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NERVE

ISSUE 26



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JOIN THE FIGHT BACK

The mainstream media hardly tell you this, but there is resistance to the endless austerity proposed by the government, and it is building. Although councils spout the mantra that privatisation is the 'Only Game in Town' people are coming together to fight back. This is seen from disabled people taking over Parliament to fight the cuts, to massive demonstrations against Trident, to cleaners in Bootle Tax Office striking because their employer wants to make them pay for the introduction of the new minimum wage. More examples of a renewed unity can be seen from the groundswell of support for Corbyn, from the price increase protest at Anfield to the success of the Blacklist Group, the exposure of undercover police and the doctor's strikes. From the sustained battle for justice from the Hillsborough Campaign, to the homes saved by residents in Granby and the Welsh Streets.

Big companies such as Peel Holdings are rubbing their hands with glee as they become part of the secret agreement on devolution signed by Merseyside Council. Supposedly this deal is to bring us greater democracy, but as they're spinning us this tale, the reality is we will have less say, as council control of schools is passed to the Secretary of State, opening up these vital resources to the pirates.

While Anderson can find money for businessmen to get here from London half-an-hour faster by train, rail unions are fighting the loss of guards. And as more homeless people live and sleep on our streets,* councillors' 'cry crocodile tears' over making cuts. The helplessness of our 'so-called' leaders in the face of Tory policy is challenged by local movements to defend health and social care, to save the Women's Hospital, libraries and public services.

The next issue of Nerve will have as its main themes the environment, nature and conservation. The following issue (Nerve 28) will have music as its main theme. Any ideas for features to be included in either of these issues would be very welcome. Meanwhile, on the local arts and culture scene, despite large cuts in these sectors, locally and nationally, there are a series of arts and music festivals to look forward to this summer, including Africa Oye, Liverpool Irish Festival, Liverpool Arts Biennial, Brouhaha and the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival. These events, as well as other local theatre, visual arts and music events, etc., will be covered by the Nerve website: www.catalystmedia.org.uk

A disturbing aspect in Liverpool, as is the case elsewhere throughout Britain, is the increase of homeless people living and sleeping on the streets. This was addressed in an outstanding series of articles published by the Guardian earlier this year.

The paper asked Sarah MacFadyen, policy manager with the homeless charity Crisis, for the reasons behind this new surge of rough sleepers.

She said a main reason is people's inability to pay their rent - the loss of a private tenancy is now the number one cause of homelessness, together with cuts to housing benefit and the implementation of benefits sanctions, as well as reduced availability of mental health support services 'have left the safety net in tatters.' Grim times indeed.

How can people help when they see people sleeping rough?

Call Streetlink on 0300 500 0914 which helps connect homeless people to outreach services in their area www.streetlink.org.uk

A programme of free artistic interventions and public forums took place during the VENT! Liverpool Air Quality Festival earlier this year to raise awareness of Liverpool's poor air quality - 'an invisible public health emergency', as described by the organisers EngageLiverpool.

Let's hope there are more similar events organised by them to raise awareness of the dire state of the air we breathe.

Coming up on the Nerve website...

Exclusive interview with 67, Liverpool's best keep secret. A band devoted to making you think and dance. Even at the same time.

Also... Matthew Wharton on Disability access in the city. Are laws being ignored?

And... Nathan Gavin looks at Liverpool music's DIY scene and whether it's time for new models.

NERVE is run by unpaid volunteers. To continue we need to raise funds for the running costs for our office, our website and printing. NERVE is still free, but donations are welcome. Or you can take out a £2 monthly standing order to help us.

For a form see the website: catalystmedia.org.uk
or email us: nervemagazine@gmail.com

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TALES FROM THE ONE-EYED TOWN

Interview with Nathan O'Hagan about his novel *The World Is (Not) A Cold Dead Place* that explores a man's struggle to exist in Birkenhead and our attitudes to mental health.

Does it matter whether readers empathise with Gary?

I never wanted to be in any way didactic about how the reader interpreted Gary. He's a challenging character, and I wanted the reader to make their own decisions. Is he an unreliable narrator? Is he misunderstood? Is he just a bastard? I wanted to create a character who could prompt all these questions. I'm happy for a reader to dislike or even hate Gary, I just want them to find him interesting enough to keep reading.

Do the problems Gary faces with authority reflect the problems we all face?

The novel was published at a time when people like Gary face huge challenges. There has been a significant shift in societal attitudes towards people on benefits. At a time when our understanding of mental illness is increasing there is growing and at times vitriolic resentment towards people on benefits. I wrote the book under the last Labour government, so it was entirely coincidental that it was published around the time when Iain Duncan Smith was making it his mission to disrupt or destroy the lives of as many disabled and mentally ill people as possible.

Why did you make the decision to set the novel in Birkenhead?

Initially I didn't. In early drafts the town Gary lived in wasn't specified, it was just implied that it was Merseyside. But as I kept writing, I realised that, as a lot of Gary's issues are caused by his home town and what he sees around him, it made more sense to set it in a real place. And once I made that decision, it made writing the novel so much easier. In fact, I'd say that it was crucial. I'm not sure the novel would have worked as well set in any other town, and certainly not in a fictional one. Birkenhead suffers from the same social problems as countless other British towns. The factors Birkenhead faces lead to certain social issues that are particularly provocative to Gary.

Was it important to offer the reader hope?

Initially that wasn't important, and wasn't something that I was planning. But during the process, there were changes in my personal life which were reflected in the novel. I fell in love, and that altered my world view somewhat. And from a dramatic standpoint, I decided that it was simply too easy to continue that misanthropy through till the end. It was more of a challenge to try

to leave Gary in a place where there is at least some degree of hope. And I believe there is always hope for people. People go through miraculous transformations every day. People beat addictions, overcome trauma, and manage to achieve and build a life for themselves against the odds. People who are much more far gone than Gary pull themselves back from the brink all the time. Redemption is always possible.

The World Is Not A Cold Dead Place is available from usual online outlets and bookstores and from News From Nowhere, Bold Street.

FOLLOW NATHAN:

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"While our understanding of mental illness is increasing there is growing resentment towards people on benefits"

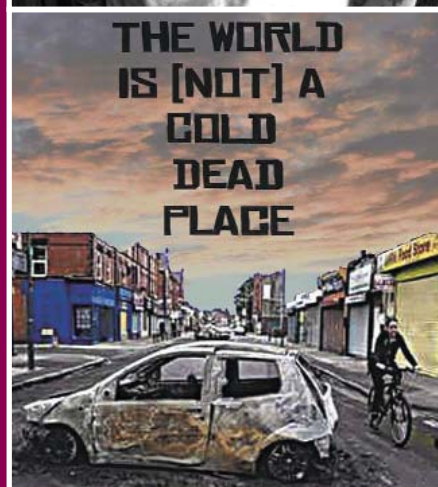
Many authors wear alienation as an emblem to give their work depth. But it is not glamorous or profound. It can be desperate. And it can be very dull. People shy away from the reality because on the surface it is not dramatic enough. To make it interesting and yet honest is a tough task.

Birkenhead has produced artists before who have manged this and Nathan O'Hagan is part of that tradition. Even though he'd probably hate the idea. His novel *The World Is (Not) A Cold Dead Place* has been published at a time when the reality facing those who find it hard to fit in has been exposed in a very raw way. The main character suffers from major anxiety issues and OCD. It's a tough journey to take with him. But it is very real and funny and touching.

How close are you to the main character Gary?

There's definitely similarities, particularly the rage that he feels at modern Britain, at other people, but I think those themes are pretty universal. It's the little things that drive us to the edge sometimes. We've all been in situations similar to the ones Gary faces. To most people, though, they're a minor annoyance, whereas to Gary, they just hasten his impending implosion. I feel very close to him as I spent several years constructing the character. As pretentious as it may sound, he feels like a real person to me and I feel oddly protective of him.

To begin with, the only thing that was clear to me was the character. The themes, such as alienation and the effect that has on a person, inevitably came from that. A theme that emerged during the writing was the complexity of human interaction. Some people do it effortlessly, but for some of us, it's a daily struggle. I wanted to reflect this in a funny and dramatic way.



NATHAN O'HAGAN



PAINTING WALLS TO BUILD BRIDGES

THE ARTWORK OF HONDURAN ARTIST JAVIER ESPINAL IN LIVERPOOL

By Mike Farley

28th June 2015 marked the sixth anniversary of the coup d'etat that deposed Honduras president Manuel Zelaya.

Since then the poor Central American republic has become the most violent country in the world, with a homicide rate of 90.4 per 100,000 in 2012. Drug trafficking, street gangs, corruption, massive inequality, and almost total impunity, combine to make a "perfect storm" of violence.

Many of the murders are politically motivated, directed against those who resist the forces behind the coup and their economic interests.

Artist Javier Espinal was born in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, in 1967. He was raised by his grandparents, who he says set him on his spiritual, artistic and rebellious path.

He has been involved in resistance to the oppression for most of his life, especially since the coup d'etat.

He rejects the idea of art as the expression of the individual. Art should be collaborative, a living expression of cooperation. Therefore, he works with communities, especially marginalised and oppressed communities, to create murals, that are a form of cultural resistance. He looks for "alternative, independent, integral spaces, where we can find our identity and create art, awareness, visibility, diversity, political education, action."

As part of a year-long tour of Europe aimed at raising awareness of the situation in Honduras and forging links of solidarity, Javier came to Liverpool, where he gave presentations and created murals in Granby, in collaboration with local youth.

It may be a long way from Honduras to Liverpool but Javier sees parallels between the successful campaign by the Granby 4 Streets, and those of Honduran indigenous movements, fighting to keep hold of their land in the face of aggression by capitalism, trying to drive them away to make way for African palm plantations, mega projects, hotels, etc.

The murals, in collaboration with and funded by Liverpool 8 Legacy Fund and the Metro Methodist Youth Centre, were painted on the side of the youth centre on Beaconsfield Road in Granby, Liverpool 8.

The theme of the project was to celebrate the African roots of the area's population, youth, art, music and Liverpool, as part of the regeneration of the community by the community.

Children from the Methodist Youth

Centre sketched ideas, which Javier helped to enlarge into templates for the murals. Then the local children, and anyone else who wanted to join in, painted the mural. This is typical of Javier's mural painting methodology.

"We paint with the entire group," Espinal explained. "Only on the last day do I work alone, to give the mural the finishing touches and to make sure that everything is well integrated."

Espinal, who has done similar projects in Italy, Spain and Manchester on his tour, is also raising funds to create an international gathering of muralism and collective art on the island of Zacate Grande, in the Gulf of Fonseca.

The event is scheduled for December, and aims to support the island's inhabitants in their struggle for the land against oligarch Miguel Facusse.



THE RELUCTANT SCouser

By Chumki Banerjee

Learning to love again: A London broad abroad, desperately seeking soul succour and something to eat.

The first visitation: Thigh high boots and vinyl. It'll end in tears and a police raid

My first unintentional attempt at being a Scouser was when I ran away from the capital; my place of birth and almost growing up; to become a sound engineer.

Though I had ostensibly lived away before, at Manchester University, that had been an existential existence of concentrated, concertinaed coming of age; an unprepared collision with the whole of the rest of the world, beyond four sheltered walls.

Enrolled for electronic engineering, immersed in a world full of boys and booze, bewildered by bulges in trousers, and tongues that did more than talk, my mind was diverted from chasing the atom, towards a more fundamental education; how to apply eyeliner like Siouxi Sioux, how to squeeze myself into sex shop extreme S&M inspired daily attire, how to sweep my hair up in a reinforced birds nest, how to drink neat gin without going blind, and how to survive without sleep.

Whisked away in Wizard of Oz whirlwind, bumped back to earth, dazed and confused, far from Yellow Brick Road to Emerald City, I emerged from this maelstrom acclimatised to alcohol, but as ill equipped as ever to face reality, not really sure where I had been nor where I was heading.

The one straw I clung to through it all, which kept me afloat in this sea awash with emotion, was music. True and constant lover through stormy weather, besotted by a teenage daydream it was towards its Liverpool arms I fled, when I went to seek if not fortune, but thigh high boots and a future in vinyl.

Driving away from home, with no particular

plan, except S.O.S. Davies Street, Liverpool, scrawled on a scrap of paper, I carried with me on the coach little more than a bundle of unsuitable clothes and a burden of hope that, in what I imagined was a high tech recording studio, I would materialise my metier and emerge fully equipped, butterfly from chrysalis.

Magnetised by my mirage it was immaterial to me where or what Liverpool was; ever geographically challenged; my Manchester experience might as well have been off planet; I had imagined that the whole of the country was one large London, so Liverpool proved a shock to the system.

Estranged, deranged, delinquent, abandoned to a lonely, eked out twilight existence in barely habitable Sefton Park bedsit; badgered, propositioned, cheated and double rented by scandalously audacious, presumptuously egotistical fake bake landlords, a horny, ruined Richard Burton lookalike hulk, in pretentious gold Roller, who loved to make me leap in the street by honking his horn.

Seeking familiar food reassurance to temper solitude, Liverpool seemed bereft of even such small comforts. True there was: a scattering of smelly, mostly less than sparkling St John's flatulent fish, mongrel meat and withered, weathered fruit and veg. stalls; steamy Armadillo's comforting whole food, welcome all embrace, where the sous-chef took pity for a peck on the cheek; desiccated un-drizzled lemon cake at Keith's, assuming deep fascination for dust caked panes, taken for diluted coffee, fearing abduction by deeply spaced out, psychotic photographer, seeking practice 'model' in Sefton Park setting; sunny side up Sunshine Cafe, where treated by a friendlier face, I shed tears at the smell of sizzling bacon, vision of bright yellow yolk,



clagging to intense orange, shining like beacon through memory; and Maranto's where, having starved for a week, I saved enough for solace in a longed for lonely solo, tomato tangy starter Bolognese and small glass of tart red, sad simulacra of remembrance, but still brief glimpse of home.

Desperately seeking serendipitous sound, without courage or cash for clubs, I missed the record shop on every street corner culture of London; I missed rifling through their random selections; I missed stalking Soho for surreal and rare vinyl.

Some of London's euphonious emporiums, such as Sister Ray, could be intimidating, but none prepared me with the courage required to climb steep Button Street stairs, to pluck Probe's star from its glowering sky. Still, in extremis, I girded soaring stilettos, shucked up pencil skirt, and shakingly arose to heights of dark delight.

Days spent prowling Probe, lingering longingly in HMV or Virgin's vinyl section, enforcedly slimmed to shadow of my former self, shielding shyness in sheath of skintight trousers and lascivious laced bodice, slashed by safety pins, lashed by looping chains, teetering on searing stilettos, waist length hair tortured into back combed beehive, nails red hot needles, face a mask of Siouxi Sioux makeup, needless to say, those disastrous days of desirous disguise did not deliver my dreams, despite many days and nights lurking in backstreet sound studios and dank, down by the docks derelict warehouse practice rooms.

But, in trying and failing, I met some incredible musical people who, for better or worse, according to your attitude, made me the way I am today.

DAVID BOWIE, 1947-2016

A short obituary and tribute from Gayna Rose Madder

He was maybe not the man who sold the world, but certainly he was the one who knew who and what he was, wasn't and could be, and did all of it...

This is the greatest loss of a musical and artistic icon in my lifetime to date. He has died just days after his 69th birthday and the release of his last album, 'Blackstar'.

From my school years on he developed from a dangerous, edgy hero into a cutting-edge writer and composer who would never rest in any one genre. 'Hunky Dory' will ever remain my favourite of his albums, and one of the most eclectic yet cohesive collections of disparate songs ever released, where he first showed his ability to attract world-class

musicians., and to allow them to bring their own qualities and talents to his music, giving it always a fresh multi-dimensionality.

He always had the ability to tap into a collective need for change, and predicted styles of music, art and fashions for generations.

Personally, he was the reason for developing the confidence to go into music independently without caring too much about what others thought or had done before. Now it's as if the fourth leg has been kicked away from the chair on which my own musical ambitions have been seated for a long time.

'Tomorrow belongs to those who can hear it coming' (David Bowie). It is only clear now that he was aware of his own death coming, and orchestrated it with the meticulous planning he applied to the rest of his long and ever-changing career.

For many of those who love or are involved in creating music and art, his legacy



will hopefully continue to inspire, and to help us to carry out and pursue any creative ideas we have, however outrageous they may seem.

THE POSTER BOY OF LIVERPOOL MUSIC

The posters promoting any creative scene can become more iconic than the artists themselves. This is true of Liverpool's Sean Wars whose distinct style has attracted attention to the local and national DIY scene for a number of years. His stark, dramatic and darkly funny artwork has become as celebrated as any of the bands, and heavily in demand.

By Paul Tarpey

What was your experience of art growing up?

I drew on anything and everything I could get my hands on, and I didn't like going outside. I used to hope for rain in school so I could stay inside and draw. Art GCSE was one of the handful I scraped a mark in, but once I got to A Level the written element was so uninspiring I quickly lost all interest.

What determined your style and the materials you use?

My first few years of poster making were awful, I was making horrid digital art riddled with "grunge" fonts. It took me a while to start drawing on paper again, and really finding my style. The majority of my art is still made using paper, pens, an A3 scanner and MS Paint. I've learned to get along fine with pretty basic materials.

Does your music influence the art?

Not so much the music, more the DIY ethos - I can do what I want and it's fine and it doesn't matter if people like it. I like to think I use colour in art whereas I use noise in music. The passion is more important than the end result, even though the end result is still important. Luckily, I've never been asked to exhibit outside of DIY art spaces with good ethics, but always do a bit of research anyway before agreeing to exhibitions or gigs.

How does feedback differ between art and music?

I've always found it easier to get people to look at a picture than go to a gig with any of my (usually very loud) bands playing. People are more vocal at gigs if they don't like what you're doing; feedback on posters mostly comes from people asking you to do more.

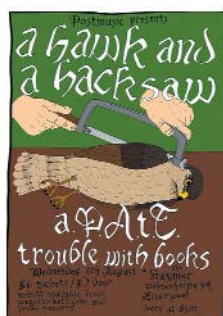
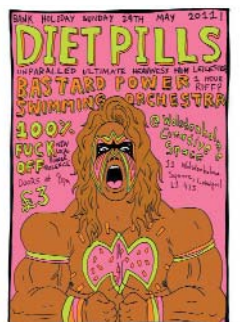
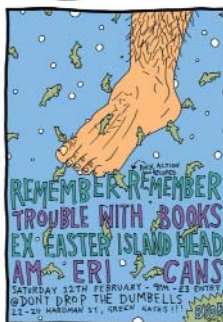
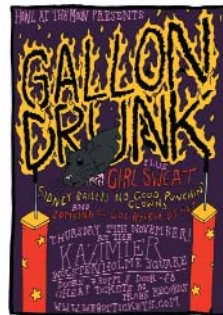
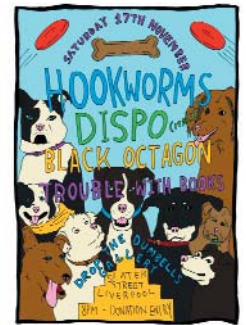
Do you feel artwork can define eras in music?

Yes, but I don't know if that's the number of interesting artists who are involved. Prolific artists can come to determine a scene's aesthetic or style, especially within DIY scenes. I think that they both feed into each other, with bands and artists both affected by the history of a genre and making a choice whether to adopt clichés or abandon them.

How is the relationship between your artwork and music changing over time?

Hopefully I'm getting better at both, but at the same time the responsibility of adult life eats away at the time to do either so it's a balancing act. No part of me thinks I'm going to make a career out of art or music, which allows me to just carry on doing whatever I want with both. I very much doubt I'm ever going to be doing gig posters for Taylor Swift tours, though I'd be a liar if I said I wouldn't.

See more of Sean's work at:
www.wrrssddrrwss.co.uk



Carlee Graham, Founder of Blue Ocean Planet (BOP), talks about the disengagement of children from nature.

IN THE ABSENCE OF NATURE

"This is about changing the way children grow up and see the world".

Stephen Moss [The Natural Childhood Report for the National Trust 2013]

In the frenetic pace of modern life, it can be unnoticed, but the evidence both empirical and physical is clear that "growing dissociation of children from the natural world impairs their capacity to learn through experience". [The National Trust Report 21/02/13]. Many children, particularly in inner city areas, are losing any prospect of connecting with nature. This loss of connection is drastically changing people and their attitudes to wildlife and crucial environmental considerations.

"Humanity is exalted not because we are so far above other living creatures, but because knowing them well elevates the very concept of life." (Edward O. Wilson, Biophilia, 1984).

In the 21st century, in the UK, we are witnessing alarmingly high levels of childhood obesity, growing teenage unemployment, and a loss of well-being amongst a generation of teeny TV, Xbox fanatics.

When kids do venture outdoors, it more often presents the opportunity for relentless texting with accompanying headphones, and little or no sense of the surrounding environment.

Moreover, our green landscape, rapidly being eroded into a concrete jungle to accommodate the indispensable car that ferries our youngsters to and from school, exacerbates particular pollution.

This 'norm' has long been seen in blatant sacrifice of gardens, essential havens for the bee and the butterfly. In effect, we are



Children from Liverpool
doing outdoor activities with Ocean Protectors

losing 'nature'.

This begs the question, what are we teaching our future generation? Furthermore, do we want children of the future to be devoid of feeling and knowledge about biodiversity and the necessity for healthy ecosystems, both on land and in the oceans, upon which we all inevitably rely?

The term Nature Deficit Disorder, coined in 2005 by Richard Louv, argues that the human cost of "alienation of nature" is measured in diminished use of senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of emotional and physical illness. This city is now half way through the Decade of Health and Well Being, set up in 2010 by the Liverpool NHS Primary Care Trust and Liverpool City Council. In their Report of 2011-12 it was identified that not only children with obesity, but young people with ADHD [Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder] would benefit from "contact with green space which can reduce symptoms" and that "use of green space and exercise can be important non-medical aids in recovery from depression".

“ When kids do venture outdoors, it more often presents the opportunity for relentless texting with accompanying headphones, and little or no sense of the surrounding environment ”

This is not rocket science but highlights a very fundamental issue which is being largely ignored. As a responsible society we owe it to our children to address this 'laissez faire' trend toward environmental degradation in a political climate where green spaces are under serious threat, and councils are selling off parks and long established sites of high conservation value to private developers for exclusive housing.

Chris Packham of BBC's Springwatch blames parents for "not allowing their children to get dirty". He reiterates that "allowing children to get close up with wildlife is an essential part of growing up".

It is though, in many regions, a case of 'accessibility' and offering those children deprived of the opportunities to relate to the natural environment the vital chances to do so.

If we do not, the sad truth is we risk a way of life where children can rattle off names of cars but have no recollection of the robin.

It is so simple, to go for a walk by the sea or a stroll in the park instead of a shopping mall. These activities are free.

If people think twice about paving that precious garden and see the beauty in a tree, allowing time to feel peace in nature, it has priceless benefits. We can all change direction in very simple ways with the will and foresight for a better future for everyone.





"Trade Unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers. The IWW offers a different vision." IWW.org

By Minnie Stacey

Founded in 1905 and known by many as The Wobblies, IWW is an international union with 100 years of history in class struggle. In early August I attended a talk by UK IWW organiser Dave Pike who said 'Capitalism sucks because the employing class and the working class have nothing in common'. He spoke of people suffering from 'boss lust' while being oppressed and that employers tend to promote bullies. Dave explained that the IWW is about skills, 'Every single member is an organiser and a rep, and can get training - the experience of winning is a good way to gain confidence'.

IWW unites people across different workplaces in industrial union branches, with dues based on monthly take-home pay. Bosses are not allowed to join but anyone industrious can. A third of IWW's members are cleaners and many work in construction, as baristas, in fast food, healthcare and education. The union claims to be rooted in real democracy and grassroots action through 'revolutionary industrial unionism'. It

encourages workers to organise, and provides advice and assistance with disciplinary or grievance hearings. Believing that direct action builds pressure on an employer, in solidarity IWW urges everyone in a branch to support every worker, to create a powerful approach to casework and bad publicity for companies. However, the amount of legal and financial support both activists and members with contractual issues receive compared with traditional trade unions is questionable. Also, hierarchies and company buildings exist as gated communities, and oligarchic-owned mass media is propaganda - all genetically modified to resist dissent with poisonous police-state protectionism.

Labels for pay levels in a workplace point to the delusion of some being 'worth' more than others in a financial belief system - IWW aims to move away from wage differentials based on hierarchies on the take from people who many a CEO, director, middling manager and senior may call 'support staff' or their 'team'. A sustainable world based on production run by workers for the benefit of all is the union's overall aim. Along the way, workers organising together can improve pay, working conditions and health and safety. A first step may be getting a living wage in a restaurant chain.

Seeing bosses and bureaucrats as an

unnecessary expense and burden, IWW is a volunteer-driven union. It doesn't seek employer recognition and maintains independence by not affiliating to any political parties or movements. But IWW's aim of mass recruitment must come up against trade unions being already established in the bigger companies, and their understanding the value of collective bargaining in negotiating and reaching agreements. It will also come up against competing unions' turf wars in the smaller companies. Barring outright revolution, moving from a system of mercenary capitalism towards working together for shared goals on a living planet calls for government that represents the interests of the masses, which may include workers' co-operatives as an alternative to profit-driven business.

It was the IWW's famous folklore hero and agitator Joe Hill who declared 'Don't mourn, organise!', when facing execution in 1915 for what many believe were trumped-up charges, as a warning to others considering trade union activity. In saying this, he was playing down the anarchic element of IWW's anarcho-syndicalism - a term which is contradictory in itself.

Marxist dialectical materialism says conditions determine consciousness. Do we wonder therefore why politics is currently being energised from the ground!?!?

UNDERCOVER 'BOB'

A song by Ritchie Hunter

Bob Lambert is probably the most notorious of the undercover police spies who infiltrated completely legitimate protest and campaigning groups.

*He was embedded with the activists
Collecting intelligence
Staying with them for many years
They thought he was someone else*

'Bob' Lambert was sent undercover by the SDS (Special Demonstration Squad) in 1983. He became Mark 'Bob' Robinson and his brief was to collect information about London Greenpeace, which campaigned for human and animal rights, and became known later for having been involved in the McLibel case, in which McDonalds tried to sue them for a critical pamphlet.

Undercover Bob was embedded for years, and in that time he led a double life organising protests, writing campaigning material and even planting a fire bomb. He was exposed in 2012 when Caroline Lucas named him under privilege in the House of Commons.

*He created false relationships
Working as a mole
Sleeping with the enemy
When he had a wife at home*

Undercover Bob ingratiated himself within protest groups, having a number of

relationships with female activists. Basically he lied to them, drawing them in to what they believed were genuine relationships. He even had a child with one of the women activists. At the same time he had a 'real life' family, who knew only that he was away a lot on secret assignments.

*Undercover for the Government
Spying for the state
Gathering up intelligence
To use against his mates*

The SDS who employed Lambert had been set up during the Vietnam War in 1968, with a specially designated pot of government money, which the Home Secretary had to endorse. Subsequent Home Secretaries continued to sign off the 'activities' of this group right up until they were disbanded in 2008.

Police have always had officers undercover. But this was like something you read in a John le Carré Cold War spy thriller.

*Stealing a child's identity
Building up the mask
Kidding environmentalists
Sticking to the task*

The method used to build up the identity of Undercover Bob was to search the Birth, Marriages and Death records and find an approximate match in age and sex. A dead child's identity was ideal because a personal

history could be built up easily around this. The ideal child was one with the same first name; this prevented any 'slips' at moments when the spy was 'off-guard'. Paul Lewis and Rob Evans* report that the SDS used dead children's identities up to 80 times!

*Sneaking into campaigning groups
Organising jobs
Showing contempt for human rights
There's plenty more like Bob*

Undercover Bob has been accused of arson, helping to organise and plant a fire bomb that caused £340,000 worth of damage to a Debenhams department store in 1987. He has also been accused of perjury for giving false evidence in court.

Other undercover police spies have been exposed, such as Mark Kennedy, who as Mark Stone was embedded for seven years.

The police launched an investigation into undercover activity in 2011 called Operation Herne. It's not surprising though that nothing has come from this. But in 2014 the Metropolitan Police agreed to pay £425,000 to the woman whose child was fathered by Bob Lambert.

***This song was inspired by the book 'Undercover: The True Story of Britain's Secret Police' by Paul Lewis and Rob Evans.**



EVER-EXPANDING STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN LIVERPOOL

By Martyn Lowe

Martyn lives in Liverpool city centre amongst mainly students

Demographic Changes

There are some major changes going on to the demographic mixture within Liverpool which are very obvious to me. The city has one third of the population which existed in the mid 1930s. Now another change is taking place in the city centre, and it will have profound effects upon the population within the next decade or so.

More Students in the City Centre

With all the new student flats being built, the average age of the central Liverpool population will soon fall from circa 32-34 down to nearer 20-22. Just count the number of new student blocks being put up right now and do the maths. Thus the demands for what is needed in the city centre will change, and outside of term times many areas will resemble the Marie Celeste. It will also produce more of a transitory population, which will have no vested interest in looking at or concerning themselves with local issues.

While all the people who used to rent rooms or flats further out of the city centre will find it more difficult to let them out. Net result – less money going into the local economy, while the big firms, which are building or renting the new student blocks, will be making a nice big profit.

No Representation without Taxation

One of the key points to keep in mind from a local perspective is that students pay NO council tax, unlike pensioners and the city poor, but they still use all of the local services. Students might moan about their loans, but not paying council tax means they do receive a de facto subsidy from the rest of the local population. So while some people debate about ending or cutting down student loans, the way in which they contribute, or rather don't contribute to local services, does need to be added to this mix. As an aside – It should also be remembered that many of the pensioners who are paying this council tax started work between 14 to 16 years-of-age, never knew what a gap year was, and stood no chance of going to university. Ditto, many of today's pensioners never stood a chance of buying their own homes, and will be

paying rent until the day they die. So where are the new flats being built for the elderly in the city centre? Yet the home help and social services for the elderly and disabled are regularly being slashed.

No Easy Solution

I'm not calling for any cuts or easy solutions to be made. What I'm calling for is a reassessment of the fact that it is only student flats that are going up, as it is starting to encourage a resentment of students by the rest of the population in the city, and will make for a very unbalanced population mix if things continue this way. We also need some more imaginative thinking when it comes to urban planning.

“ It will produce more of a transitory population, which will have no vested interest in looking at or concerning themselves with local issues ”

Vacant

What's really notable about the city centre is the number of shops which are boarded up, or have a To Rent sign outside of them. Ditto, the many buildings which are vacant and which would make excellent low cost flats. It also is a constant wonder to me how many vacant plots of land in the city centre are just covered by grass, but would be ideal for small urban parks or miniature woodlands, which will help to counter air pollution and global warming. These plots of land would also make excellent locations for small workshops, community centres, or eco-villages.

Many of these ideas are not really new ones

As someone who comes from Cockneyland I can see that there is a lot of potential to really develop the centre of Liverpool as a people-based and ecologically balanced city. Yet where is the imagination to create these things? Though the real question is, if anyone would be willing to put some money in to creating such an urban dream?

QUESTION MORE?

An oasis of free speech or the mouthpiece of Putin? Steve Moss looks at the RT television news channel, one of the alternative sources appearing on Freeview.

I've found myself in the past watching Russia Today (rebranded as RT) and thinking their coverage was pretty good. Then they would report that Pussy Riot were funded by the USA (!). Oh! I forgot they did this sort of thing.

It's sometimes easy to forget about the pro-Putin propaganda when the rest of their coverage is in tune with your own political leanings. We take for granted that the BBC is part of the State machinery and biased towards the establishment point of view much of the time, but are other stations any different?

RT has high viewing figures in the UK and USA and is the most-viewed news channel on YouTube. It is popular for its apparently radical content but do people (myself included) watch it just because they already agree with the message and prefer its bias to another station's bias? Does it merely confirm rather than challenge its viewers' beliefs?

Its obvious anti-American slant seems like a refreshing change after watching the BBC, and produces some interesting news items, but as we might expect from a network that claims to be offering a 'Russian perspective' on global events, Russian policy is not held up to the same high levels of scrutiny.

The extensive coverage of the Occupy movement in the USA was in stark contrast to the limited exposure it got on the BBC News, but at the same time they were condemning any grassroots protests in Russia.

As with the BBC, RT is state-funded and not overly keen on biting the hand that feeds it. Half of its start-up budget came from the state, and the other half from

banks and companies friendly to the government.

The creation of RT was a part of a larger PR effort by the Russian government to improve the image of Russia abroad. Putin said that while the intention was to create an independent news channel, "certainly the channel is funded by the government, so it cannot help but reflect the Russian government's official position on the events in our country and in the rest of the world one way or another."

Impartiality seems a lot to hope for in light of this, and in fact RT's response to accusations of bias is not to claim it is unbiased, but to insist that everyone else too was biased. Basically, objectivity is a myth, and it is better to be honest about that than to hide behind specious claims of presenting the truth.



Max Keiser and Stacy Herbert with their copies of Nerve Magazine from when they spoke at the Casa on Hope Street.

However, you will search in vain for any direct criticism of Vladimir Putin on RT. In comparison opposition activists are commonly given very negative coverage. RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan tweeted, after protests in the lead-up to the March 2012 presidential election, that

RT

RUSSIA TODAY

protesters should "burn in hell".

Some former employees claim that they were given strict guidelines on what they could and couldn't say about Russia. Even those who were otherwise believers in RT's mission were uncomfortable with the heavy-handed message control.

This is of course not to say that any of the alternative broadcasters were any more objective. In 2014, Washington D.C. anchor Liz Wahl resigned on air after a question was censored from an interview about Russia's intervention in Ukraine, although the previous day Breaking The Set host Abby Martin told her viewing audience that she was against the intervention. Possibly, as a prominent highly visible presenter, she has more leeway in her views than most.

The American media is, unsurprisingly, very hostile towards RT. This is despite its own corporate and government ownership. Nevertheless RT has successfully recruited a number of American journalists to its ranks. One of the most popular amongst these is Max Keiser, a very entertaining presenter and provocateur, although somewhat less strong as an interviewer, often dominating his guests.

Other positives are that RT's documentaries are very well made and informative, and that dissident voices are treated as credible and not invited on just to be ridiculed, as often happens on the BBC. The discourse is central, not spin and over-rehearsed media skills. This often makes for challenging broadcasting, particularly on unfamiliar topics, as it doesn't dumb down like mainstream channels, but encourages the viewer to go away and do their own research if they don't understand.

Any alternative voice can only be a positive thing, presenting perspectives you never hear on other stations. Although this can sometimes lead to fairly 'out-there' conspiracy theories being promoted and people with pretty unpleasant affiliations being given airtime.

The bias in their coverage of domestic Russian news is pretty hard to ignore, but I tend to take the opportunity to put the kettle on whenever they begin reporting on home affairs. Most viewers have the sense to expect any channel funded by the Kremlin to be poor on Russian news items, but this doesn't mean it can't be interesting on other countries. There is no denying that RT does carry some strong and challenging items, but it is a good idea, as with any other news outlet, to keep in mind what they aren't telling you and that it is unwise to get all your news from one source.

A BLACK MAN PRAISES THE POLICE. BUT P&O? THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY

By Tayo Aluko

It had been a very loud and angry exchange. I was the only Black person in the place, I think, and had been at the centre of it all. And then the police arrived.

This story ends much better than many would expect, given the multiple tragic stories one hears coming from out of the USA these days, but for me, the officer from the Port of Liverpool Police did what was expected of him, and the matter was settled to my satisfaction: a very irate truck driver who had racially abused me during a confrontation eventually apologised, I accepted the apology and he drove away feeling chastened. As far as he was concerned, that was the end of it. It would have been the same for me too, had it not been for the subsequent behaviour of P&O Ferries' staff and management.

It was December 2014, and I had just returned to Liverpool from a short tour of Ireland. Having been the last vehicle onto the ship in Dublin, I should have been first off, but due to misinformation from the duty manager, I didn't return to my car when passengers on my deck were called, and I ended up delaying an entire line of traffic for several minutes. When I heard, "Would the driver of vehicle number...." specifically being asked to go to the deck immediately, I rushed down, apologised to the staff, and as I went to do the same to the driver immediately behind me, was met with a torrent of abuse, including a racial slur. My refusal to move without an apology resulted in him producing a large metal bar with which he threatened to break my skull. I stood my ground and asked for the police to be called. As we waited, I suggested to a member of staff that I could move my car so that those behind us could get away. He agreed, and as I started to move, I was stopped by another member of staff who, arriving on the scene for the first time said to me, "You cannot conduct yourself in that way and expect to be able to leave the vessel", making me hold up the traffic that much longer until the policeman arrived. Almost immediately, he got me and the offending driver to move to let the others leave, then proceeded to take statements from us individually, during which I offered not to press charges as long as I received a genuine apology.

Before I left, I said to the woman who had stopped me from moving my car in the first place that I hadn't appreciated being spoken to the way she had done, but she was adamant that she had treated both the other driver and me equally, in a way that she considered appropriate. I left it at that and went home.

It continued to rankle however, and I sent in a complaint a week later, thinking that

eventually I might receive something of an apology from P&O and that the lady might be given a talking to about better customer care. What followed over the next three months however was really quite different. P&O Customer Relations first stated that on investigation, the information they received differed greatly from my version of events. Later, it transpired that their investigations indicated that it was I who had been aggressive, offensive and threatening, as borne out by the fact that the police were called and that no action had been taken against the other driver. Confident that CCTV footage would vindicate me, I asked for this to be made available, but was told that this was not permissible under Data Protection law. I persevered, defying them to produce some footage, which I assumed they had seen but were suppressing, confident that it would show my initial contriteness, my attempts to apologise, the threatened serious physical assault on me as staff looked on, but above all, my lack of aggressiveness. In my emails, I mentioned the fact that whilst my case was thankfully very different to the shocking incidents from the USA that one has seen shared on social media, Black people are now beginning to

“ Black people are now beginning to be grateful for the usefulness of mobile phone technology in exposing racism ”

be grateful for the usefulness of mobile phone technology in exposing racism. I particularly mentioned the footage of some Chelsea fans' racist behaviour in a Paris underground station, and the fact that its having gone viral on social media had contributed to the Chelsea management's promise to take decisive action against the hoodlums. I also pointed out the fact that one of them had called in to a radio phone-in programme in London to say that they had been acting in self defence as the Black man had himself been aggressive, when the video clearly showed this to be untrue.

Racial profiling, I argued, had been at work here on the deck of a P&O ferry - a Black man defending himself from abuse is perceived as aggressive and dangerous. Never mind the fact that this Black man had just returned from a trip where several hundred Irish people had been introduced through him to Paul Robeson - a great African American artist who had educated the world about racial equality; that this Black man had performed at Carnegie Hall



in New York and travels the world with his art; that this Black man is a published writer and is also responsible for the design and construction of a good number of buildings in the UK as an architect. I had thought it sufficient to make the offending driver grovel with an apology to the very Black man he had abused, after being made to see that the Black man could react to serious provocation in a peaceful and magnanimous manner. I had hoped to persuade him that every person, regardless of their skin colour, deserves respect - especially when they first approach you with humility.

Sadly, P&O, according to their Head of Security, concluded that no apology was due from them, that their ground staff were not guilty of racial profiling, and that as there was in fact no CCTV surveillance in that part of the vessel, I could (and I paraphrase here) go away and do my worst. Having determined, with the very generous help of the Duty Sergeant at Port of Liverpool Police, that the unbelievable is indeed probably true (no CCTV), it seems that the "worst" I can do is tell this story to those who would care to read it.

I consider it a story worth telling not just to laud straightforward decent policing where such praise is due, but also because to remain silent is to be complicit in behaviour which, if unchecked, can so easily have tragic consequences. The recent UK cases of Deen Taiwo and Sheku Bayoh remind me to be thankful that I lived to tell this tale, but also that it is my duty to speak out against racism with every breath I have in me, and to do what I can to educate others - be they on the bottom decks or at the top echelons of well known ferry companies.

Tayo Aluko tours internationally with his award winning play Call Mr. Robeson - by air, car and sea.

One of the most frequent questions asked of anti-fascist and anti-racist organisers is why they wear masks.

WHY WEAR MASKS?

Fascists and members of the far right have been profiling anti-fascists for decades, and the age of the internet and smart-phones makes it even easier to do. There are websites, social media groups, and sites on the 'dark web' dedicated to profiling activists, sharing their photographs, phone numbers, places of work or education, their home addresses, and details about their family lives.

This profiling isn't harmless, though – it leads to assaults at home or in the workplace, intimidation, damage to vehicles and homes, distress for family members and partners, and the resulting stress and impact on mental health.

Many activists want to participate in activism without being stalked, harassed or assaulted by racists and fascist organisers. Most people who choose to wear a face covering at a demo are asked about it at some point. "With respect, many people who aggressively challenge activists for wearing masks don't have an understanding of the wider situation", M, an activist from the north-west, explained. "Just because I'm prepared to attempt to stop fascist marches doesn't mean I should also be prepared to hand over mug-shots of myself to them, and be ok with them turning up at where I work – or, worse, my home."



'Bobby' is a young student. "For me, it's because of college. I've been told if my face appears in the papers or on social media, I'll be removed. I don't see why my education should suffer because I stand up to racists."

An activist, who identified themselves as Mr Sands, explained, "I wear a mask because I want to be able to leave an action and return to my everyday life. Wearing a mask isn't to intimidate anyone, it's just a tool for a job and means that I can act securely. There's always the possibility of being identified and picked out for attacks later. I've already been assaulted once and would rather it didn't happen again."

Fascists aside, there's also the threat



from police data-gathering teams, who attend demos with cameras, and use sophisticated face-recognition software to help profile activists.

"The police don't care about why we do what we do," said M. "They just want us to stop doing it, and so try to build up large databases of information on activists. Often policing at demos and protests is wildly inappropriate, misinformed or downright illegal, which is why we use trained and well-respected legal observers and lawyers to monitor the actions of both the police and us. The public would be shocked if they knew the threat that incompetent or malicious policing poses to average citizens engaging in protest."

Mr Sands suggested a different take on the issue of masks and face coverings. "The question shouldn't be why we mask up on an action, but why more people don't."

In this opinion, individual activists aren't alone. The Network for Police Monitoring (NetPol) is a network of lawyers, researchers and campaigners that monitors police overreach, intelligence-gathering practices and abuse of power. In a May 2015 article, 'Why cover up? The Case for Protest Anonymity', NetPol noted that the risks posed by an increasingly aggressive and draconian policing style meant that there were good reasons to wear masks to political events and protests.

NetPol went further, and suggested that the normalisation of face-coverings at such events – from militant anti-racist protests to more mainstream, 'fluffy' peace-walks – would be a progressive step in the defence of civil rights and rights to privacy.

For more information about NetPol access www.netpol.org Merseyside Anti-Fascist Network: www.facebook.com/MerseyAFN/

CREATING COLLAGES

By Philip Hayes

I began making collages around 2004, drawing on the wealth of material I was amassing at the Picket music venue in Liverpool.

I use a variety of images (posters, flyers, tickets) and photographs to create a collage based around a theme, person or topic.

I have been commissioned by private clients, organisations, Liverpool bands and a published author to produce collages for a variety of purposes including:

"A Terrible Beauty is Born" - two pieces created in connection with a book based on the work of Belfast muralists.

"Liverpool: Wondrous Place" - borrowing the title of the Billy Fury song and the book by Paul Du Noyer, celebrating Liverpool's culture and creativity.

"Sound City" - for Liverpool based S.C. music festival.

Work in progress by me includes a piece to celebrate the Cavern's 60th birthday in 2017, The Farm, two for Cast, Threshold Festival and Liverpool Football Club homage. I'm a season ticket holder in the Kop and was instrumental in producing "Fields of Anfield".

I've spent 25 years working as a venue manager and festival organiser in Liverpool. For more background information go to: www.savethepicket.com

My pioneering work included setting up a community access recording studio for unemployed bands, including the La's, Pete Townshend from the Who, Elvis Costello, Paul McCartney and Yoko Ono.

I've worked at two music venues, the Picket in Hardman Street, now the Old Blind School, and was responsible for the first venue to open in the Baltic District in 2005 with performances by Deaf School, Elvis Costello and Mick Jones, Pete Dinklage and The Farm as part of the Justice tour for Hillsborough Families.

Also spent time in the 1980's/90's as lead singer in a band The High Five, and later as a band manager.

Now I'm working creating collages....

I am extremely passionate about my city, music and, most of all, my family and friends.



Philip Hayes (second from right) with John Power (Cast), Alan McGee (manager of Oasis and Cast) & Peter Hooton (The Farm) **Photo by Valerie Christie**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: GREEDY GIANTS AND AGRICULTURAL ANGELS

By Katy Brown

If you go down to the docks today...

You may never have heard of Cargill, but it's a company that along with four others - Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge, Glencore International and Louis Dreyfus - controls between 75% and 90% of the world's grain trade, and you will have almost certainly consumed something that it produced, processed or distributed.

Cargill has a number of operations in Liverpool, including rapeseed and soybean crushers and refineries and an imported animal-feed ingredient terminal at Seaforth, and a cotton trading office at Prince's Dock. The refineries on the docks are responsible for the regular funny smell when you head north on the train out of the city centre.

Agri-business: profiting from hunger

Cargill and the other big grain companies have a huge influence over the type of food we eat, how it is produced and who has access to it. Unfortunately the fact that Cargill has such a large proportion of the global food market does not mean it is a company engaged in ensuring everyone is well fed. The prime concern of these companies is profit.

Cargill trades in food futures markets, meaning it gambles on food prices, hoping to cash in when food prices rise. This speculation on food prices contributes to periodic global food crises which leave millions of people hungry. As people struggle to feed themselves due to high prices, the profits of companies like Cargill soar.

Genetically modified crops

Cargill has been instrumental in the introduction of genetically engineered (GM) crops. As well as health and environmental concerns, GM crops create a situation of dependency on seed companies for farmers. Many companies make it a requirement that farmers do not carry seed over from one year to the next, instead being

contractually obliged to buy seed from the company the following year, and will even sue farmers if they find them 'illegally' saving seed.

Cargill has refused to separate genetically modified crops from traditional ones. Given there is no requirement for animal-feed to be GM-free in the UK it is highly likely that genetically modified grains are processed at the Seaforth animal-feed terminal.

How did we lose control of our food?

Over decades governments and international financial institutions have paved the way for the disappearance of peasant agriculture and the rise of industrialised and corporate-led food production. Without government regulations to protect the public interest, a lack of policies to guarantee the rights of small-scale producers to access land, water and seeds, and with the enforcement of 'free trade' at the expense of local and national food self-sufficiency, corporations have taken control.

It is scary that large companies like Cargill have so much power in the global food system that they can actually 'play god', deciding whether people live or die through their speculation on food markets and, through that, their influence on food prices. However, let's not despair...

Food Sovereignty in the Global South...

The global food sovereignty movement has grown out of the Global South as an alternative to the unsustainable corporate industrialised global food system. Food sovereignty is about more than just people being fed, it is about people taking back control over food production and it addresses issues of production, consumption and distribution in a holistic manner.

La Via Campesina is the name of this global peasant movement which brings together 150 organisations from 70 countries around the world to struggle for the realisation and globalisation of food sovereignty.



And closer to home...

While down on the docks the Port of Liverpool is serving as a gateway for global agri-business, elsewhere in the city people are taking the power back. Here are just a few examples, but get looking locally and you'll find many more.

Growing Granby is trying to bring wasteland in the Granby area into use for food growing.

The Liverpool Food People is a network of food growers, composters, buyers, cooks and eaters passionate about a positive healthy food culture for lovely Liverpool. It is involved in projects from growing in schools and communities to trying to get healthier meals on school menus and is involved with the Food for Real Film Festival.

The Real Junk Food Project is focussed on reducing food waste and encouraging a 'Pay as you feel' (PAYF) model for paying for food when eating out.

Free Food Liverpool is also focussed on food waste, directing food that would otherwise go in the bin to anyone who needs it.

Somewhat out of town up near Rainford, **Fir Tree Community Growers** is a vegan organic farm supplying healthy cruelty-free veg to Liverpool through the organic veg box scheme run by **Liverpool Organic Direct**. A similar scheme is operated by **Windmill Wholefoods**, with both schemes operating successfully for many years.

And of course people have allotments and grow fruit and vegetables in their own gardens across the city. It may not seem like a revolutionary act but by growing your own and taking control of where your food comes from you too can become part of the global food sovereignty movement.



LINKS

La Via Campesina www.viacampesina.org/en/

Growing Granby
www.landshare.net/organisations/growing-granby/

The Liverpool Food People
sustainablefoodcities.org/findacity/cityinformation/use/rid/44

The Real Junk Food Project
therealjunkfoodprojectliverpool.org

Free Food Liverpool
facebook.com/freefoodinliverpool

Fir Tree Community Growers
facebook.com/FirTreeCommunityGrowersCropshare

Windmill Wholefoods www.windmillorganic.co.uk

Liverpool Organic Direct
www.liverpoolorganicdirect.co.uk

GLORYBOX PHOTOGRAPHY

By Vesta, Director of Art @ Glorybox

Glorybox Photography, founder of the Eclipse Dark Room in Liverpool, is the city's only public access traditional photography space. It has now set its sights on one of the most exciting and culturally diverse countries on earth to mark its first birthday.

Relocating to Japan for four awe-inspiring weeks of research, collaboration and discussion, this learning will contribute towards an enriched artistic programme and shine light on the basics of Japanese culture within photography, examining artists, audiences and their interaction with the dark arts.

Just weeks before we launched Eclipse, coinciding with LOOK/15, Liverpool's International Photography Festival - which, by the way, we were thrilled to be a part of - we got wind of "Metamorphosis of Japan After the War", a talk and exhibition from Marc Feustel at The Open Eye Gallery. It changed a lot for us. Who knew a year on we'd be packing our bags and heading East.

The photography was stunning, undeniably, but what Marc really opened us up to was the idea that artists and photographers, people and their beautiful minds, creators and observers from far-flung regions. Well, they have their own way of doing things, just like we do.

Japanese photographers consider and create their works under very different parameters, with different ideals, different outcomes, different intentions. Where our final photographic product might be, for example, a gallery exhibition, adorning a sterile space with the solitary image, the Japanese are practitioners of an art far more intimate.

Enter the photobook, not only a vessel, but a body with limbs cast from light and memory. This body holds those limbs in purpose and sequence, punctuated by margins, writing, space and page after page of tactile, sensory stimulation.

Despite advancements in technology creating a norm for virtually administered information, the physical Japanese photobook prevails. By its very nature, each photograph is an original, and so each photobook considered an original work. A new perspective, for us at least.

Our latest piece, Just You & The Moon, exhibited at the Threshold Festival 2016, was a live, alchemical reaction and social experiment, exploring the roles of the observer and the creator, paying homage to the moon.

Audiences were invited to step under the hood of a black curtain and switch on a light source to view the white paper underneath. Treated with silver nitrate and potassium chloride, the paper responds to light, and through the collective efforts and persistent interaction of the audience, the viewer became the creator of the piece, developing the latent image through observation alone.

We explored these new contexts. The compulsions in science, spiritual practice, the mundane and rawest subject matters, long conversations endured both with oneself and one's few remaining friends, and further the delivery, interaction and understanding of one's work through the viewer.

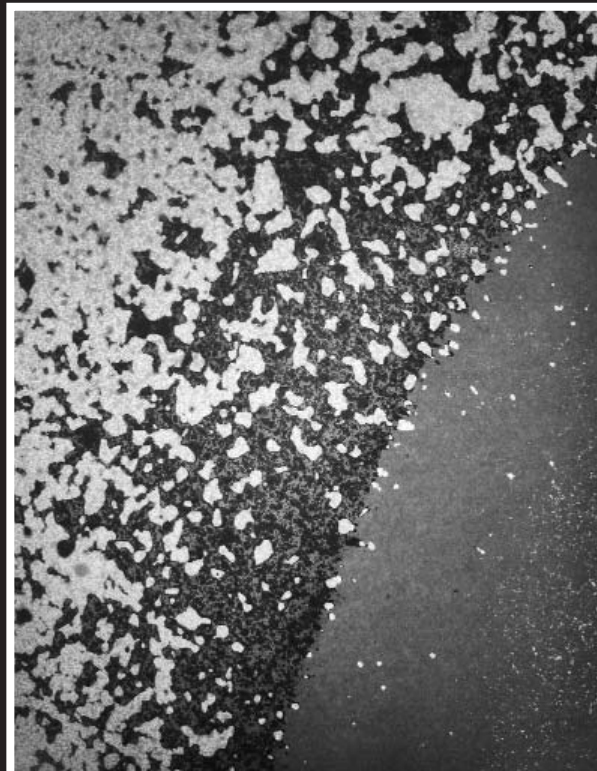
This artistic process, understood but never learned, we knew but couldn't vocalise, we could see without being shown. The reason is the action. The art is the process. The pleasure is the journey, except for the fact that in each of us, the process that makes us the same makes us so very different.

This process is as unique as the fibres that create the framework which sustains our reality, as unique as the morals and values we hold, the intrinsic, astounding, omnipotent wisdom within, the knowing by feeling without knowing.

It is this knowing without knowing that has driven us so far.

Now we wish to know.

Facebook: Eclipse Dark Room, Liverpool
Instagram & Twitter: GLORYBOXuk
www.glory-box.co.uk



KURDISH WOMAN BEATING THE HELL OUT OF ISIS – THE REVOLUTION IN ROJAVA

INTERVIEW WITH A KURDISH FREEDOM FIGHTER

By Darren Guy

Sama is a 21-year-old refugee, who works 12 hours a day, six days a week in three different cafés in Liverpool. She speaks five languages. In her twenty one years she has lived and seen things that most people will never experience in their lifetime.

Sama has already mingled the scouse accent with her Syrian tongue; she even dresses like the young scouse girls. She laughs a lot when she talks, even when she describes shocking things. She radiates warmth and friendliness. Sama is very proud of both the strength and the humanity of her people: the Kurdish people.

She trained in the Women's Protection Unit (YPJ) but as the oldest member of a family of four girls, was sent away at the beginning of the war against Islamic state (ISIS) because her parents felt she could serve her family and people better.

Her best friend was beheaded by ISIS; her 17-year-old sister was also shot in the

face by them. Her three sisters are part of the YPJ, fighting against injustice and inequality within their own culture, Syria, but more furiously against ISIS.

"I am from Kobane: a city in Northern Syria, on the Turkish border. I am Kurdish. I was in the first year at university, studying English, and when the war started in Syria, I left uni and planned to go and fight for the Kurdish people. My mother was very ill at the time and my father was afraid I might get killed. So they insisted I leave; my father suggested I go to the UK and study and work and support my family. It was a very painful thing for me to leave my family in a situation like this.

I was so afraid for them, but my parents insisted I was the best person to leave (the oldest). So I escaped from Syria over the Turkish border. I suppose I became illegal at that point. Over the coming months I made my way up through towns and villages, until eventually I arrived in Istanbul, where I stayed with a friend of my father's for two months. I then paid a trafficker who arranged for me and 22 others (mainly children) to take a very scary boat journey to Athens. I stayed in Athens for one month before I boarded a plane to the UK. The whole journey from when I left Syria to when I arrived in the UK took one year.

When I arrived I claimed asylum as a Kurdish person from Syria. They sent me to a hostel in Leeds, where they had guards and I couldn't

leave. They said I would be there for two days. I was there for a month, then they brought me in for 'the big asylum interview'. I was then told I could claim as a refugee. The week I arrived in the UK, ISIS attacked my town of Kobane. Can you imagine how I felt? It had taken me one year to get here, and the week I arrived my family, friends and my people were under attack. I wanted to go back to be with my family and fight ISIS. But I couldn't leave.

Before ISIS attacked Kobane, the Kobane and the Rojava region had become a very peaceful place. During the start of the Syrian war against the Assad regime, we Kurds used the opportunity to set up our own system of government. We took control of the area we lived in and established our own system of stateless government: democratic federalism; one we had been discussing a long time. The war had given us the opportunity to rule over 300 villages, towns and cities. We began to involve thousands of people in democracy and running their own areas. We spread values such as caring and respect for each other, regardless of religion or race - Arab, Christian etc. - and the equality of women.

We believed that you cannot have a revolutionary society unless the women play a role that is equal to men. Recently in Rojava they introduced equality for LGBT people, which is a big thing in the Middle East. But we also understood we would have to protect our area, so we established the People Protection Units (YPG/YPJ)



which is a volunteer people's army, run by the people and funded by the people. We have no police force, and intend to keep it that way.

Every citizen gets training in how to defend themselves and their community, so they will also be encouraged to take an active role in their village, town and community. Soon after 'the revolution' we set up our own women defence force: the YPJ. But it was when I first arrived in the UK, that ISIS attacked Kobane. Then my sisters joined the fight against ISIS. This has been three years now. But in the Kobane I lived in, we were teaching the people how to be independent; we were setting up schools, including Kurdish language schools."

Tell me about your sisters who are fighting ISIS?

"I have three sisters who are in the people protection units. They are Narin - she is 15, Shirin - now 17 and Jiyan - she is 18. Narin is a nurse and Shirin and Jiyan are fighters in the YPJ. Narin was working as a nurse just over the Turkish border, helping people who were getting injured by ISIS. She was arrested by the police, thrown in a cell; then these policemen beat her about the face and body. They swore at her a lot (which is a big thing in our culture) and said terrible things to her. After three days they released her and forced her back over to the Syrian side.

Her friend, who was arrested with her, is still in prison. But my sister was very disturbed by what they had done to her; I mean she was only 14 at the time. Can you imagine men beating her, and calling her terrible names? Shirin, who is nearly 17, has been fighting for three years since she was 14; she is very strong, and probably would have fought them back."

Shirin was only 14 when she started fighting? Some people here would think that was strange?

"Well in this country you don't need to fight like this. In my country we have no army, so who is going to protect us from ISIS? The women want to fight ISIS. I joined the army when I was 17. I am from a family where my dad, my mum, my granddad - we were all political. We always believed in the Kurdish struggle. At 14 in my country you are already a man or a woman."

I suppose in a situation like this you either fight or you die?

"No, no. We don't fight to die; we fight to live; we fight to live. We are not ISIS; they fight to die; we fight to live."

OK. Your other sister?

"Yes Jiyan. She is 18 and she was in the first year of university, studying medicine, and she decided, 'No, I'm not going to university - I'm going to fight.' Jiyan is also a news reader on the TV."

Getting back to how life was after the revolution and before ISIS attacked, tell

me about this?

"Well everyone had their part to play; there were lots of things to do. We were taught to care for each other; we were all getting a form of military training too, to look after each other. Everyone was getting taught to have a good conscience, lots of education, lots of discussion, and talks - it was so good. That's why ISIS didn't like it. It was so perfect: everyone had a role to play; there was equality between people.

But during the time when Assad and the Syrian government controlled Rojava, everyone was scared. When you are afraid you have no hope in life, and because you are afraid, you are unhappy and sometimes you look at others to blame for your unhappiness."

Did your dad suffer because of his politics?

"Yes, for example my dad was taken three times by the government agents. One time they took him to the prison, and after two days, they called my mum, my granddad and brother and told them to come to the police cell. I went along too. And when we



arrived they took us to see my dad, and told us, 'Watch how we are going to kill him.' They said, 'You will watch while we kill him.' Can you imagine? This is my father; I love him more than anything in the world. They took my dad because he was a political activist."

What happened at the cell of the prison?

"Well after three months, we raised the money to bribe them to release my father. In Syria under Assad, it was all about money; money buys you anything so he got released. Otherwise he would have died. When my dad came out of prison, he had bullet holes in his shoulder, his arm and his calf. He still has problems but he is ok now."

So I read on the Internet, because they don't report it on the news, about the recent ISIS attacks on Kobane when they went from house to house, killing 250 civilians?

"My sister Shirin is a captain in the YPJ. She was told a village called Jeade, that they were visiting, was free of ISIS, but when she arrived it was full of ISIS. All of her group were killed, except my sister and a boy. Shirin lost an eye and the boy lost a leg. She is still fighting. She is so strong and brave yet she lost an eye. But she is still fighting. She could have gone to Turkey after that but she said, 'No, I'm going to fight for my people.'"

Let me tell you about a friend of mine. She was so strong - a really amazing person - and she said to me before I left, 'Do you want to join the YPJ and fight ISIS?' When ISIS entered Kobane she joined YPJ and she was fighting and in one fight she got caught by ISIS. They tortured then killed her - they cut her head off. She was 18 and within two days all her family got killed by ISIS.

I find it very difficult to talk about this. I am 21 and already a lot of my friends my age, or younger than me, have died. But I have no time to mourn, I just have to say, 'They died,' and that's it. I can't really talk about this; it's inside my heart; what can I say?

ISIS are killing people in such a ruthless and cold manner. It's one thing to kill a fighter: a soldier face-to-face but these people are killing children and killing women and unarmed people. This is so terrible.

I saw a picture of a child they shot five times. I mean, when you see these things you just want to kill the people who do these things. You are so angry, but you have to be careful you don't lose your humanity; it's so easy when you see these things that you can lose your humanity.

But the people in Rojava are fighting for life; for a beautiful life; for freedom for all. So we live with hope inside of us, united by care, compassion, hope and love for each other. We are united - not like ISIS by hatred, fear and ignorance. So people should know what we are trying to achieve in Rojava."

Thank you SAMA.

A little over a year ago, in February 2015, an invisible nation rose to its feet in the Syrian town of Kobanî and successfully defended its territory from a band of rapists and torturers who hoped, and still hope, to one day bring about a glorious apocalypse.

THE KURDS, TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

By **Thomas Phillips**, PhD researcher in International Human Rights Law and the Kurdish Question at the University of Liverpool

The Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women's Defence Units (YPJ), with the crucial assistance of coalition airstrikes, didn't only resist ISIS - they pursued the fascist gangs to the gates of their stronghold in Raqqa and evicted them from dozens of towns and villages in Northern Syria.

It used to be the case that the secular Kurds had no friends but the mountains, despite the fact that they have been resisting Middle Eastern despotisms for hundreds of years: from Saddam Hussein to the Islamic dictatorship in Iran to the racist al-Assad dynasty in Syria and the ultra-nationalist Turkish state. When these monsters were the best friends of the US and the UK, the Kurds were always at the forefront of the resistance and have always had the potential to spark a long-overdue transformation of the Middle East. Now that the Kurds are fighting our enemy for us, they are suddenly all over the news. But there is more to this story than bands of beautiful women with rifles ululating over the defeated remnants of ISIS gangs.

The Kurds: A Very Brief History

The Kurds, who number approximately 30-40 million, are a unique ethnocultural group whose existence in the mountainous regions between modern-day Turkey and Iran can be traced as far back as the fourth century BC. They speak a unique language, have a shared sense of history and solidarity, and immerse themselves in unique cultural practices.

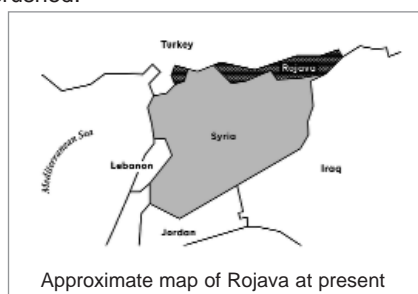
Until the Allied victory in World War I brought about the introduction of the nation-state system to the lands of the former Ottoman Empire, the Kurds enjoyed far-reaching self-governance under Ottoman rule. When that model could no longer compete with the



An Iraqi Yazidi girl receives weapons training in an abandoned Sinjar Mountain village. She is part of the Sinjar Resistance Units, which were established to fight the so-called Islamic State and protect the Yazidi religious minority.

European nation-state model, the Ottoman Empire began to crumble and eventually collapsed. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Kurds were promised a state of their own in the first peace treaty with Turkey (the Treaty of Sevres). After Turkey's war of independence, the treaty was renegotiated and a new one signed in Lausanne. The Kurdish homeland was divided between Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran, and the Kurds were destined to become minorities in all four states.

From that point on, the Kurds' identity was seen as a threat by their host states. Speaking Kurdish in public became a crime, education in Kurdish was outlawed, and any attempt to resist was brutally crushed.



Approximate map of Rojava at present

The Kurds and the Future of Turkey

Kurdish resistance in Turkey has evolved around the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), led by Abdullah Öcalan since its establishment in 1978. The PKK started life as a Marxist-Leninist organisation and carried out a long armed struggle for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. Decades of non-violent struggle had yielded next to nothing for the Kurdish people, who were not even permitted the basic freedom to identify as Kurds (the state insisted that they were mountain Turks who had forgotten their language). Kurdish names were forbidden, Kurdish history was erased from textbooks and anybody who tried to promote their Kurdish identity ended up in prison.

After his arrest in 1999, Abdullah Öcalan began a radical rethink of the PKK's ideology. Having been influenced by the work of the American socialist Murray Bookchin, Öcalan developed the concept of Democratic Confederalism. According to Öcalan:

"This kind of rule or administration can be called a non-state political

administration or a democracy without a state. Democratic Confederalism is based on grass-roots participation. Its decision-making processes lie with the communities."

These ideas are promoted through the PKK's de facto political wing, the HDP, which contested Turkey's parliamentary elections in 2015. The HDP's election manifesto strongly emphasised its commitment to universal human rights and argued for a decentralised Turkey that involves all ethnic identities. This programme gained enough support in the June election to surpass Turkey's 10% election threshold and deprive the governing AKP of its parliamentary majority, thereby scuppering President Erdogan's plans to establish an all-powerful presidential system.

The AKP government's response was to completely break-off its on-going peace negotiations with the PKK and resort to full-scale war against Kurdish towns and villages that voted for the HDP. The message to Kurdish voters was clear: declare loyalty to the HDP and you will be crushed.

Although the AKP succeeded in regaining its majority in a fresh election, the cost has been staggering. Some Kurdish towns have been under total siege for months on end while a shoot-to-kill policy, which Amnesty International has described

solution to the Kurdish Question based on decentralisation and having the audacity to win wide support for that proposal in a democratic election. Meanwhile, European states, in their desperate attempts to keep Muslim refugees in Turkey and away from Europe, are turning a blind eye to Turkey's descent into fascism. If that policy doesn't change then it might soon be wishful thinking to talk about peaceful solutions to the Kurdish Question.

The Rojava Revolution

The Turkish state's opposition to Kurdish freedom does not stop at its southern border. In Northern Syria, or 'Rojava,' the Kurds have established several autonomous cantons under the governance of the Democratic Union Party (PYD). Like the HDP, the PYD is philosophically and ideologically linked to the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan.

The PYD's *Social Contract* declares that Rojava is a confederation of various ethnic groups, recognises Syria's territorial integrity, and affirms that the principles of Democratic Confederalism are to be applied. These principles include the equality of all persons and communities, local, bottom-up self-government, commitment to international human rights law, ecological feminism, and gender equality.

authority.

These valuable gains for human emancipation have been achieved in the face of a comprehensive blockade imposed by Turkey and its clients in the Kurdistan Regional Government of Northern Iraq. Furthermore, the Turkish government has insisted that any attempt by the Kurds to turn their isolated cantons into a contiguous region will lead to violent repercussions - as Kurdish forces have discovered to their detriment after attempting to kick jihadist forces out of territory west of the Euphrates river.

As the region changes shape, new political entities are being formed and old ones are withering away. Predictably enough, Turkey wants leverage in negotiations on the region's final settlement, and in order to achieve this it projects its power into Syria through proxy jihadist forces and its influence over the Syrian opposition's High Negotiations Committee. It uses its proxy forces on the ground to attempt to prevent the emergence of a Kurdish proto-state in Northern Syria that might one-day link up with the Kurds in Turkey, and when that doesn't work it resorts to outright aggression against the Kurds in Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

There is no longer any doubt that the Turkish government has been assisting jihadi groups in Syria, including ISIS. Its latest attempt to support the islamists involves a demand for a "buffer zone" or a "safe zone" along a 50km strip of the Syrian border. Like everything else in the Turkish government's parlance, this would be the exact opposite of what it claims to be. The fundamental aim of the proposed buffer zone would be to allow the Turkish state to continue backing the islamist gangs by preventing the formation of a contiguous Rojava. This has nothing to do with providing a buffer between Syria and Turkey and nothing to do with ensuring the overall safety of the Syrian people.

At the same time, Turkey has been hindering the liberation struggle of Kurds, Yazidis and others. By illegally bombing the PKK in Iraq - which successfully rescued stranded Yazidis from Mt. Sinjar and brought them to safety, and which continues to fight for the liberation of Yazidi towns and villages - the Turkish government is hindering the Yazidis' struggle. By bombing the YPG, the Turkish government is providing valuable assistance to the jihadi enemy in Syria and elsewhere.

Those who stand for leftist principles, including secularism, universal human rights, anti-fascism, anti-totalitarianism and the empowerment of the disempowered, should offer our solidarity to the Kurds and their allies in Rojava and South-East Turkey. We should also learn from them as they attempt to achieve in practice what we support in theory. As the Kurds say: "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi!" (Women, Life, Freedom!)

More info: <http://kurdishquestion.com/>



Women gathering after a meeting in Qamishli to decide how to deal with security in their neighborhood

as collective punishment, has been in operation. The right to life has been violated on a massive scale, historic towns have been destroyed, around 400,000 people have been displaced, dissenting voices have been silenced and imprisoned, and the European Union's Turkey rapporteur has openly warned of the possibility of civil war.

At present, President Erdogan and Prime Minister Davutoglu are attempting to lift the parliamentary immunity of HDP leaders and prosecute them for "disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the state," or in other words, proposing a perfectly reasonable

Although it is difficult and dangerous for an outsider to attempt to judge what is going on in Rojava, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the peoples of Rojava have managed to create something quite different from the rest of Syria. Females in Rojava don't just fight on the front lines - they also sit in democratic women's assemblies and deal with gender-specific problems; efforts are being made to switch to a democratic, co-operative model of business ownership; and for every position at every level of government in Rojava, there is (at least in theory) a female equivalent of equal

WHAT BASIS OF SOCIETY WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

By Anthony McCarthy, Community philosopher

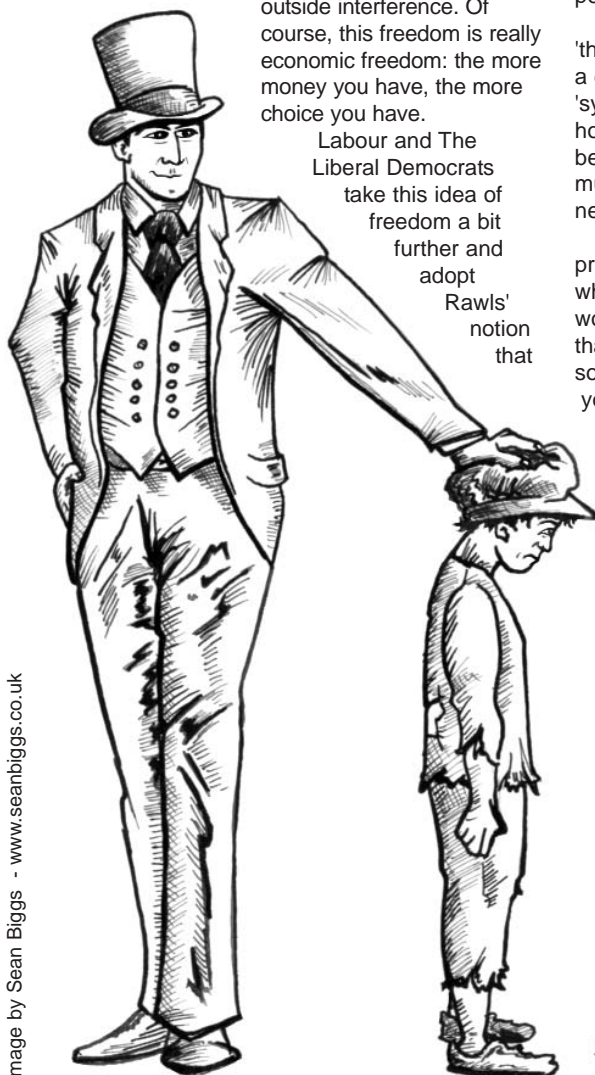
John B Rawls (1921- 2002) was a philosophy professor at Harvard and Oxford Universities. He was awarded a Bronze Star in World War 2, where he fought in the Far East against the Japanese. It was his time in that War, witnessing the slaughter and chaos, that made him a philosopher.

He developed an idea that Justice was essentially an issue of Fairness. In 1971, he wrote his famous work *A Theory of Justice*. The ideas he outlined are relevant today and could be seen in the positions outlined by the major parties in the recent 2015 General Election, in the UK.

His main point is that we are all free agents; nobody is to be coerced into adopting a point of view. This is the main idea of modern Conservatism: the freedom to develop your own life to the full, without

outside interference. Of course, this freedom is really economic freedom: the more money you have, the more choice you have.

Labour and The Liberal Democrats take this idea of freedom a bit further and adopt Rawls' notion that



fairness can only really be a reality if there is some form of re-distribution of wealth; the least privileged in society must be the prime winners from any new political policy. This introduces the idea of welfare and social structures: Rawls advocated the establishment of minimum entitlement: a social minimum, below which no citizen can fall.

Rawls thought that Man is born with a 'moral capacity'. He thought that Man is more inclined to co-operation than competition. This is a rejection of Thatcher's 'no such thing as society'; Rawls thought that people are naturally good and inclined to help each other if they see that they are operating under a 'fair system': 'fair' means that the deserving get rewards and no-one starts life with an inbuilt, unfair advantage: this was the basis of New Labour, a social democratic party. The Tory idea is that 'greed is good' and natural; that people should be allowed to get as rich as they can and then allow their wealth to 'trickle down' to the people below them.

Rawls' most famous thought experiment was 'the original position': imagine a group of people on a desert island. They are drawing up their new 'system'; some will be leaders, others followers: however, they don't know which role they will each be given, therefore they make sure there is as much opportunity and equality as possible in the new Constitution.

Rawls' starting point is the question of what principles of justice would individuals agree to when designing a new society, and concludes it would be one based on fairness. So the idea is that people were asked to choose what kind of society they wanted to live in: 1) a society where you were born into different social classes that had different life advantages or disadvantages; with those of one particular class enjoying very good life chances, and those of another having to make do with very poor life chances, with all the varying degrees in between. Or, 2) one where you were born into a society that didn't have different levels of social privilege or social disadvantage as part of its structure; where your life chances were more or less equal. The choosing here is done without anyone knowing where 'their' position in the new society would be; that is: from behind a 'veil of ignorance'.

So, Rawls faces us with the same challenge as in his day: to design a way of living that makes us all stakeholders in society and makes us feel no-one is born into social privilege or disadvantage due to an accident of birth.

CONTACT PHILOSOPHY IN PUBS

Website: www.philosophyinpubs.org.uk
Email: info@philosophyinpubs.org.uk

Philosophy in Pubs Enquiry Groups/Venues - Spring 2016

The Crown: Lime Street, City Centre. Meets weekly, Mondays 2.30pm upstairs

Stamps Bar: Moor Lane, Crosby. Meets every Thur at 7pm

The Victoria Hotel: Great George St, Waterloo. Every Tue 6.30pm

Keith's Wine Bar: Lark Lane, Sefton Park, Liverpool. Every Tuesday 7.30pm

Friday Forum: 7 Abercromby Square, Philosophy Dep't, Uni of Lpool. Every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month (2pm)

The Halfway House: Woolton Road, Childwall. Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of month (7.15pm)

Lakesideview Kiosk: Newsham Park, Orphan Drive, by model boating lake. Meets 1st Wed of month (1pm)

The Belvedere: off Falkner St, off Hope Street (Cultural Quarter, L'pool City Centre) 2nd Mon of month (7pm)

The Bluecoat: bar/restaurant: School Lane, City Centre. 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month (1pm)

The Casa Bar (and Social Centre): 29 Hope Street, City Centre. Meets every 2nd Saturday at 11am

The Perch Rock Hotel: 7 Grosvenor Rd, New Brighton. Meets every 3rd Mon of month (7pm to 9pm)

The Johnny Pye: 5 Pye Road, Moor Lane, off Telegraph Rd, (behind Bus station) Heswall. Meets every 2nd Tuesday (7pm to 9pm)

The Rose & Crown: 57 The Village, Lower Bebington. Meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month (2pm till 4pm)

The Red Cat: Greasby Road, Greasby. Meets every 3rd Thursday of month (2pm to 4pm)

SUMMER TIME AND THE LIVIN' IS IN THE BACK GARDEN

Fireweed by Sandra Gibson

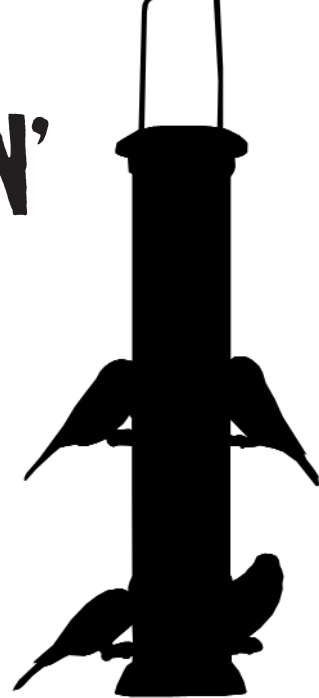
When you travel by train you realise how much green there is in Britain, not just the dull Constable green where the cows munch, but the smaller areas of green that are part of urban settlement. From formal parks and feral-shedded allotments to tiny pots of green on canal boats, having a garden is part of the national psyche, enjoying a quiet revolution among people concerned about the fate of our wild life. In the BBC's recent *Springwatch*, wild life sightings have been logged on the Nature's Calendar website and The Woodland Trust, in conjunction with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Cambridge, has been collecting and analysing two and a half million pieces of data, recorded currently and in the past by the UK public. Information gathered from the gardens of Britain is giving an insight into the way animals and plants are responding to climate change. For some species Spring and Autumn are two weeks earlier than they used to be and this matters a great deal because of interdependence. If leafing and caterpillars are happening earlier, are birds dependent on these caterpillars coordinating their breeding so as not to miss peak availability, for example? As a measure of our commitment to wild life, the sale of bird food was unaffected by the recession - according to the British Trust for Ornithology. Less optimistic is the ecologically concerning increase in hive deaths, attributed to a combination of fungal and viral infections, the use of pesticides and the loss of bee foraging habitats. If we feel powerless against corporate poisoning we can at least do something immediately about the loss of forage by planting bee-friendly plants in the garden.

If our garden is a microcosm of the larger ecological picture, it also projects the smaller, individual scenes of contemporary life among the human species. This extra room accommodates our expansive and

visible summer life style: from barbecue areas resembling the Master Chef kitchen, to jungles representing the triumph of Nature over (minimal) planning. Witness the agglomeration of make-shifting and guiltless neglect and forgotten priorities: bamboo tripods for spindly sweet peas, black cat asleep in the still-warm ash of a cheminea, a soggy teddy under a purple-flowered rhododendron, a terracotta pot of gone-to-seed parsley, a courgette plant determined to be a Triffid, the dog's rubber bone almost hidden by clusters of dusty nettles, a white buddleia subsisting in a fissure in a brick wall, orange flashes of nasturtiums, whose airy flowers trumpet advance, fence panels bearing the fist of thwarted plans and the latest garden accessory: a fire pit whose unprotected flames will give everyone not a moment's peace whilst there are toddlers or tipsiness about.

'As a species we and our stuff dominate the environment and because of the alarming combination of apathy, ignorance, poverty and corporate greed, we are likely to cause our own extinction'

The best garden moments happen when you are not distracted by domestic minutiae. At dusk, when the cloud-trapped air is warm and static, you will see bats swoop for moths over the honeysuckle, whose scent coincides with bat-time to tempt them. Then, during the short summer darkness, an urban fox, his eyes catching the street lamps, will snuffle out the remains of the KFC buckets, registering the owl's eerie call and the skittery feet of hedgehogs on cracked paving stones. And early in the morning, when the



night has hardly had time to be dark, the birds start to sing their territorial claim: a blackbird on a chimney pot points his beak to the dawning sky and sustains his sweet eclectic call, to a distant mellifluous response, whilst the querulous sparrows go cheep, cheep, cheep, in the guttering. A robin high pitches, the finches sing silver and the mellow doves flutter coo - coo - coo - coo-coo at one another. A crow saws the sky to land in the shimmering birch tree and all is alive with overlapping song battles.

As a species we and our stuff dominate the environment and because of the alarming combination of apathy, ignorance, poverty and corporate greed, we are likely to cause our own extinction. What is counterbalancing the coming apocalypse? It seems to me that an awareness of our coexistence and interdependence with the wild life that shares our diminishing spaces is growing. In political and economic terms we have noticed that the goose that lays the golden eggs is facing exhausted barrenness. If the stupidity continues we will kill her. We know instinctively that we've got to get ourselves back to the garden and that is what must start to happen - is starting to happen - in our own back gardens.

If the motivation is to save the goose so she can be greedily exploited again, then we are getting nowhere but if the aim is to sustain egg-production in order to distribute them fairly, then that's progress.

REVIEW OF DAVID BOWIE'S THE MAN WHO SOLD THE WORLD

By Rob Harrison



“The Man Who Sold The World is a precursor to the gothic punk of Siouxsie and the Banshees and The Cure with its taboo-breaking subject matters - magic, gay sex, death and madness”

Maniac Squat Records and Academy Events Tony Visconti and Woody Woodmansey with Glenn Gregory perform David Bowie's The Man who Sold the World 02 Academy Liverpool.

I'm sitting in Lime Street Station watching the fingers on the large clock move slowly round. It's my first gig in a while but it feels more like a date, I'm beginning to get apprehensive as I finger my costa tea, all those gig memories come flooding back to me.

My reverie is soon shattered by some old bearded guy in the queue who cheekily quips "nobody here has been born before the 21st century". Yes, we are definitely in a grey area here.

I'm among the beardies and neo-pensioners to review The Man who Sold the World for Nerve magazine after waiting for my stage pass in something reminiscent of the film Almost Famous.

We start to move in.

The Man who Sold the World was born 45 years ago -- quite old now but blow the dust off and it reveals itself to still be a worthwhile listen. Visconti, who produced and played on the original, rates it as one of his best Bowie albums but in terms of the Bowie catalogue it tends to get overlooked and stand neglected -- until tonight when Visconti and co will seek to redress that.

The album is dark and claustrophobic, the black cover illuminating or not the dark materials within.

David Buckley in his biography of Bowie describes it as gothic rock and roll(1) and in many ways The Man who Sold the World is a precursor to the gothic punk of The Banshees and The Cure with its taboo-breaking subject matter - magic, gay-sex, death and madness.

It's no coincidence that an album recorded at the end of the sixties is so nihilistic -- Bowie rises from the ashes of the hippy revolution and from it a new culture of dystopian style emerges.

So, back to the gig: the band is starting to set up, three guitars (really?), and at this point there are lots of people on stage, making it difficult to see who exactly are the roadies and who are the band. When the roadies do eventually clear off, we still have a lot of people on stage, including two backing singers who keep it in the family -- so to speak (Mick Ronson's daughter and Tony Visconti's daughter). Three guitars as mentioned, keyboard/synth player, Visconti on bass and Woody at the back on drums. One of the guitarists doubles as sax player too -- phew! And last but not least two lead singers, Glenn Gregory (Heaven 17) and Marc Almond (Soft Cell).

The opening riff to Width of a Circle heralds the start of the show and with its eerie feedback the band are sounding good.

The introduction of the three guitars adds more power to the overall sound, and the general orchestration works well -- we see the visible hand of Visconti here perhaps?

As an arranger and producer, Visconti is second to none. Apart from being a highly imaginative producer Visconti's forte is creating a band sound. This he did with T-REX on the Electric Warrior album, made at about the same time, then again with Bowie's The Man who Sold the World where he began to create the Bowie sound, moving away from the rather fey folkie musicality of the previous album Space Oddity.

The band move confidently through Width of a Circle. Glenn Gregory on vocals with neat suit and shaved head commands the stage, his vocal range is amazing! Not so much Ziggy

more The Thin White Duke, showing a linear trajectory from The Man who Sold the World to Station to Station in its various obsessions with the dark side.

The album works really well live. (Visconti originally produced the album with this in mind.) The Superman is particularly good, with guitarist James Stevenson doing his best Mick Ronson impersonation. In fact Stevenson is slightly underused throughout - this guy has talent and presence.

About three songs in Marc Almond bounces on to the stage to sing After All. Marc's campy vocal style and Brechtian swagger add weight to the song, teasing out further possibilities in a brilliant Bowie tune. Other standout tracks are: The Man who Sold the World (of course) with its brilliant spine chilling intro intact; All the Madmen with the spoken bit done brilliantly by Glenn Gregory; and Black Country Rock, one of my personal favourites on the album -- I was not disappointed!

Once The Man who Sold the World has finished the band move on to cover Ziggy period Bowie.

Marc returns to camp it up again, this time with Oh You Pretty Things and The Wild Eyed Boy from Freecloud which he makes his own, and gets the baldy guys in front of me to camp it up along with him (no mean feat!). For Marc this is the hometown gig, as he originally hails from Southport (near enough). He recalls to us the tale of being beaten up by thugs on the train as he was on his way to a Bowie gig in Liverpool, ending up at the gig covered in blood and scars. If you wondered where all those Soft Cell lyrics came from, look no further.

The frantic pace of Moonage Daydream leaves the oldies in a bit of a daze. It's at this point they start searching for water as the place is now very packed and hot, as the band slam out Bowie hit after hit. We have a good gig situation on our hands meanwhile on stage, James Stevenson does another stunning Mick Ronson impersonation on Moonage Daydream -- you know the one where Mick's foot seems to get stuck on the reverb pedal!

Meanwhile at the back Woody Woodmansey powers away doing all the good drumming bits on the songs, especially during Ziggy Stardust with its various intricate drum patterns. The band also play what appears to be the BBC sessions version of Changes. This night has become quite special all of a sudden.

The Wizard of Oz moment comes at the end, when Woody steps down from the kit to thank everyone -- was this little guy with the strong Hull accent really the behemoth behind the drum kit just minutes ago?

So, has Visconti pulled the musical rabbit out of the hat yet again? Well judging by the sea of outstretched hands and happy faces at the end of the gig it would appear so, but not yet, for as I leave the main auditorium a bit knackered after the gig, thinking the band are off for a well earned sleep, I notice a long table with pens and chairs and an equally long line of people clutching albums and stuff. It's not over yet, such is the life of the rock musician, baby!

1. The quote is from David Buckley -- David Bowie The Definitive Story Virgin Press 2005



Photograph by Colin Serjent

A REVIVAL IN VINYL

By Lynda-Louise Tomlinson

"Kids today don't know that much about Vinyl" states Martin Gore of Depeche Mode. But the joke is on the older folk as it's the kids that are bringing back the Vinyl and losing interest in the remastered, high quality MP3s or CDs of today. A cassette isn't vintage enough, it's the 78's that are being found scattered across the living room floors of the younger, hip generation. Record shops are in increasing business and charity shops are in high demand for any vinyl you can donate. In the late 1980's, the compact disc (CD) caused a gradual decline in the sale of vinyl records, so why, in 2014 was it reported that over a million Vinyl records had been sold in the UK, a level not reached for nearly ten years? What is it about the old scratchy 78's that everyone strives to possess? Record Store Day takes place globally on the third Saturday of April each year. Conceived by record store employee Chris Brown, Record Store Day was founded to celebrate the art of music, with special record releases and celebrity signings however, as I have to leave my desk to turn over my copy of George Harrison's Thirty Three & 1/3 half way through the album, I wonder if Vinyl records are really convenient in this modern, busy world? I enjoy the nostalgia that it brings, taking you back to the days of Elvis and The Beatles but if you really want to build a record collection of your own you must be prepared to delve through many discount bins, charity shops, record stores and

online auction sites. Dig Vinyl, the little basement record store of Bold Street believe that "The iconic LPs will sell all day long in any shop, but we have seen that teenagers are getting into these classics too. Seeing that younger people have made good use of the accessibility of music is encouraging. Putting albums like 'Hunky Dory' in the same bag as 'AM' represents the direction record shops are now heading towards!"

For me, the artists most suited to the warmth of the needle and the novelty of the scratchy sound, unique to each and every record, are the likes of Leadbelly, Bessie Smith and Ella Fitzgerald. Do true vinyl audiophiles really want to hear modern artists such as Bruno Mars' Uptown Funk coming from their turntable? "It's cool that current artists are releasing their music on the vinyl format. At the end of the day, records are modern and shouldn't be seen as retrospective either. The vinyl culture has always updated itself and will continue to do so (we hope!)." With a 23% surge in record sales, the UK's first Vinyl Singles chart has been launched this year by the Official Charts company, presenting a weekly rundown that excludes any contemporary formats such as CD or download and concentrates on the sales of 7" and 12" singles. In the first official vinyl singles chart, Underworld vs Heller & Farley's track Baby Wants to Ride takes the number one slot with Noel Gallagher and his High Flying Birds being the biggest selling vinyl album of 2015 so far. But can we call it a revolution?

Professor Mike Brocken of Liverpool Hope University doesn't believe it to be a revolution, "Rather than suggesting that a revolution has occurred whereby new things will happen as a consequence - a kind of avant garde - it is more to do with purchasing a format which was previously regarded as detritus by the business and claiming authenticity from it - a kind of avant garde - which is very de-revolutionary and to be applauded!" and believes "in practical terms it also has something to do with interior design rather than music; people like to dress their rooms with vinyl, therefore it has little or nothing to do with the sound as such." Martin Talbot, chief executive of the Official Charts Company, speaking to Manchester Evening News, admits "I'm sure it will hit a ceiling eventually, though. Vinyl remains a niche format, accounting for between 1% and 2% of the total albums market. I don't see it becoming a mass market format again, as it once was."

But what do the record stores think? Dig Vinyl say "Things come in waves and bursts but vinyl as a 'culture' has been consistent.

"Music has changed so much over the years, technology changed and accessibility became infinite, which saw worrying drops in vinyl chart sales. The music industry had to adapt and now we are beginning to see that different music formats can co-exist." So maybe it's not a revolution, maybe it's a phase or a fashion item that, like everything else will be forgotten about in a year or so, only to come back in another twenty years time and continue the vicious circle of life.

Round-up of Recommended Reads

International Women's Day has passed for this year, but in keeping with our belief that every day should be IWD, we first recommend a couple of books about international women. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author of the wonderful novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, has published *We Should All Be Feminists* (Fourth Estate £5). Originally a TED talk, this booklet addresses an African audience, but is universal in its sentiments: "I would like to ask that we begin to dream about and plan for a different world. A fairer world. And this is how we start: we must raise our daughters differently. We must raise our sons differently." Waris Dirie wrote an amazing trilogy of memoirs about growing up in Somalia, being subject to female genital mutilation and escaping forced marriage as a child. In *Saving Safa: Rescuing a Little Girl from FGM* (Virago £8.99) she recounts her mission to save this young girl from Djibouti (who played the young Waris in a film) from the abuse that is FGM.

There has been an impressive recent flowering of funny women, on stage and in literature. Bridget Christie's *A Book for Her* (Arrow £8.99) is part memoir, part laughter-filled rant, a tour of the most irritatingly sexist things in the world. Reading Francesca Martinez' *What the **** is Normal?* (Virgin £8.99) will warm you to this

fantastic socialist, "wobbly" comedian and actor. And if you've ever picked up one of Jackie Fleming's cartoon postcards in the bookshop, you can now indulge in a whole book *The Trouble with Women* (Square Peg £9.99) in which she investigates the history of women from the "olden days" through questions like "Can women be geniuses, or are their arms too short?"

Once we've figured that one out, we can move on to activist women. *The Hammer Blow: How 10 Women Disarmed a War Plane* (Peace News £10) is by Andrea Needham, one of the Seeds of Hope women who were acquitted, in 1996 at Liverpool Crown Court, of conspiracy to damage property, after they had attempted to prevent the greater crime of British Aerospace Hawk Jets bombing the East Timorese people, by taking a hammer to said planes. A must read - passionate, dramatic and uplifting.

While Syria is in all our thoughts, it is good to return to the origins of that conflict, when Syrians rose up against the Assad dictatorship in 2011. Samar Yazbek's *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution* (Haus £15.99) gives a woman's perspective on those early days. Meanwhile the struggle of the Kurdish people to create a different non-hierarchical society in northern Syria is illuminated in *A Small Key Can Open a Large Door: The Rojava Revolution* (Strangers in a Tangled Wilderness £11.99). Amazingly this community, while daily combatting ISIS, have been developing an anti-state, anti-capitalist way of life, which values feminism, ecological stewardship and pluralism. Much to learn for us all.

Back home we had our own minor revolution in the Labour Party. *Corbyn's*

Campaign edited by Tom Unterrainer (Spokesman £7.95) and *Being Red: A Politics for the Future* by Ken Livingstone (Pluto £12.99) are great companions to our understanding of how such an upheaval came about and how progressive forces within and without party politics can point the way to a more socialist future.

Finally to an interesting little publication called *Bad Feelings* (Book Works £8). It is a collection of essays and articles from the Art Against Cuts movement. With pieces entitled *The Rage That Turns to Action, Pain, No-one Can Make You Feel Inferior Without Your Consent, Brute Forces, Revenge and Notes on Racial Domination* and a beautiful bookmark you'll certainly be intrigued.

Mandy Vere



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Don't Let Him Know (Bloomsbury Publishing) Sandip Roy's debut novel

Extract of Book Review by Chumki Banerjee

Contents of my Cousin's mind
The God of small smites, senseless
slights, secrets, lies and blighted lives
My Indian fascination

Though I am of Indian extraction, my parents separately tore up their roots and transplanted themselves in England's fair and pleasant land, while still striplings themselves.

Renegades, running from restrictions, headstrong hooligans, when their retrograde paths collided, two atoms never destined to combine in a culture where intermingling was primarily elemental; arranged within same caste; fizzed with irresistible attraction of opposites, fused to form new molecule. Bonds already stretched, irretrievably broken, these two radicals floated free of an ancestry that could not comprehend this new compound.

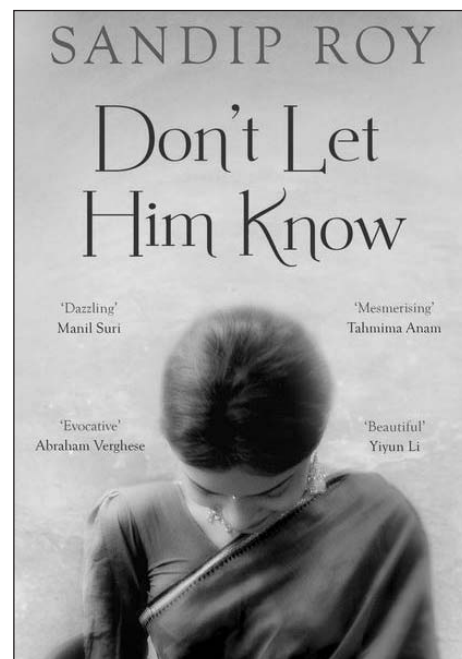
So, before the seed of me was even planted in their minds, the history book of my parents' lives had been torn into tiny pieces, scattered leaves carried away by winds of change.

Born in fresh soil, watered by clouds that

had never held monsoon rains, or been evaporated by exotic sunrays, though England is my home, all that I know, a germ of me remains un-bloomed, retains a remnant of genetic memory, which tugs at my subconscious, exerts a fascination for a country which I cannot call my own, yet is buried in the marrow of my bones.

So, over the last few years, as Indian authors, in the ascendant, have blossomed in our bookshops, I have attempted to greedily consume their words, incorporate their heritage into a psyche hungry to fill an awning gap, to extract and clarify the essence of a familiar scent which clings to my consciousness, drifts through my dreams, lingers at cusp of comprehension, mirage which eludes, just out of reality's grasp, captivating me with ripples back to a past I will never realise.

Estranged as I am from specific ancestry, *Don't Let Him Know*, though not autobiographical, is a very special book to me because, as my closest cousin, the contents of his head penetrate mists, grant me a glimpse into my genetic heritage, especially as this is a cousin with whom I share a spectral connection, beyond bloodlines and his uncanny resemblance to my brother. This is a book, which though peopled with fictional characters, is set in real places, evokes anecdotes and atmospheres which permeate



my memory, from encounters with this extraordinary cousin and the country which made my parents; which answers many of my questions about how cultures and religions affect real day to day lives, in a way I can directly relate to.

BABADUB – THE RESTORATION

Album review by Tommy Calderbank

Babadub are an incredible duo from the heart of the Scouse underground music scene. 'The Restoration' is their debut album, and what an audacious treat it is, mixing a variety of styles and influences to form a tasty, addictive and heady brew. They describe their sound as 'Epic Vocal Dub Electro Fusion', and I can't disagree.

The first thing to note is that this is a DOUBLE ALBUM. Count 'em: 22 tracks in total. That's a lot of goodness, brethren! The CD sleeve is beautifully produced by Liverpool graphic art scene veteran Paul Hunt, with trippy images of psychedelic coral and images of the band and Buddha. This is a band on a mission to free our asses and make sure that our minds follow....

Babadub are Marty Snape and Sharlene Squire (Charlie to her friends). Marty does the 'computer stuff, synths, machines, guitar, bass, and weird noises', while Charlie does 'lyrics, vocals, keyboards and happy accidents'.

Together and separately, they have been part of some seminal local bands, including ZEB, The Hat Band, Snappertronics, and The Dub Jazz Sound System, to name but a few.

The album was crowdfunded on Indiegogo, providing a model for all musicians to get their material produced and out there for the people. No record companies required. The list of thanks on the sleeve show that this is a band with a lot of supporters, a lot of love.

They say within every good double album there's a great single one trying to get out. I don't know if that's the case here, as there's hardly a duff tune. Their range is astonishing, from the bouncy joyous optimism of 'Way Out' to the fragile melancholia of 'Life Ain't Nothing', their versatility is astounding.

The lyrical content and consistent vocal performance confirm the fabulous Ms Squire as a solid gold poet diva. And Marty is a musician and tunemeister of the very highest order. Together, they are an



irrepressible force to be reckoned with, and a fantastic live proposition (as they proved recently at the wonderful Rebel Soul curated 12 hour marathon 'Positive Vibrations Vol 3' at Constellations).

Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks, Babadub. Long live The Restoration! **9/10**

Further info and to buy 'The Restoration': www.babadub.co.uk/
Album also available from News From Nowhere
www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/

NEIL CAMPBELL – EMERGENCE

Album review by Joe Coventry

New for 2015 and right on the heels of his last CD, the abstract Tabula Rasa Suite, Neil Campbell is back with eMERgence, an existential expedition through time, space and life. So what do we get for joining in on the trip?

The man featured on the CD cover is striking in red; a confident guitarist on top of his trade. Inside there are pictures of the band as young kids, the leader playing in a space suit. Influential and important to the tracks that follow? Definitely.

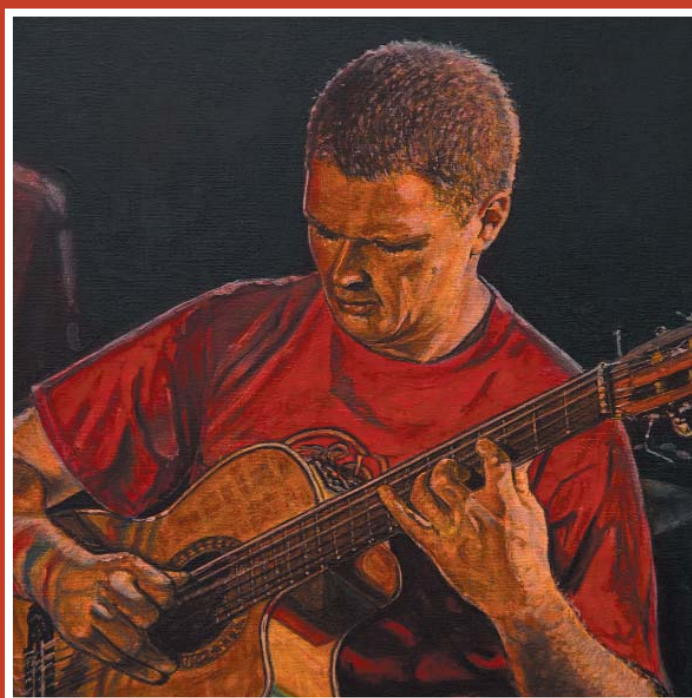
Where to begin then? Morphogenetic is seven minutes long, a mutating mitosis of a piece. To the accompaniment of siren voices, out of the primordial swamp of life comes music that will transcend childhood and beyond, affirming the way forward. After a seven second silence this transmogrifies into MC² (not Einstein's famous mc²). Here the music is a Kraftwerk-like beating along the autobahn, its cocksure orgasmic stroke hinting at pastures new.

Private Collection 1&2 precede track 5, Teilhard de Chardin. No 1 has hints of maracas and Spanish guitar above the drums and some haunting angelic female voice-over. No 2 has an electronic beat; think otherworldly space flight timelessness, and you are there.

The journey that lands on the epicentre of track 5 is a reflective, contemplative, instrumental, searching for enlightenment. The cleric and palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin is primarily credited with the synthesis of theology and science, a construct which did not go down too well with the Catholic Church. Here though it provides a soft landing for the 'ME' in the album title.

Private Collection No 3 is outward bound again charging bravely into another universe, the keyboard emanating gravity free pulses while the drums/cymbals drive the music on its way. No 4, guitar and keys to the fore, has the vocals straining into ominous territory - a portent of what?

The miasma of Fields Within Fields follows, a multi-dimensional layered and chasing all-in from the band, eventually separating out to



a steady state finish. The journey climaxes with the 4 minute 21 second, E = . This features slow guitar, gently disappearing into a receding gypsy caravan-like epiphany, and onwards to the next phase of muse driven ether.

This is an album which grows on you the more you listen to it. There are influences of prog rock and jazz fusion, along with some abstract electronics from Marty Snape that ensure the female voices do not sidetrack the evolving search.

The 'ME' in all of us is travelling on a parallel journey to Campbell's as we too evolve. It is his good fortune that he is able to express his version of events with the talented line-up on these nine tracks.



A TRIBUTE TO TERENCE MATTHEW KANE

3/5/1970 - 22/4/2015

By Gayna Rose Madder

Very infrequently one encounters an artist who is so individual, so uncompromising about his work and life, and for whom 'normal' rules don't apply, that it can be difficult to anticipate what will happen next, or what direction will be taken - as well as troublesome for that person to live an uncomplicated life.

Terry Kane, as he was known to his many friends, and who has died aged 44, was such an artist.

Attending the Fine Art Foundation Course at Liverpool Hope Street Art College in the late 1980s, he met many colleagues with whom he remained friends for years.

I spoke to one who described him as being, even at that age, a 'Parisian painter in Liverpool'.

Early influences included Pablo Picasso and the Cubists, particularly in terms of colour. As a prolific painter, however, he had his own distinctive style from an early age, and many, including some tutors, believed he had the talent to become a major established artist in his own right.

In fact he always was a successful artist, selling, giving or bartering vast numbers of his works to friends, family, colleagues and sometimes others. Another colleague and friend relates that famous Brazilian bossa-nova singer-songwriter Joyce Moreno (who is named after Irish novelist James Joyce) was presented with one of Terry's 'girl with guitar' paintings and took it back to Rio de Janeiro after her concert in Liverpool a few years ago.

He also relates that an art collector in Seville in Spain (on the Guadalquivir River



where Columbus set sail for the Americas) has three of Terry's paintings permanently on display.

His most productive period was from the late 1990s to 2000, by which time his influences included Henri Matisse, Georges Braque and Stanley Spencer.

There were distinct periods of work; for instance a trip to Greece inspired a set of paintings of pastel buildings rising up hillsides from the sea nearby.

He was fascinated by music - not only listening to it, but by the mechanics of making it. This led to a series of paintings of groups of musicians from differing genres playing instruments. These were painted in great and accurate detail, even though sometimes from imagination.

His musical tastes were eclectic but by far his favourite artist was Syd Barrett (deceased - formerly founder of Pink Floyd), especially his album 'The Madcap Laughs'.

He was also a big fan of Radiohead, and the American band Eels. But he had broad tastes and would open-mindedly listen to almost anything.

From 2004 on, his painterly style became more Expressionist, which continued throughout the rest of his career. He took to using large canvases for his figurative paintings, using a limited colour palette.

He has been described as the 'glue' which held many others together. Everyone knew who he was, and he knew most of them. He was able to mix socially in many layers of society, being well-educated but not remotely snobbish. As one of his closest friends said, 'He was the real deal'. He was a one-off who will be much missed.

Twisting Paths Through Time And Space

Extract of poem by Chumki Banerjee
(full version to go on Nerve website)

A poem inspired by this beautifully evocative sketch, gifted to me by local artist Felicity Wren, and in celebration of the old dock road, Liverpool's Regent Road, reflecting on what remains of its past, as it is rapidly swallowed up. You probably would need to know the Dock Road to get an inkling of what I am rambling on about, so why don't you walk to the beat of the Admiral's feet and follow in his steps.

SCREWING IN HIS MONOCLE

A life in the day of the admiral of Admiral Street, Liverpool eight: admirable or abominable, you decide

- * Rising with the crowing cock, standing proud in just his socks, dreams still wet from salt spray docks, the Admiral arose.
- * Squinting at dawn's glinting crack, fond recollections flooding back, exotic lands where caught in flack, he captured dusky beau.
- * Screwing in his monocle, rising lead his oracle, caressing bushy follicles, he slips his fingers in.

* Slippery, shiny, Vaseline slick, finest asset soldier stiff, curls commanding upward flick, he whets red gash of lips.

* Brandishing his sturdy stick, telescoped to swingeing wick, mastiff fondly roused with kick, the Admiral sallies forth.

* Barometer set for foul or fair, though fleet no longer in his care, scalped of tri-corn, head stripped bare, he heeds his duty's call.

BURJESTA THEATRE COMPANY

By Lynda-Louise Tomlinson

Burjesta Theatre Company is unlike any other on Merseyside, "We wanted to do it our way", said Julian Bond and Mikyla Durkin in agreement, when I met them to learn more about the company.

"We want to communicate with Liverpool things that are relevant and important to them. We have both got something to say and have chosen theatre to say it."

They founded the company in October 2011, and have since produced, cast and directed over fifty shows. "It's our baby" said Julian, who believes "theatre is still not where it needs to be".

The venue of our meeting is the Casa, based on Hope Street. I am introduced to the venue and told of its history by Julian himself, who tells me of its strong association with the dockers of Liverpool after an industrial dispute in 1998.

The Casa is part of the Initiative Factory, a charitable trust set up by those that were sacked, to further the hopes and aspirations of the people, and alleviate poverty in Liverpool.

With Julian's great passion and interest in Greek theatre, it is no surprise that Burjesta's latest production was of Euripides' Medea, with an original adaptation by Burjesta member and poet, Jonathon Bibby. "It was one of our largest productions with a cast of sixteen, including two child actors, and an all-woman Greek chorus".

Although Julian and Mikyla claim to have "total artistic control", they also admit to their different approaches when it comes to directing.

"We never co-direct, we take it in turns" says Mikyla, as she admits that Julian has a much more laid back approach but their ethos remains. "We have both got something to say and we have chosen theatre to say it...all our plays say something, attack something. We are not an amateur company,



we are social, political...there isn't anything more powerful than theatre."

The process of casting a production begins with workshops, held at Burjesta's home, The Casa, every Wednesday evening. No experience is necessary.

"We have an open door policy", says Julian, "all we ask is can you act."

"Our members range from 11-70 years of age and everything in between."

The workshops allow the directors to try out ideas, to "find their feet", and also give the members the opportunity to "have a crack at directing themselves....from chaos comes creativity" say Julian, "and find orientation in disorientation."

As the workshops are open to everybody, so are the auditions, but future cast members must attend workshops in order to be considered for the closed auditions. "We give high priority to loyalty...rehearsals differ from workshops, they're high end and earthy."

The scripts are born and grow within devising sessions, and scenes come from improvisation into script, but as Julian continues to explain the rehearsal process, he certainly isn't as laid back as Mikyla may have suggested, and believes that the cast are "a much poorer group" without having built a relationship and confidence working with the other members within the workshop process.

The popularity and success of Burjesta is like in all companies, the responsibility of the marketing and promotion department and, in Burjesta's case, this also happens to be Julian.

Feedback forms are given to audience members, and there is a website, together with Facebook and Twitter accounts. As

Julian believes, and I agree, that Facebook, although incredibly popular and useful, can't be your sole provider of promotion, and this belief is supported by the walls of the Casa being adorned with racks of leaflets and posters that I was subconsciously drawn to as I walked through the corridor.

Burjesta receive no funding for their productions and rely on the time and generosity of their volunteers. Mikyla, as production manager, reflects on their last production Medea, which only cost a total of £19 for production.

"No one gets paid, it's miraculous and intense making something out of nothing." Ticket sales, at only £2/£3 each, cover the costs of materials and set. "We don't want theatre to be for the elite", says Mikyla, as she explains how the work of Burjesta challenges stereotypes, promotes individuality and highlights "massive wide issues" such as class and the representation of Liverpool and the 'Scouse' accent in theatre and entertainment.

"Entertainment is dumbed down...insubstantial light laughter dressed up as theatre is nonsense."

The worst scenario that Julian can imagine is "a good show", as he believes that their work is "a serious responsibility...you want them to be the best...be proud of what they do."

Mikyla agrees. "The most precious thing in your life is time" and as people give a lot of their time to the workshop, rehearsal and performance process of any production "it has to be of high quality...to be proud of it...it's rousing stuff...theatre is not going to change the world but it is a good place to start."

Anna Nielsson

I've always enjoyed photography because it's a way for me to capture my surroundings and observe things that might otherwise be ignored or forgotten. It is a way to express feelings and perspectives about the world without the need for words or judgements.

I have a wide variety of interests which I think helps inspire my ambition to travel and document what I see.

My collection of images includes many from around my home in Liverpool, particularly of the waterfront, and a wide variety of architecture, as well as pictures of cities across Europe and the USA.

I also enjoy photographing the natural world, from landscapes to flowers, as well as pet portraits.

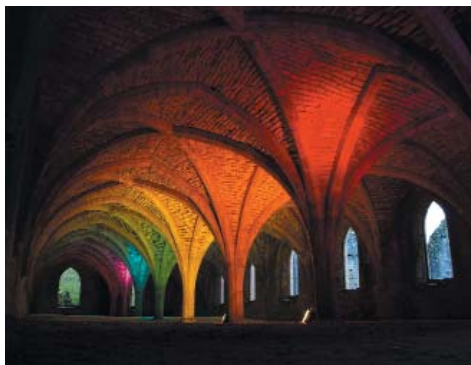
I've been involved in many exhibitions across Liverpool and Merseyside, and my photographs have been featured in various calendars and greetings cards.

I primarily use an Olympus OM-D E-M10 - a compact system camera which I prefer because of its high quality images despite its light weight and small size. Recently I've been having fun with a 9mm fisheye lens which means I can get much more in an image than I am used to.

For me the future is all about experimentation and finding new ways to explore my environment.

www.annajanephoto.com

www.flickr.com/photos/annanielsen



Steve Lamb

I would describe my style as *Modern Urban Photography*, including elements of street photography. I love cityscapes and street art, and have recently started including more people in my shots rather than focusing purely on symmetry, architecture, and light (though these are still vital aspects of my work).

I'm a big film buff and my photographic style is influenced by cinematographers like Wally Pfister, who shot Christopher Nolan's 'Dark Knight'. This has helped me achieve a more cinematic quality to my shots, rather than the more traditional style of photography which I consciously try to avoid.

Regarding equipment, I use the

Micro Four Thirds cameras which allow a good balance between size and image quality. I'm a firm believer in the ethos that 'the best camera is the one you've got with you'. Carrying a full size DSLR is not a good idea when you're walking around Piccadilly Circus at 12am or participating in a major Anti Austerity event! The Micro Four Thirds cameras are relatively small so allow discretion but produce excellent images.

Recent work has included covering 'Light Night' 2015 for Open Culture and the 'Above The Beaten Track' music festival for Nerve Magazine. I would like to build on this media work and potentially exhibit some of my photography.



Vesta

(Director of Art at Glorybox)

My work is not necessarily borne from the desire to contribute to the world of photography but is borne from the unquenched merging of understandings, the consciousness and awareness of the lines that intersect science, religion, mythology, art and social understanding.

The struggle to identify as a photographer in the literal sense is rooted deep, although photographic processes are the basis for much of my work.

I am an avid pupil and teacher, a control freak, a feeling thinker, persistent under achiever, whipping boy, sacrificial pig, an alchemist, the first born and last regurgitated.

The desire to pick apart and understand the intricacies of our perceived modern viewpoints, projected through the stains of legacy and ritual, became the key, but I do wonder if I'll ever understand what I mean when I say the word 'artist'.

Is it the innate desire to grasp and take ownership of our psyche that stops us from developing our own concepts, views, ideas about the world we live in and the places we have migrated from?

The idea of some perfect work, an expectation, the masterpiece, the want to be better. I think it just gets in the way. I'll never know and I'll never stop trying to know, but letting go of the necessity to find out and observing the internalised mechanics is enough to satisfy me from day to day. The rest is a journey, and I'm never settled in the little steps, but I can't justify resisting them.

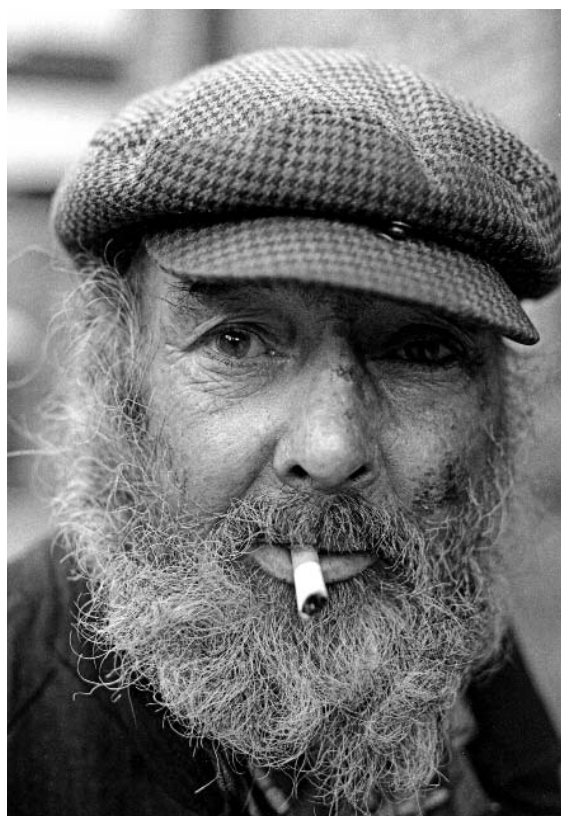
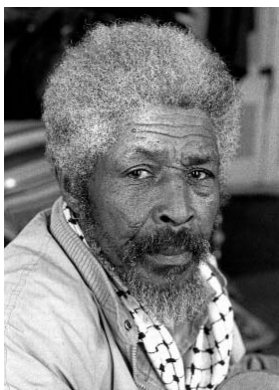
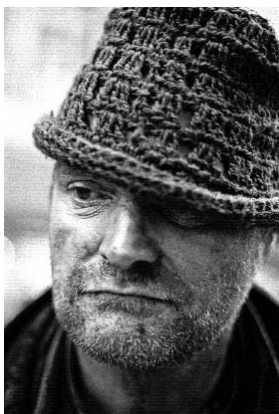
Email: info@glory-box.co.uk
www.glory-box.co.uk

Photographs featured:

OhlayIndigo, singer, songwriter, producer. Artwork from her latest single G.E.M

From an international commission with Milk:Presents/Broken Men in Russia, tour of Moscow & St Petersburg, Nov/Dec 2014

Raspberry - Part of Light Night and LOOK/15 International Photography Festival



Abdullah Badwi

I see myself as a passionate social documentary photographer, I am and always have been fascinated by 'real people', people from all walks of life who live and reflect the life, times and culture they inhabit.

But I am drawn to those people who have endured, are enduring, or surviving some form of struggle, whether that be poverty, pain, war, racial or physical abuse, etc.

I grew up in Toxteth and things were not easy when I was young. I remember playing and climbing on what we called 'bombies', i.e., the mass of derelict houses around the area. I am sure this also had something to do with my darker, grittier image capturing.

The exhibition I had at Camp & Furnace during the Look 15 International Photography Festival in Liverpool during May 2015 was an opportunity for me to display work that no one had seen for 25 to 30 years.

The work was a selection of images from some of my personal projects. The photographs, like most of my work, were an intimate collection of images of people who I had tried to reach out to, who I sometimes had to spend weeks getting to know, gaining their trust, to be allowed to get the intimate portraits I had on display.

After using many forms of film cameras I have now, finally, accepted a digital camera, and use a Fuji X Pro 1, which is a fantastic camera and takes an almost 35mm B&W film-like image, almost, but not quite.

LIVERPOOL PUBS PAINTINGS BY STEPHEN BOWER

**Exhibition at the View Two Gallery
Reviewed by Joe Coventry**

Stephen Bower hails from Totnes but he loves coming to Liverpool. So much so that he has painted the town more than red whilst capturing the essence of some famous watering holes. Inspired by American Social Realist Edward Hopper he is happy to accept that this collection is nearer the French Impressionism of his other hero, Degas.

The View Two is an independent Gallery in Mathew Street and is just the right size for this show of 25 acrylic canvasses that are well worth a visit. The mostly 40x40cm or 50x50cm evenly spaced out pictures fill the space to a tee. One wag has come up with the title 'Two pints of paint and a packet of crisps' to describe this novel concept. The inside of the pubs on show will register high in the psyche of those who have bevved in them, but what is presented here are rapidly put together impressions of the external facades and elevations.

So how does he do it? Well, by standing up outside in all weathers for a start. It's all



about atmospheric effect, rather than capturing a definitive statement, that he is after. The scene taking shape is continually in transition. The arc of the sun, new shadows, twinkling lit interiors, itinerant Lowry like figures standing outside for a smoke, capturing tradesmen's vans before they drive off; that is what Bower is eager to capture. Colour, light, impression, time of day, viewpoint, size of hostelry - all are important to how the 'finished article' turns out.

The Ship & Mitre's Art Deco exterior came out a mediocre grey after two efforts when viewed from under an overpass, while Ye Cracke's white frontage was phosphorescent when caught in some mid afternoon glare. The Belvedere in fading light, is caught with a garish Moorish splurge of yellow on its Sugnall

Street side wall. With the sun behind him the sky is cobalt blue, as the purple and green outlines of the Midland Hotel opposite Central Station leave a distant Adelphi in the gloom. Conversely the John Lewis building is a dazzling cream while a splurge of orange on Sabastian's fruit stall leaves no doubt what has caught the artist's eye.

Whether it is the formidable, sombrely outlined storied windows of Thomas Rigby's, the almost Fauvist grandeur of the pink sky surrounded, cupola sporting Philharmonic; or the understated uniform simplicity of the Globe compared with the pillar box red of Coopers' next door in Cases Street: everywhere it is the essence of the place that Bower has tried to capture, rather than the ideal and for me it worked very well.

SERJENT'S ABSTRACT NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

By Sandra Gibson (With reference to an exhibition of Colin Serjent's photographs, staged with Jane Groves, at the Egg Cafe in Liverpool at the beginning of 2016)

Colin Serjent's photographs approach two-dimensional abstractions in their close observations of nature. I particularly liked the one with the dark tracery of branch and twigs: bare against a bright sky so that there is a resemblance to stained glass windows. And there was an extra surprise because although at first it looks monochrome, there are some delicate patches of green. The photograph paired with this, of texture and shadow, nicely balanced between black and white, moves further towards abstraction, as if to make a

point. Sky as back-drop is a prevalent theme in Serjent's work and he experiments with the proportion of background sky to whatever is in the foreground. In a jewel-like development of the stained glass motif was a photograph where the pattern of dark branches is placed against a bright blue sky, with lime green leaves. The blue's the thing here whereas in another photograph with illuminated lime and orange leaves, the blue is minimised, though it is there to enhance the warm orange tones. So its power is still strong though it is less impactful in itself. My favourite of the exhibition was powerful through its oriental-style minimalism: bare, perpendicular branches against a blue, blue, sky.



Serjent's photographs can be seen on his website: www.abstractway.co.uk



Steve Moss celebrates the arrival of Liverpool's Small Cinema

SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED

Back in the 1990s Liverpool was home to the 051 Cinema which featured a fabulous array of arthouse and foreign language films which weren't being shown anywhere else in Liverpool. I saw some great cult films there including *Blue Velvet* and *Tetsuo The Iron Man*, but looking back now at the old listings, I wish I'd gone a bit more often while I had the chance. After it closed its doors in 1997 I was left rueing the lost opportunity to see films I'd only read about in those days before they became more available. The arrival of FACT in 2003 was very welcome but it didn't quite replicate the diverse programme boasted by the 051.

I began putting on ad hoc screenings in fairly basic surroundings at Next To Nowhere on Bold Street from 2007, showing some of my own collection, the sort of films I wanted to offer others the chance to see and be challenged or encouraged by. I spent many an evening watching political cinema with my new friends until falling numbers and technical challenges caused by the location led me to stop in 2015.

Meanwhile I would occasionally pick up flyers from other like-minded people organising film shows in assorted pubs and basements across the city, often finding out about them after the event and wishing there was a better way for us all to communicate and support each other in our attempts to bring imaginative cinema to the people of Liverpool. So I was enthusiastic when contacted in 2014 by an acquaintance with the great idea of creating a website which would enable us all to list our events and find out where all the other ones were happening without having to rely on stumbling across a photocopied flyer on a tipsy night out. The Screening Film site has proved invaluable in linking up people and increasing our visibility.

My delight was increased in early 2015 when I was approached again by the same person who had a vision of bringing all these people putting on screenings together in one

physical venue. This would require some work as it did not yet exist, being merely an empty room in an old magistrates' court on Victoria Street and would have to be constructed by hand! Fortunately there were many people as excited as I was by this prospect and with the generous help of many people who donated materials and time, we were able to create this cinema in barely 2 months. Working in freezing conditions we employed all our DIY skills (in my case, limited to applying a few coats of paint!) and the cinema appeared before our eyes in record time.

Liverpool Small Cinema opened its doors on March 19th 2015. Immediately visitors could see the difference between this and the chain cinemas. The traditional experience was replicated with the use of some donated uniforms, tear-off tickets, plush seats rescued from an old cinema, introductions given to each film and the low admission prices, but most obviously by the selection of films. The first month featured such diverse delights as the 1928 classic *The Passion Of Joan Of Arc*, Ken Loach's documentary *Spirit Of '45*, 1960s obscurity *Herostratus*, the infamous *Freaks*, new documentary on colonialism *Concerning Violence*, children's animation and African cinema alongside recent releases *Pride* and *The Lego Movie*! This really went to show the range of interests held by the different groups involved, who were nevertheless more than willing to lend their time to assist in other people's screenings, resulting in surely one of the most varied programmes to be found anywhere. Of course we are not perfect (yet!) and still aim to increase our diversity.

Since its opening the Small Cinema has quickly become a celebrated addition to local culture, namechecked in many magazines and even tweeted about by Yoko Ono. It continues to exist as an alternative model for cinemas, run exclusively by volunteers and film enthusiasts for the sheer love of cinema

and rewarding those who manage to locate it in its hidden corner at 57-59 Victoria Street. The end credits are regularly met with a round of applause from the appreciative audience who come back again and again and are often eager to become volunteers. We are slowly learning how to navigate the maze of licensing each film for screening, which sometimes requires a significant amount of detective work! The current programme has expanded to embrace a kids' club, classic 80s horror, various film festivals, sci-fi and a season featuring



women in Polish cinema. The cinema is open to approaches from anyone with ideas for screenings and has recently expanded its horizons to offer the newer volunteers a chance to help choose films and become part of what feels like our new 'family'. Now it approaches its first birthday the team are beginning to think more about the project's long-term aims and wondering where it will take us, but we are still loving our very own small cinema and the opportunities it gives us to meet so many good people and share our love of film with them.

FIND OUT MORE:

<http://liverpoolsmallcinema.org.uk/>
<http://screeningfilm.com/>

BIRDMAN OF LIVERPOOL

A profile of wildlife artist Anthony Smith

Anthony Smith is an award winning wildlife artist living and working in Liverpool. His earliest memories are of country walks around Tarbock, near Halewood, and he soon became interested in the wildlife that he saw on these walks.

Smith began trying to recreate the pictures in the nature books that soon became Christmas and birthday regulars.

After leaving school he went to what was Liverpool Polytechnic – but is now John Moores University – to study graphic illustration in Hope Street. All through the studying he continued with his love of natural history. When he left the Polytechnic in the 1980s he spent most of his spare time around the Merseyside coast, especially Crosby, Seaforth and Oglet, where he filled his sketchbook with drawings of birds, insects and animals.

He started to exhibit work at open exhibitions around the country, including the Society of Wildlife Artists exhibition at the Mall Galleries in London. When exhibiting there he won the Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Fine Art Award, and was twice shortlisted for 'British Birds' Bird Illustrator of the Year.

Whilst showing at the annual National Exhibition of Wildlife Art, which at that time was based at Mann Island at the Pier Head, he was asked to take over as artist at Chester Zoo, and has since been their unofficial artist for over fifteen years, painting their identification and informational art.

Smith has recently finished one commission to paint every species at the zoo.

"Away from the exotic species I am always drawn back to the local and native species that I see on my 'local patch' of Merseyside, and on trips to other wildlife sites around the country.

"My favourite part of the picture making process is the collecting of the reference material. I do not paint species that I have not seen and been able to observe, because I need to see how the birds behave and move - only then can I start to build up ideas for a picture.

"I am attracted to 'bird shapes'," he added, "the shapes the birds adopt as they go about their business. Some are plumped up like a



ball to protect themselves from the cold while others are slim standing tall if the temperature rises."

His exhibition at the View Two Gallery in Mathew Street, held earlier this year, was his first one-man show and featured thirty oil paintings and watercolours painted in the last couple of years.

A few were from trips made to Lindisfarne, Pembroke and Oban, but most are from locations nearer home. Many are inspired by him looking out of the kitchen window!

"In my paintings I try to recreate the experience of me seeing the bird – some busy and noisy - and some quiet and still. Often the noise and smell of an encounter are important factors and therefore demand that things are painted, warts and all, in order to give the viewer a sense of the moment."

He has twice been shortlisted for Bird Illustrator of the Year (BTO). His work has appeared in magazines such as 'Natural World' and 'British Birds (BTO)'.

He has exhibited his paintings at various venues, including at 'Whaletail' Wildlife Art Exhibition in Nairobi, East Africa.

www.anthonysmith.eu