation' by New Order.
Richard: 'Sweet Child Of Mine' by Guns'n'Roses.
Paul: 'Dancing Queen' by Abba.
Jo: 'Gimme Gimme Gimme A Man After Midnight'.
Richard: Another Abba song.
Jo: We like Abba. I also like John Denver, but no-one else wants to do any of his songs.

Do you do a cover version?
Jo: Yeah. What's that song by The Beatles we used to do?
Richard: 'If I needed someone'.
Jo: And 'So sad about us' by The Who. 'Hang down your head' by Tom Waits.
Richard: We did 'White horses'.
Jo: And 'Isn't it a pity' by Galaxie 500.
Paul: It's not written by Galaxie 500.
Jo: No, written by George Harrison, but I did my first guitar solo in that song. That Sly & The Family Stone song, 'Running away'. And also we tried to do some Jesse Garon songs, because about a year ago they were my favourite band. I think they're brill. What's that Jesse Garon song? 'You'll never be that young again'. I think it's brilliant.

What's the strangest thing that's ever been said about you?

Jo: That we're good. It shocks me that people think we're good.

Paul: And that people remember the songs. You don't think people will actually remember it, especially when you're the support band.

How do you see yourself as different to other similar groups?

Paul: I think we've all got very conflicting tastes in music. I'm not absolutely obsessed by a lot of indie bands. I like a lot of dance things.

Jo: We've got conflicting influences within the band, quite odd ones really.

Paul: I always want to do everything with drum machines and samplers, but they won't let me, so I suppose we could be different if we took that further.

Jo: Although a lot of bands are doing it now, indie bands are turning dance, like The Soup Dragons.

Paul: I've always had a keyboard before I had a guitar.

Jo: Paul's just itching to smash his guitar and take out his keyboards again.

Paul: They're a lot more into songs that are written on the guitar, but I didn't used to listen to guitars, I always listened to drums and things. So if it's starting to gel, or the conflicting ideas started coming out on the records, we would be different, but it's not actually happened.

Richard: What's he going on about?

Paul: About how I don't like the same music as everyone else.

Richard: You do. Paul's got The Shop Assistants album. It's the only album he owns.

What do you think of Lush and The Sundays?

Jo: I love Lush, but I hate The Sundays. I bought the album and I took it back. I pretended I had two for my birthday so I could take it back.

Paul: I love Lush because they're sexy, but The Sundays: I've got the LP and I sort of like it, but I don't think they're as good as The Cocteau Twins, if you can put those sort of things in the same bag.

What soap opera would you most like to be in?

Jo: I wouldn't want to be in any soap opera I don't think.

Paul: I'd love to be in a soap opera. I'd like to be Sammy's boyfriend in Brookside.

Richard: Would you be in 'Steptoe & Son', Paul?

Paul: It's not a soap opera.

What's the worst journey you've been on?

Jo: Oh God, that was Chichester, wasn't it? We had this tiny little van. All the equipment wouldn't fit in the back, let alone me and Paul. We just had to crouch in little balls in the middle of the van, and all the stuff was piled around us.

Richard: We had to put you in the snare drum, didn't we Paul?

Paul: In the bass drum.

Were you ever a member of a fan club?

Jo: Yes. The Judy fan club. I had a little badge. I used to have a hat covered in badges, and the Judy badge took pride of place on the front.

What's your claim to fame?

Jo: Bob have slept in my bed.

Richard: You weren't in it though, were you Jo?

Jo: Yes I was. No, I wasn't.

Paul: The only thing I can remember is being quite near Boy George at a Happy Mondays gig. That's the closest I've been to anyone famous.

Richard: I met Mark E Smith once. Miserable bastard, reading the Daily Mirror he was. Doing the crossword.

Jo: I won't tell you about Noel Edmunds.

Have you ever written to anyone at the BBC?

Richard: We sent our record to Uncle John, but he didn't play it.

Paul: When Swapshop, or Superstore, had a competition that you could win a small 4-track recorder, and Steve Levine, Culture Club's producer, was



in there, I sent off a little tape of me with a synthesiser. And, when I was younger, I did a puppet show for a Blue Peter appeal, everyone down our road did, and wrote a letter to Biddy Baxter saying what we'd done, and Biddy Baxter sent me back a letter.

What's your favourite advert?

Jo: I think it's Liberty.

Richard: It's not that coffee one anyway, I can tell you that.

Paul: It's not the Flake advert. Mine's definitely not the Flake advert.

Sexist pig comment for the day. Used to be the Coco Pops advert about 5 years ago.

What's your favourite fast food?

Richard: Pot Noodles. I used to eat them when I was at Poly.

Jo: Burger King burger.

Richard: Uh!

Jo: I know, I know.

Richard: Bean burgers we meant to say.

Paul: Cold baked beans. I love cold baked beans.

What's The Buttons philosophy.

Paul: I wish I had a good time all the time. I'm thinking of Stone Roses quotes about being everything to everyone at everytime. I quite like the idea as a collective that we want to be something to someone at sometime in their life, at some moment during the day. I can't really say it's a philosophy, but I like the idea of The Buttons having songs that don't actually mean something, but they can mean something at a certain time of their life. They can think "this song reminds me of that". I don't know how to convey that as a philosophy in words.

He said later that what he meant to say was "We want to mean something to someone sometime". And why not?

If you want to contact Southampton's finest, you can write to 27 Cromwell Road, Southampton, Hants, or phone 0703 332504.

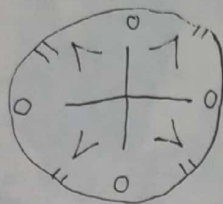
As I mentioned earlier, one of the best demos I was sent was by The Blobels. It's not so much a collection of songs, as an epic journey in sound. They seem to have changed their name to Mayomberos Alive, but I suppose these things happen. Since they live in Ireland, there's not much chance of interviewing them personally, so I sent them a list of questions, which are answered over the page.

What is the name of the band?

MAYOMBEROS ALIVE

Draw a picture of yourself.

"I AM
the
centre of
the
universe



the winds
of time
blow through
me..."

How would you describe your music?

This is A Difficult question
we are definitely not one type, or sound.
I hope we can lend our hand to anything
and we continue to surprise. Somebody
described our 2nd tape as "wildly unpredictable"
so I hope we retain this trait.

What should be banned?

Cruelty to animals (then maybe we treat humans better next)

What's the strangest thing that's ever been said to you, or about you?

Dont know I forget things, eh... "with your
jeckling hand, you are one I do not understand..."

What annoys you?

pettiness, bitchiness and games people play

What was the last thing you made?

my breakfast

What is your claim to fame?

Doing Graffiti of a large multi Coloured Giraffe
with the words "Jesus was the first punk" on a local park's wall.

Who is the most fanciable person in pop?

"The Girl from Del Monte"

What film would you like to have written the music for?

The music for Halloween I was excellent
but I'd like to have done music for "Orpheus in the Underworld" (Cocteau)

What's your party trick?

Juggling with five kittens (see question 4!)

If you could wipe one memory from your mind, what would it be?

The last girl I knew (honest)

What's your favourite / worst?

newspaper D'observer (but it is boring really) / Sun
place Decayed parts of Dublin / Anywhere with lots of happy people
advert The one where the dog kisses the cat who kisses the mouse / Advertising should be banned)
civic amenity Anyone who with graffitiable walls / Anyone you can't skateboard on
Prince record "Pop Life" / A lot of his stuff is shit
Cyndi Lauper record I like most of her stuff and she is sexy
biscuit Jaffa cake / arrowmint
yoghurt Kit-Kat Covered in Ambrosia rice / All Yoghurt

Invent your own question and answer it.

What is the music of the future? : HIP-HOP!

PRODUCT AVAILABLE

- # 1. "oh to be a Blobel" £2.00 stg
28 Songs, one hour
 - # 2. "12 in 5AYNE..." £1.20 stg
18 songs one hour
 - # 3. "MAYOMBEROS ALIVE" £1.20 stg
For club release one hour
 - # 4. "MAYOMBEROS ON THE
PHONES" £1.20
PRANK PHONE CALLS
ONE HOUR
- All tapes are chrome c60's
you can send equivalent
goodies instead of £££

You can buy all of the product mentioned there from Noel, Flat 5, 20 Stamer St, SCRD, Dublin 8, Ireland. The one I've got is 'iz insayne...?', which is brilliant, and I'm sure the others are equally zany.

I'd been looking forward to The Fat Tulips playing Deptford Fountain for about 8 weeks, but the week before I find out that I am going to be unavoidably detained elsewhere, so I had to do another postal interview. Are you superstitious? Only on Friday the 13th.

Just as I'm putting the finishing touches to this fanzine, but still waiting for The Fat Tulips and Joyce McKinney Experience to reply, I go to see Bleach and The Charlottes at the Bull & Gate again. The guest lists are full of media people, and there are lots of people there who've heard the demo. Bleach come on and impress the socks off everyone, and sell all the demo tapes they brought with them. The Charlottes are also very impressive, but everyone knows that now anyway. Everyone also knows that they do 'Venus' as an encore, and they did. You can buy the Bleach demo tape by sending £2 + SAE to 55 Surrey Rd, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2LS.

Ah! Hear comes The Fat Tulips interview.

What was the last gig you went to?

Mark: Ted Chippington who performed the same songs and jokes as four years ago but still made them funny!

Sheggi: The Stone Roses Spike Island rave.

Matt: The Mission because I'm a goth - Fields of Nephilim next week!!!

Paul: I like the Go-Betweens.

Do you like being the Fat Tulips?

Sheggi: Yes because it means I get to wear all my sexy outfits on stage.



Are you going to pay the Poll Tax?

All: No!

If the Fat Tulips were a film, what sort of film would you be?

Matt: A Carry On film - lots of sexual innuendos!!!

Sheggi: A science fiction film - Paul always seems to be on another planet!

Paul: No I'm not!!!

How have your records sold so far?

Matt: Normally under the counter!!!

Sheggi: Actually they've sold really well - both of them are nearly sold out now & sold 900 of each of them out of 1000 - you can still get them for £2.00 inc p+p from Heaven though if you're quick.

Have you done many dates?

Sheggi: Not really - nobody will give us a gig which is a pity because we're quite good now.

Paul: I've eaten hundreds of dates.

Mark: The girls' parents weren't very happy about that were they!!!

How would you describe your music?

Matt: Indie-pop!!!!

Do any of the band wear flares?

Sheggi: Noooo! We'd never do anything that embarrassing!

Matt: Although Mark's ears are quite flared!

Do you have any strong political opinions?

Sheggi: Let's just say we hate the Tories - especially for introducing the Poll Tax.

Mark: I'm into Anti-Vivisection too but don't support the Animal extremists who bomb people.

What are your songs about?

Sheggi: Mine tend to be about people I know.

Mark: I tend to write about anything. 'You opened up my eyes' was an anti-fashion song. 'Girl called suicide' was about a drug experiment going wrong, and the girl's boyfriend committing suicide through guilt. All of them are littered with subtle sexual innuendos however!!!

Did the band catch World Cup fever?

Matt: Definitely - especially the Subbuteo World Cup!

Mark: Yeah - ENGERLAND!!!

Sheggi: It was horrid & boring.

Paul: What World Cup?

Do you buy fanzines?

Matt: Yeah - All of them!!!

Mark: Yes - I buy loads, but there are an awful lot of crap ones around at the moment.

Sheggi: I think fanzines are a waste of time.

Paul: I like fanzines.

What have you released to date?

1987 'You opened up my eyes' flexi.

1989 'Where's Clare Grogan now?' 7" EP.

1990 '4 songs for Simon' 7" EP.

1990 'Girl called suicide' flexi.

1990 'Angels amongst us' flexi.

1990 'St Steven' & 'Bodies for sale' on

'El Dorado Vol.8' German comp. LP.

1990 'Ferensway' 7" EP.

1990 'To cut a long story short' German 7".

1990 'Dance to the sun' on Japanese comp. LP.

1990 possible 'Tulip Explodes' EP.

Fave bands?

Mark: Altered Images, Talulah Gosh, Crass, Sea Urchins, Screaming Custard, Poppuns, Bachelor Pad, Charlottes.

Sheggi: Happy Mondays, Stone Roses, James, Inspiral Carpets, Charlatans.
 Matt: Wonder Stuff, Mission, New Model Army, Heavenly, Field Mice, Siouxsie & The Banshees.
 Paul: Galaxie 500, Adam Ant, Who, Primal Scream, Jesus Jones, Go-Betweens.

Fave films?

Mark: 'Gregorys Girl', 'Heathers', any Steve Martin.
 Paul: 'Gregorys Girl', 'Heathers', any tacky horror movie.
 Sheggi: 'A hard days night'.
 Matt: 'Robocop'!!!

Fave sport?

Mark: Football.
 Paul: Eating
 Sheggi: Cross country running.
 Matt: Subbuteo and stock car racing.

I think they must have been watching too much of The Chart Show!!!!

Isn't it annoying when people say they're going to do something and then don't? I could have used this space to say a bit more about how wonderful Bleach are. If The Joyce McKinney Experience do ever reply, and you want to know what they said, just send me an SAE. Here are the questions anyway.

Who is everyone in the band?

Pre Dog have done some fairly dull demos, but the live track has got a bit of atmosphere and a beat box. From Neil, 15c Harrier Mews, Thamesmead, London, SE28 0DQ. So have Handsome Bastards who live at Ashwood, Copse Lane, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants. Another bunch of competent musicians.



Would you rather be associated with thrash metal or indie?

The Fables two track demo is about a year old now, but it is very good and comes in a nice, glossy, non-recycleable sleeve. From 2 Kingsley Grove, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8DX. The cover photo has a picture of the band, each with a different facial expression (miserable bastard, etc).

Why call 'Realise' 'Real Eyes' on the record?

Hayfoot Strawfoot have done some rather good demos with lots of interesting titles. They promise to send you exercise books full of awful Sixth form poetry if you send hate mail to 13 Camberwell Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1LP. Anyone who claims to do "guitar, vocals, egotrip" had to call their demo 'Pretentious', I suppose.

I saw 'Realise' described as 'narrowly failing to make a classic record'. Is that a fair description? Are you trying to make classic records?

It's always good to hear of another band who are "born out of boredom, bile

& psychic B.S.E.", so I was particularly pleased to receive The Last Gasp demo tape. The songs are written and sung by Mark D (not The Mark D!). These unusual sounds can be bought from Jerome K Malone, Unmade Productions, The Infirmary, 15 St Saviour's Road, London, SW2 5HP.

Why did you print the lyrics on the sleeve of the record, because surely the point of a lyric is that it's within a song, and it's not poetry?

Oranges For Angels have got some nice little ditties on a tape which doesn't have an address, but you can phone Liam on 0742 670248.

All these demos are probably £2 plus SAE.



Do you ever regret calling yourself Joyce McKinney Experience?

I would have recommended that you buy the Corrupt Postman compilation tape, but they've sold them all. Not suprising really, but he gave me a free one, which can be yours if you are the first person to answer this simple question: What is the biggest understatement in this fanzine?

Do you do a lot of fanzine interviews? What's the most common and what's the best question you've been asked?

Another compilation tape which is worth buying if you've got £2 spare is the Fizzy Cathedral tape which has got some tracks by bands that don't appear on a lot of tapes but sound like they ought to. From Richard, 22 Falmouth Close, Edginswell, Torquay, Devon, TQ2 7SE. The bands you probably have heard of are Jane From Occupied Europe, Thrilled Skinny & Strawberry Story.

What do you think of the Birmingham bands? (The ones that used to be called Grebo's)

You Can't Be Loved Forever no.2 has got the Fat Tulips song which would have been on my last flexi if it hadn't been so long. The trouble with compilation tapes is that they tend to be padded out with crap tracks, but this one puts them all on side two, so you can just rewind after side one, which is very thoughtful. It's £2.50 from Phil, 50 Armstrong Way, Reading, Berks, RG5 4NW. Some of the bands on side one are The Penny Candles,

The Haywains, Shelleys Children, Girl Of My Best Friend & Strawberry Story.

Has it been a help signing to Decoy?

Windmill Records have got a 2-sided flexi with tracks by The Haywains, The Fat Tulips, The Applicants and Paintbox (wow!). It also has a groovy free badge, and is only 80p inc p&p (+50p outside UK) from Chris, 85 Hilltop Ave, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, SK8 7JA.

Do you get nervous on stage, or before you go on stage?

If you want to buy lots of good fanzines and lots of good records you can find the best selection by sending an SAE to Steve Biscuit, Three Gables, Paven Close, Purton, Wilts, SN5 9DD.

What were you doing before you started this interview?

If you want to buy any indie record or a wide selection of fanzines you could also write to Rhythm Records, 172 Gwydir Street, Cambridge, CB1 2LW.

What was the last record you bought?

The Price have written the lyrics on the sleeve of their single, so you can tell it's going to have some meaningful tale to tell. 'Between the lies' is about the tabloid press, and 'So what about love?' is about world peace. Repeat to fade. Distributed by SRD. Global rock music.

How would you like people to react to your music?

According to this big pile of paper, Trees were quite big when the Bull & Gate was called Timebox/Hype. I can't see why. Perhaps the fact that a venue has paid for their record is an indication that they are better live than on record. Nevertheless, you can still buy their 4-track 7inch for £1.50 from 9 Gainsborough Close, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5NB.

What band would you most like to support?

Scott Bond has made a couple of jangly Boogie Woogie 7inches which you can buy from S.Colmer, 35 Beccles Drive, Barking, Essex, IG11 9HX. This might not sound like your kind of thing, but it's a refreshingly different sound made by people who are making the records they want to hear. Also because both singles have got a track called 'Intro', which is, of course, the last track. There is also a forthcoming fanzine which provides an introduction to Boogie Woogie. I don't know what these cost, but I expect £2 will cover it.

What's your favourite place?

The Fat Tulips second single is selling fast, but I think they've still got some left if you send £2 inc p&p (+50p overseas) to Heaven Records, 110 Bridle Road, Burton Joyce, Nottingham, NG14 5FP. Watch out for lots more flexis from this fanzine friendly bunch, including a flexi LP!

If I've forgotten anything here, send leaflets and I'll throw them around.

Still a bit of space left. How about some reviews.

The Heart Throbs - Borderline - 17 July 90

The Heart Throbs slag-off on page 18 was a bit presumptuous of me. I went to see them twice after that, and by the third time I thought they were extremely good, but the MM reviewer thought they were crap, so it was probably the first time he'd seen them since last year. Maybe last year's excellence has left too much expectation, which is not instantly fulfilled during the duration of 50 minutes. I've just read a review in Sounds which highlights all the, er, highlights, and suddenly I'm back at The Borderline reliving that stunning evening, and realise that although The Heart Throbs might just look like another girlie band, they are more distinctive than that. Their songs are quite capable of penetrating into your subconscious, whilst only rippling your conscience. If The Heart Throbs disappear for another year, I will still be here when they get back. Unforgettable.



Vicious Kiss plus The Arguments - Hampstead White Horse - 27 July 90

Vicious Kiss haven't changed at all since I last saw them, apart from a new set of clothes. Tanya wore her DMs and didn't look all that foolish. They got pissed and entertained everyone except themselves. Moral: if you get pissed when you play, don't worry, be happy. The Arguments were supposed to be in this issue of Big Muff, but I was going to do the interview the day before The Fat Tulips interview, and when I missed that, I couldn't manage to track them down. I suppose The Arguments are most like a cross between Th' Faith Healers and Bleach. Believe that at your discretion. Juliet announced 'Teenager' as "this is for you, not about me". This appears to be a song about the need for toy-boys. Even if it's not, all the songs have got rather diverse and perverse subjects. They did an encore of 'A finger of Fudge is just enough to give your girl a treat'. Makes you think, doesn't it?

The Charlottes - Camden Falcon - 4 August 90

John Peel once said of Ride "stirring stuff indeed, like the 1812 Overture with all those bells chiming and so forth". The same could also be said of The Charlottes. Watching them again at The Falcon, they are still one of the most exciting bands around. 'Watching' is not quite the right word, since I had my eyes closed most of the time. No-one really wants to watch a lot of sweaty bodies bopping gently. They played a shorter set than usual because of the extreme heat, but were still swayed into coming back to do 'Venus' as an encore.

And, of course, I can't go without plugging these.

Big Muff Issue One is still available from me and it has interviews with Motorcycle 'microphone stand' Boy, Parachute 'buy the records instead' Men, Pop 'favourite colour Smarties' Guns, Po 'read the words' I, Shop 'not a comeback' Assistants, Fizz 'dunno' Bombs, Patsy 'not an interview' Cline, Clare 'touchy' Grogan, and a flexi featuring Fat 'we love Amelia' Tulips and Spinning 'we love Cud' Jennys. It's 80p + SAE.

Also available from me is a list of bootlegs which has got Lost At C written on the cover and has got hundreds of tapes listed inside, mostly by the bands that are in Big Muff. Just send an SAE.

My name is Neil Boyd and my address is PO Box 128, Fleet, Hants, GU13 0UA. Goodnight.

The Love Buttons - Southampton Joiners - 26 July 90

I went to see The Love Buttons at Southampton's only venue, and they have indeed changed since I last saw them. They were extremely good and slightly harder, bar the dodgy keyboards creeping in for 'If I needed someone'.

Hugh Sunfish even joined in for the encore of 'You can never have it all'. I heard a rumour that The Groove Farm have split up, but didn't believe it.



Is that it then?