

Poetry Express Newsletter #63

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In Memoriam Frank Bangay



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Registered Office: c/o C/O Raedan, 7 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, England, WC2E 8PS

Contributions to Dave Russell (Editor) – bricolage92@hotmail.com

In Memoriam Frank Bangay

Frank Bangay was, luckily for us, wholly untameable wholly unclassifiable – though he liked to classify others sometimes, and with reason.

The first I saw of Frank was one of his memorable performances at the **Diorama Studio in Osnaburgh Street in 2003**, this burly Wandsworth voice fluted with a high Tessitura and a boom that seemed to hit the floor in a kind of whump. Frank's lariat of lyrical invective, half-singing half-skirling, lashed into memorability. Then there was the mouth organ. And Frank always wore an off-white suit to perform – more vanilla, or manila: like a joke on Alec Guinness.

In fact, Frank, amongst other things – embodied a cosmic joke of Blakean proportions. Look at his knowingly naïve, vivid Blakean paintings and his commentaries on them, or his sophisticated historiographical memoir of the music of **Kevin Coyne**. There's something of a Renaissance portmanteau man about Frank. Look in the pages following.

I'd learned Frank was the semi-detached co-founder of SP and most people here, including Editor **Dave Russell** and Events Organiser **Debbie McNamara** knew him for up to 20 years more than I, and far more closely.

Taking up the Artistic Director post at SP is a strange oxymoronic world at the best of times, but Frank helped define what it wasn't or wasn't any more. I soon learned that he'd left SP in disgust at the rebranding exercise of 1999 that altered the great founding strapline 'Survivors of the Mental Health System' to 'Survivors of Mental Distress.' 'So anyone can get a nosebleed now and say they're a Survivor' Frank contemptuously noted. Outreach Co-ordinator **Roy Birch**, who knows a thing or three about isolation,

incarceration and exclusion noted: ‘If someone with a nosebleed wants to join SP, there’s a story.’ Wise mediating words.

But you know what Frank meant by them. **James Ferguson**, then editor of *Poetry Express*, thought Frank had a point and we wrangled over how we could re-inject the original radicalism back into the strapline and asked people in 2006. People wanted it to stay the same – a bit frustrating. Still I wondered if there was a way.

Survivors of Distress and the Mental Health System

Basically Frank meant: the move towards Arts Council Funding and Regularly Funded Status initiated by co-founder and angelic Machiavel supreme **Joe Bidder** (surely up for an MBE if the very notion of it wasn’t offensive to many). The managerial move, the casual hierarchies, salaries and governance seemed to Frank like Wordsworth’s prison bars rising round the one safe place hewn out of bitter exile by the four survivors and their comrades.

Just appointed, I might have seemed like my predecessor, an ex-ACE high-flyer, my Cambridge PhD etc. marking me out as seemingly pure Establishment, despite being hoiked into post by then Chair John O’Donoghue like the Irish tramp by Reginald Perrin in *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* Part 2. Like the tramp, I turned out ominously good with stats. But my torn suits didn’t get any better, and – literally – not a patch on Frank’s.

It didn’t help that later ACE wanted us to start questionnaires around events, the one thing Frank kept attending. I could see where ACE came from pressured by DCMS with its quantifiable outcomes and justifying our ways to the gods. But I saw Frank’s point – and not only his, but Razz’s and most attending. So where there were non-answers I’m glad it was cheerfully taken as a

political statement by – among others – the writer **Gemma Seltzer**, then our incredibly empathic ACE Contact Officer.

Frank's bear-hug performances effortlessly survived in their pristine ambience – even the move to the Poetry Café's Betterton Street cellar – and of course they occurred everywhere in London. Frank preserved more than any perhaps the original rage and rock against the system. In his case there's an elemental growl up from the bass-line to the heart.

There were superb elegant forays from **Peter Campbell**, the most piercing and sophisticated of the founders; and more quietly inflected ones from **Hilary Porter**, wry with regrets. And Joe Bidder's sardonic twist to lyricism. And poet signatories of the 1994 Constitution from the magnificent poet and mesmerising artist **Colin Hambrook**, and **Debbie McNamara**, both still active in the movement; and of course event-co-founder blues composer-guitarist and acclaimed poet/translator **Dave Russell**, the nearest to Frank in rage refracted through an enormous range of gifts including the editing and curating of this e-zine, and Razz whose poetry lifts off the page back to the voice and idiom of lilt, live.

Frank, though, is the visionary. Awkward, burling the tidy from his sight as he peels back his barbaric yawp, like Whitman he earns his freedom, including the Christianity he found latterly, individually, with Blakean angels. Unlike Whitman – though his song is un-assuaged, unforgiving of state trespasses, and a thorn in the side of politesse and appeasement. May it stay there forever.

Simon Jenner

News from Events

The return of the Lockdown Lounge Parties on zoom in January coincided with the news of Frank's death, the night on 28 January was dedicated to Frank's memory with some beautiful tributes in poetry and song, as well as the billed lineup of performers. For some it was the first they had heard of his passing. In February there was further opportunity to come together to mourn with some fine pieces by and about Frank read, memories of Frank shared, music played for him, Kim Bennett read her exquisite obituary.

Frank's flat is being cleared and boxes of his work being retrieved and passed on to Core Arts, where Frank spent a lot of time recording and working on his many projects. They are going to transfer all his poems, artwork etc onto the website he had just started developing there. When we have access to all this work we will have a night on zoom to celebrate Frank's poetry.

When we can return to the Poetry Cafe there will be a night to remember Frank at our home. And further off a night to mark his passing and his legacy at the Poetry Library on the Southbank, as we did for Razz in 2019. It's a longer process to get this in the bag, as an application has to be assessed by a panel that only meets every six months, to allocate dates for the following year, and it's currently shut. But Frank's legacy will always be apparent, and always cause for celebration.

Me, I'm going to sit on the park bench on Mabley Green near his flat where we had planned to go when the cold weather of this winter had passed, and spend a few moments remembering my friend in a place he loved.

Debbie McNamara
Coordinator of Live Events

Obituary

I first got to know Frank in the mid-1980s, in connection with the then **Campaign Against Psychiatric Oppression**, which, among many other things, put on shows at the Troubadour in Earls Court. I subsequently shared many spots with him at the **Cynics and Idealists Cabaret**. In the early 90s, I began to participate in Survivors Poetry and Music, of which Frank was a founder member. Frank was deeply rooted in Homerton, East London – an area once noted for its extreme instability and volatility. Its essence has been brilliantly captured in Robert Dellar's *Splitting in Two*. Then and there, psychiatric hospitals seemed to be a second home for a high proportion of the population.

He was always utterly diligent and dedicated, struggling valiantly against a mass of health issues. He had involvement with the psychiatric system, and acquired an extensive knowledge of that system. Frank protested eloquently against ECT. His own words can be read in his Statement *Shocked Treatment*, and its Footnote, in his poetry collection *Naked Songs and Rhythms of Hope*, facilitated by the late **Robert Dellar**. Another powerful work (so hard to choose out of so many) is *A Journey through the Psychiatric Corridors*, published in that great collection *Under the Asylum Tree*. Ever prolific, his work was published in many periodicals, including Southwark Mind Newsletter. He took great pains to memorise many of his poems. I was proud to have cooperated with him on his collection.

His output over the decades has been prodigious. In this he was superbly assisted by **Core Arts** in **Homerton**, and by **Southwark Mind**. There he produced a large number of CDs, in collaboration with the many musicians who frequented core (and myself) on a one-to-one basis, and their extremely skilful recording engineers. I am proud to have helped design some of the covers for these. There were also strong links to the radio network **Resonance FM**, with whom he made many recordings, and the **Mental Fight Club**, based in Borough.

Unfailingly, he gave stalwart encouragement and support to others, including visiting people in hospital, and helping them to sort out their Benefit problems. One example of this was with the late **Brian 'Smiley' Simms**, whose a capella singing was recorded and dubbed at Core Arts, some tracks to be put on YouTube. Smiley was highly erratic, and extremely difficult to 'keep on track', and Frank had a fantastic empathy for his problems.

He was also a devotee of the late singer/composer **Kevin Coyne**, whom (among others) he interviewed. He felt a special bond with Kevin, who had the exceptional perspective of having been both a psychiatric nurse and a patient. Generally, he always kept up with new musicians and bands, and their recordings. Frank had a passionate interest in botany. He had a huge collection of potted plants, made many expeditions to botanical gardens, and wrote extremely well-researched pieces on his favourite species. With special thanks to Core Arts for much of this material, and to Lawrence Renée for his Photography

Dave Russell

The story of Frank Bangay

ANDREW ROBERTS uses the images from Frank Bangay's poems to tell his story.

This is really the story of how I read Frank Bangay's memories. Frank lives in an old block of flats, near me in Hackney. Like most people, he does not have the connections you need to find a professional publisher. It took him six years to raise the money himself to publish *Naked Songs and Rhythms of Hope*, a book of his poems and pictures. Since then he has made CDs on which he recites his poetry to music. He sells these for the cost of making them.

The book and CDs give bright glimpses into Frank's life and the movements he has been part of. They are, as the title of one of his CDs says, "Jewels from the Pound Shop". I have threaded some of these pound shop trinkets into a story of my friend's life.

His father's garden

The rhythms of hope are naked because Frank uncovers all his secrets, including that of his "Secret Garden", revealed in a CD of Songs, Poems and Prayers from August 2008.

Frank was born in Wandsworth in 1951. His father had previously lived in Battersea.

"Opposite was the large Morgan's Carbon factory. Although the area was very polluted my Dad did manage to make the plants in his back garden flower. These conversations with my Dad inspired my love of plants too."

Now Frank grows succulents and wild flowers on the balcony of his flat, walks the canals of London looking at plants, like the Giant Hogweed, that he could not grow, and studies plants from all over the world in Kew and the Chelsea Physic Gardens. "My plants are survivors", he says, and in his imagination he has a "secret garden", with a special place for plants called "weeds".

Family life

Frank's poem "And we can learn", written in August 1996, has hope for all of us. It is about growing up in a working class area of London during the 1960s. It includes children finding ways of coping with parental violence, illustrated by the children's cartoon of "Roger the Dodger":

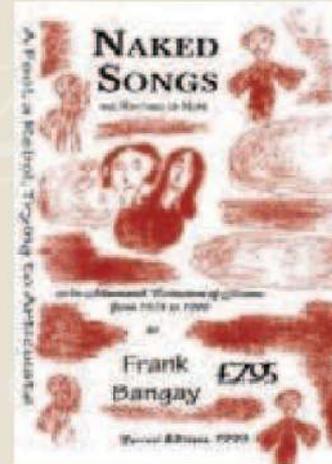
"With his philosophy on how to shirk and skive
But his father had a big moustache
A slipper in his hand."

And it is about families struggling against poverty. But, "though we came up from being poor... at an early age we learn how to stereotype... We harboured fears of black people" and "the mental people".

The hope for us all is in the last line, "I became one of them". Frank's breakdown was part of his life's journey of learning.

Starting work

Frank left school in 1966, when he was 15. He had "the prejudice/fear that a lot of people had towards the Caribbean families who were moving into the area that I lived in". He had grown up with the belief that "these people were lazy



The front cover of Frank's poetry collection

and scrounging off the Welfare State". But "when I saw the discrimination towards black people at the labour exchange, it was the beginning of a long period of learning".

The contradiction in Frank's life was that, despite the racist stereotypes he had inherited, "I liked the black music of that time, including the Ska/Reggae that came from Jamaica."

In his early twenties, Frank started work as a hospital porter and then as a hospital orderly. Here he was working alongside people from the Caribbean and learnt how hard they worked. His depression started at the same time, and the subsequent breakdown and hospitalisation taught him "what it was like to be prejudiced against and stigmatised". As a result of his breakdown, Frank met more black people and through personal relationships "started to see things differently". Nowadays, much of Frank's most creative work is done in collaboration with a close personal friend, the Congo born gospel poet and singer, Sophie Mirrel. You can find them both on YouTube.

Jewels in the Poundshop

Frank Bangay



The cover of *Jewels in the Pound Shop*



The front cover of 'Songs, Poems and Prayers'

Depression, poetry, recitation and publication

Back in the early 1970s, Frank found that expressing himself through poetry helped him to disperse the gloom of his anxiety and depression. He discovered the Troubadour Poets who held Monday night poetry evenings at the Troubadour Coffee House in Earl's Court, and he began reciting his poetry there. One of his earliest poems, "Fear", was published by Troubadour Poets in late August 1974. It is deeply personal and vulnerable: "You tell me that I frighten you, well I never intended to... I'm not a tough man... there are many times when I am afraid... afraid of isolation ... afraid of my superiors... afraid of love... And sometimes I'm frightened of you my friend."

Springfield Hospital

Frank's 1985 poem, "Food and Shelter", relates to experiences in 1976 to 1978 and "the revolving door system that we can get caught up in once we enter the psychiatric system". Frank was a patient

in Springfield Hospital, Tooting, South London. Not all his experiences there were negative. He helped Kieran Brown, an Occupational Therapist, to produce *Springfield Words*, a magazine published by the hospital. It contained

"Spring is Rising", a poem of conviction that "peace in our hearts" is "more than a dream" if we "sing out loud" and "make it real". In 1979 Frank helped to organise a half hour of poetry and songs based around life in Springfield Hospital, featuring Kieran, himself and Dave Dorling, who was also a patient in the hospital. It was staged at the Troubadour and "quite well received".

Music, poetry and politics

At the end of the 1970s, Frank collaborated with musicians in the *Fighting Pigeons Band*. "Park Song" one of his most beautiful poems, was written as lyrics to one of their songs. "I saw you crying in the park today. I nearly felt strong enough to cry with you."

It seems to have been the need for a human approach to mental distress that brought Frank into politics. In 1979 he found some booklets by a group called PROMPT (Preservation/Promotion of the Rights of Mental Patients in Treatment). This group later became CAPO (Campaign Against Psychiatric Oppression). In the 1980s, Frank organised music and poetry events ("Gigs") to raise money for PROMPT and CAPO. The first of these were at *The Metropolitan*, a public house in Farringdon, whilst others were at the Troubadour coffee bar in Earls Court. Many activists were brought together at these events. The television feature "We're not Mad We're Angry" in 1986, although eventually not involving PROMPT, was originally a PROMPT project. CAPO was also an important

catalyst for the revolution that led to the formation of Survivors Speak Out in 1986, although, again, Frank and the other CAPO members did not involve themselves in the organisation when it was formed.

Solidarity 1985

Many of Frank's poems are combined with pictures that he draws himself. In the 1980s he sold photocopies of these in pubs and coffee bars. "Solidarity", one of the best known, expresses the pain and the joy when people who suffer mental distress come together to work towards a more humane world:

"We cried together last night, but our tears were in solidarity with the sadness of the world, and through our tears we found strength."



Frank performing at Together in 2009

Survivors Poetry

Frank's work led to the formation of *Survivors Poetry* in 1991, to help people express what they think and feel through words, rhythm and song, and the *Survivors History Group* (which meets at Together) in 2005 to enable us to record and celebrate what we have achieved, individually and collectively, as people with mental distress.

Naked Songs and Rhythms of Hope costs £7.95.

The CDs are £10 each. (postage extra). Frank can advise you what is available if you email him at frankbangay@yahoo.co.uk.

The Survivors Poetry website is at <http://www.survivorspoetry.com/>

The Survivors History Group website is at <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm>

Have Faith My Friend

Sometimes I think this is just a strange dream
I will wake up to find that things are not how they seem
The world is still spinning
Birds are still singing
A little shaken I will start my day.

Sometimes I think this is a science fiction movie
The demon virus from another galaxy
We have so much trouble keeping it at bay
How can we chase it away?

Where are earth's mighty heroes when we need them?
Iron Man, the Mighty Thor, Captain America, Luke Cage Powerman,
And many more.
They often seem able to defeat these deadly enemies
As tough as the battle seems to get.
Doctor Strange could tackle it with his spells
I am sure Spider Man would do his bit.

Where are Batman and his mate Robin?
Are they back in Gotham?
Hiding in their Batcave
Hey you guys this is bigger than it seems.
This is not a prank being played by the Joker
The world needs to be saved.

Sometimes I see no poetry
No humour
Just a desperate world struggling to survive
Even earths mighty heroes
Need to protect themselves.

I have fears for the day
And hopes for the future
That this world will be able to recover
But sorting out facts from the scaremongering
Is never an easy thing,
Never an easy thing.

The other day I walked down the Hackney Narrow Way
I walked past the Churchyard of St John's
I saw a flower bed planted with spring flowers
Seeing all the colours made me happy
And I will believe that one day
I will be sitting on a park bench again
At peace with myself
At peace with the world.
Have faith
Have faith my friend
God Bless.

April 2020





A Journey Through the Psychiatric Corridors

They label themselves as normal
They label us as mad
But the effect of this ideology
Becomes a little sad.
So many of us get lost
So many of us get forgotten
The soul struggles against so many years of assault.
This is the road we wander up and down
This is the road we cadge cigarettes on.
They label themselves as normal
They label us as mad
But our anger is our assertiveness
Not an illness we should apologise for,
Feet shuffle on hospital lino
Open mouths
Staring eyes
And institutionalised clothes

For years we have been oppressed by psychiatric drugs.
This is the road we wander up and down
This is the road we cadge cigarettes on.
They label themselves as normal
They label us as mad
So often they speak on our behalf
But so many stories need to be told
So we become the scapegoats of many comedians' jokes
But we don't need this scorn
As we get lost in a psychiatric ghetto
Always seen as the problem
But right now we're looking for our voice.
This is the road we wander up and down
This is the road we cadge cigarettes on.
They label themselves
They label us too
And the do-gooders run their nice little charities
And the scientists dither about
Looking for that elusive gene
But I think they fumble in the dark
So many myths can be seen through
Once you know
And now you know
The rhythm of the spirit will be proud and strong.
Where is the road we seek freedom on?
Where is the road we find our liberation on?

1995



Mean Virus Blues

That mean old virus
Shows its ugly face
That mean old virus
It shows us its ugly face.
It has no compassion
No mercy
And it knows no shame.

Outside in the street children are playing
Traffic is rumbling to its destinations
Pigeons are cooing and pecking on the ground
This old world keeps turning,
Our hearts keep beating.

That mean old virus
It laughs while we panic
That mean old virus
It laughs as we panic.
Can I go out?
Should I stay in?
I can no longer shake hands

With my best friend,
Should I be wearing a suit of armour?

Outside in the world spring is rising
See the trees full of blossom
Daffodils give us their golden smile
Nature is about to run riot,
The world keeps turning
Our hearts keep on beating

That mean old virus
It's always on the prowl
That mean old virus
It's always on the prowl
I mourn for its victims.
I worry about family and friends
I worry about myself,
I feel unsure about self-isolation
I know we have to do it,
But many of us have already experienced much loneliness.
All around us GOD'S troubled earth
Sighs and sometimes weeps
But there is still beauty out there
There is still beauty
A reason for hope in these times
That mean old virus
Ain't no friend of humankind.

The world keeps turning
Our hearts keep on beating
Let's pray that it stays that way.

March 2020

A Path to Light

The sun smiled today
Even though it's wintertime
A little unprepared for the chill
I stepped outside.

A Pelargonium and Echeveria
In a pot on my balcony
Still flowering despite the cold.
Memories of bygone summers
Those moments
When the warmth is in harmony with your emotions.

The moon smiles tonight
No longer angry
No longer macho,
Sitting in the sky
Showing his effeminate side.
The moon is a wise old man
Somewhat saddened by the tragedies he sees
He watches wars take place on earth
So much suffering,
Saying I could light the way
As you travel through much darkness
I could lead you on to another dawn.
A dawn of hope
Hope to find
A path to light,
Don't give up
Don't give up
Don't give up the fight
Keep on travelling
The journey to find
A path to daylight.

The sun smiles a little
Saying I will return soon
To help create springtime.

Bygone days
And future days
In the bleak mid winter we struggle on

As Jack Frost play his icy pranks
Laughing at us
Always laughing.
In time he will retreat
As quickly as he came
Sun and moon working in harmony
Saying why can't humans do the same?

December 1997

On A January Day

Walking down the Mile End Road
I saw some daffodils about to come into flower
They were growing out of a strip of grass
In front of a housing estate.

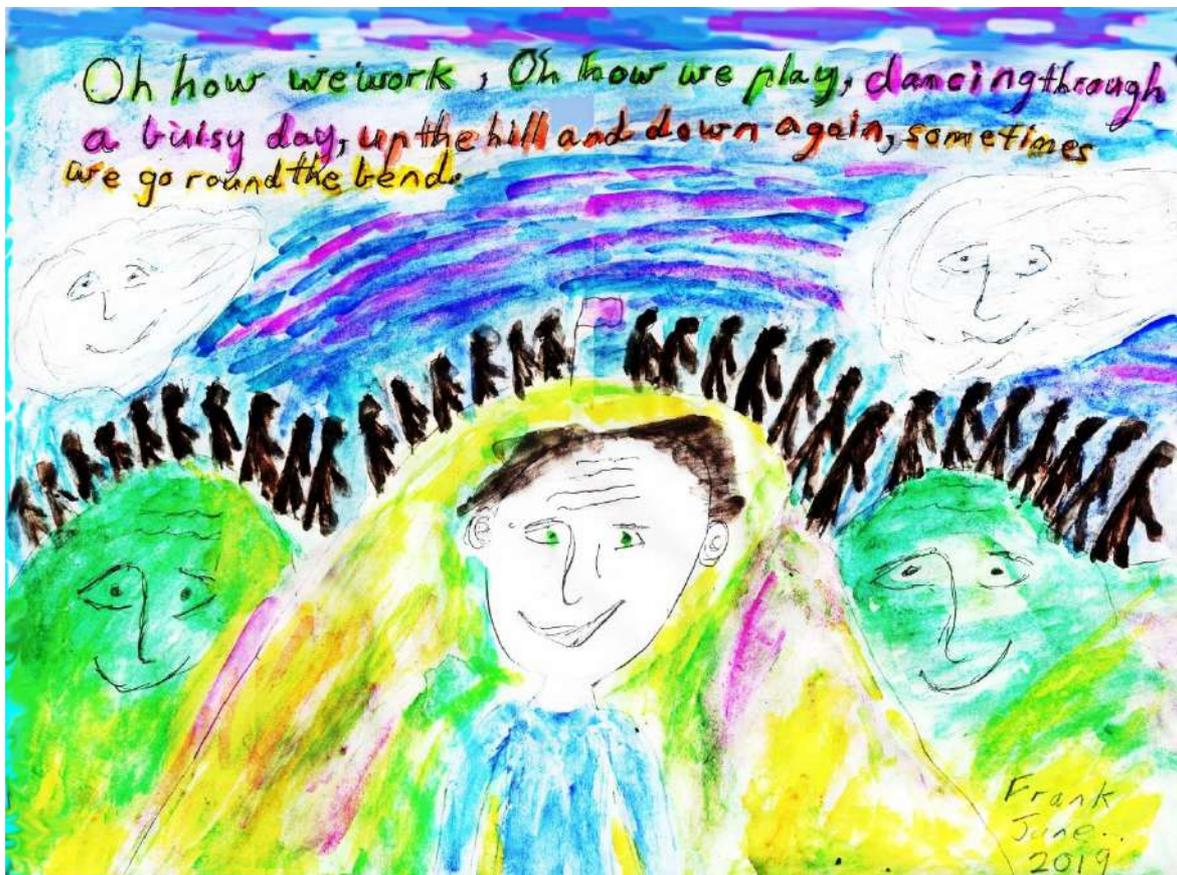
I said to the daffodils
Be brave
Be proud
Be strong
And when Jack Frost comes round

Don't take any nonsense from him.
You have arrived a little early
Underground your bulbs multiply
I like to see your flowers
They have a friendly smile.

In this busy city
As traffic goes rumbling by
We move towards springtime
When this urban nature will run wild

February 2020





POETRY

THE SELF-OBSSESSED

For the Tory Party

The laughter of spivs
from the suburbs of Hades

Insane through arrogance
does his own head in.

Disaffections of the driven dead,
patriarchs loved in home and head.

Mod-tech love-making,
celestial nothingness.

Vainglory of toff accent,
cosmology of self.

Sexuopathic Knightsbridge god,
gadgets, gimics and guns.

Fucks like a machine-gun,
doesn't know the girl exists.

And his biggest problem
which wine with his pudding.

Zilch milk of human kindness,
dust to dust.

When we share
We think of others.

DAVID KESSEL

THOSE EINSTEIN BLUES

When Einstein was at school
The teachers thought he was simple
Forever adrift in his foolish dreams,
His parents shook their heads in despair.
Dear God please help us
What is to become of him?

When he grew up
He let the world know his thoughts
Agree with him or not
We started thinking,
He liked to sit in a bath tub
And play his violin.

Things ain't always how they seem to be
Things ain't always how they seem
Don't judge a book before you read it
Things ain't always how they seem.

When the Bash Street Kinds were at school
In class 2b
Everyone said that Pug was ugly

That mirrors cracked when he looked at them,
His parents wondered how he came to look like that.

Now he is on his first date
And they say she's a real stunner
Pug has turned out to be a winner.

Now we stand here
Without sharing a greeting
We look at each other
Hoping to find faults,

The only face value that I want to see
Is the smile in your eyes
The smile on your face
Kind words we say to each other

My friend, don't let our differences start a war
Let's see what we can share
Let's see what we can relate to.

FRANK BANGAY

RENT MAN

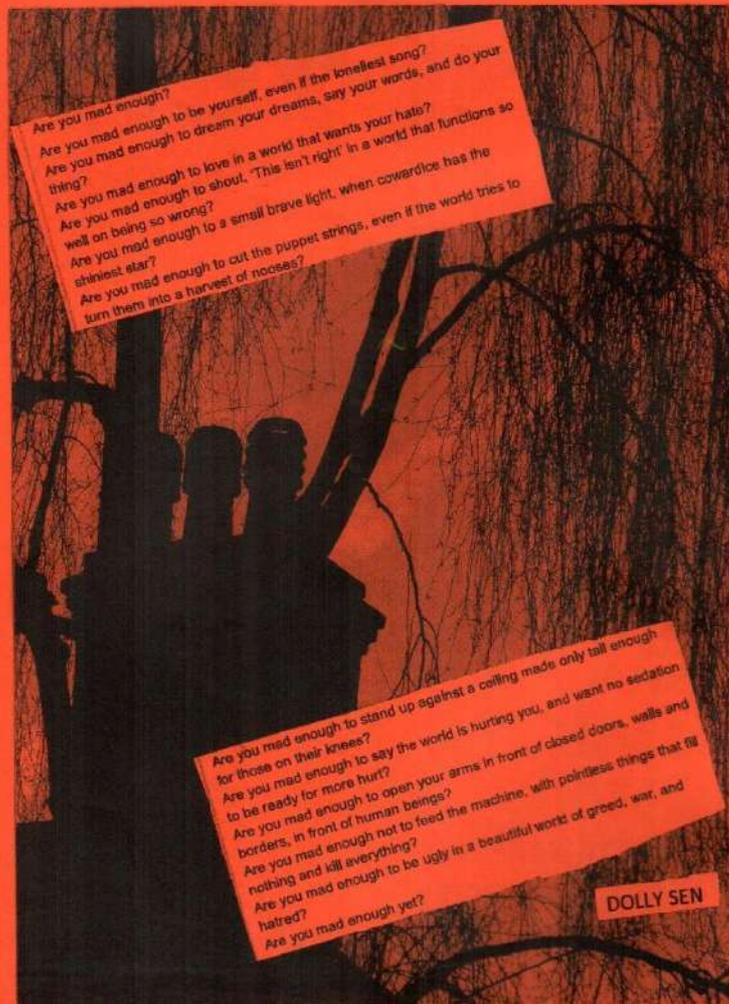
Look out your window Mamma
Tell me what do you see?
A thousand cargo ships
Go sailin' out to sea

Ask any sailor
What they're sailin' for,
A thousand silver dollars,
They don't know the score.

It's like you and me babe
It's like you and me,
Once we were together
Now WE BOTH ARE FREE.

PAUL CARSON

Photograph taken by
STEVE MCCULLOUGH



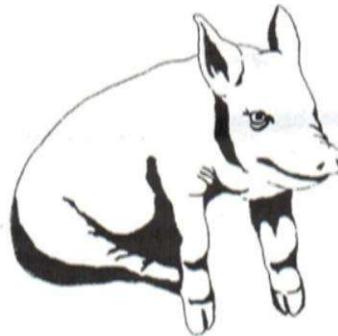
DISEMPOWERMENT

(To deprive someone of power or authority)

I am here in your care
I am standing here
You sit and play cards
Where am I?
Why am I here?
Why must I take these drugs?
What are they?
What will they do to me?
Why are there cracks in the
bathroom and
shower doors where people
can see me
Piss and soapy naked?
The majority and I are not
suspected of self harm
Do you put great big volts of
electricity
through people's heads here?
Even though there is to
evidence to recommend it
that withstands analysis?
I know that practice occurs in
many places like this
Why can men walk in my
room at night while I am
sedated because staff don't
relock my door after
they enter?
What could someone do to
me while I am sedated?
Why do you forcibly sedate
me if I cry too
loudly at night without even
asking if I want to
talk about it?
Are you very tired?
Why are you here at all?
Would you rather be standing
where I am?
If you were standing where I
am wouldn't you eventually
get very, very ANGRY?
Oh yes, just one more thing,
Why do you take my life
(freedom) away from me
Then write down what you
think my life is in notes
And then hide it from me?
You are taking my life away
and hiding it from me
You take away my life when
you take away my choices
And I don't think you are
being very careful with it
Other patients have the right
to assault me and throw

boiling water on me, and I do
not have the right to
call the police
I am too ill to ask these
questions
But there are times through
the days when I
can understand
These questions are
important to me
These questions should be a
constant topic of
discussion
I am no longer standing in
that corridor
When I left I was much better
Because of the medication?
Because of the excellent
care?
Because of family support?
When I left that place I was in
shock
One year later I shake in
anger.

Anon.



BIG FRANK AND LITTLE SPYDER

Little spyder crawling
across the carpet
I play on my fears
Its reddy brown body
And many legs
Somehow causes anxiety.
And I ask myself
Is it dangerous?
Will it attack me?
The tough guy panics
His heart flutters
But really it's running away
from me.
Then I think about
Some of the myths

The horror stories,
And there are human-
made webs
That we can get caught in.
But they say
If you want to live and
thrive
Let a spyder run alive
And I will be cursing
When the flies return.
The big tough guy
Tries to show sensitivity
Fumbling around
He searches for the
dustpan
and brush.
Trying to hold a steady
hand
I sweep the spyder into the
dustpan
And rush it outside the
front door.
I feel sad to see this little
one go
Out into the cold nite
It just came inside
To find some warmth,
So as it hurries off
I hope it will find a warm
enough home
Amongst my plant pots

Frank Bangay



ENVY & JEALOUSY

We had just completed a day's labour
I was in rags
While he was in riches

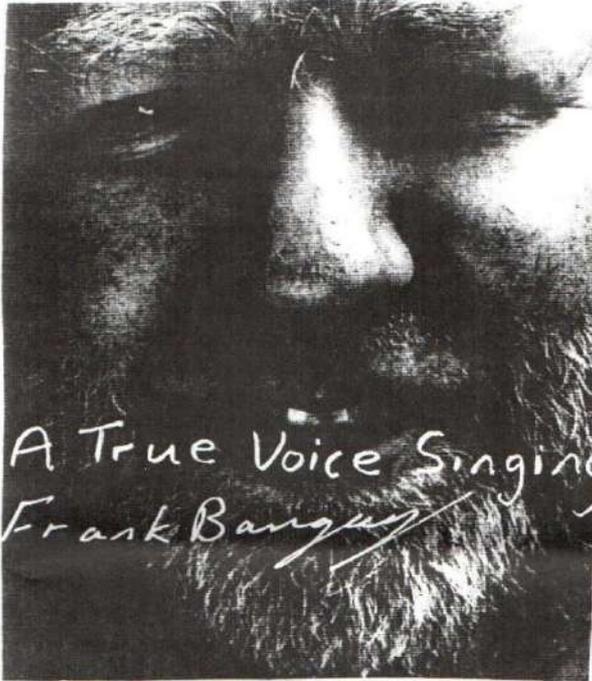
We looked into each others eyes
And then came a smile

His smile said
'See this poor man'
Mine said
'See this rich man'

Somewhere in my smile
Lay a stint of envy and jealousy

USER CD REVIEWS

FRANK BANGAY: *A TRUE VOICE SINGING* (Core Sounds, 2001)
CERAMIC HOBS: *STRAIGHT OUTTA RAMPTON* (Pumf Records, 2001)



This month sees the release of new albums from two of the user movement's most inspired and well-respected creative acts. Launched at a high-profile Core Arts do at the Union Chapel recently, Frank Bangay's *A True Voice Singing* captures 15 poems by this man who, rightly, is the best-known poet to have come directly out of the British survivor movement.

Recorded at Core Arts' studio in Hackney, this CD sets Frank's spoken-word vocal performances to discreet musical backing from a variety of musicians. As his book *Naked Songs and Rhythms of Hope* made clear, Frank's poems stand up amply well on the printed page. However, in performance, and Frank has made his name primarily as a performance poet, another dimension is added. Frank's voice is full of emotion: angry, compassionate, caring, articulate. Featuring some of his best-loved poems as well as new material, *A True Voice Singing* kind of reminds me of some of the

recordings of the beat generation poets from the 50s and 60s, who regularly set their words to jazz and other forms of music, in the belief that the rhythm and cadences of spoken word performance shaded and deepened the meaning of their texts. *This Urban Tree* finds nature and beauty in the concrete ghettos of Homerton, while a cello aptly illustrates the poem's wistful tone.

Elsewhere Frank challenges discrimination against psychiatric patients, being sometimes painfully up-front about his own and his friends' experiences of the mental health system. As in all his work, on this album Frank is frank (as in candid) and looks for meaning in the gutter through authenticity and smart observation. The message is that life is harsh, a struggle to survive, but that the struggle can be worth it and reap its own rewards. This album will resonate with significance for anyone who's ever been through the mill, and the overall tone is one of hope in spite of the sometimes uncomfortable honesty of the lyrics. The musicians on the album are very competent, and illustrate Frank's poems and message without detracting from any of the meaning. *A True Voice Singing* is a very good album by any critical standards.

Blackpool's Ceramic Hobs are unique in the rock 'n' roll field by being completely up-front about



their status as users, and their lyrics somehow continually have the shadow of the nearest psychiatric hospital in the background, regardless of what themes they tackle. The sound is basically avant-garde punk, complete with all manner of weird samples and effects. Even on the more 'commercial' numbers such as *Lone Twister* and *Red Zone*, any radio-friendliness is deliberately undermined by abrasive production techniques. The result is a record that will not appeal to a wide audience, but will be appreciated by those looking for music that is inventive, intelligent and challenging.

There's much humour on this album, but Ceramic Hobs are angry as hell: lead singer Simon Morris is currently injunctioned from going anywhere near his local unit after he trashed the closed circuit TV cameras there when visiting the Hobs' drummer who was sectioned at the time. Ceramic Hobs are simultaneously one of the funniest, but also most furious rock bands imaginable. Unlike Frank Bangay, they don't offer hope through appreciation of beauty in small things: redemption for Ceramic Hobs lies in the act of rebellion, and in extremely dark humour. Also, in Simon Morris, they have one of the wittiest and cleverest lyricists in Britain, reminiscent of Mark E. Smith in his heyday.

A True Voice Singing costs a tenner from Core Arts, 1 St. Barnabas Terrace, Homerton, London E9 6DJ. (Tel. 020 8533 3500.) *Straight Outta Rampton* is available for a negotiable sum from Simon Morris, 124 Condor Grove, Blackpool, Lancs FY4 5QY. (Tel. 01253 769402.)

FAMOUS BIOGRAPHIES by Fu Dun Rest: NIGEL T. FRICE

Nigel was a very good child and never cried and so never needed to be picked up and hugged. At night he was always well tucked in, and later made his own bed so he was well tucked in. One day, by chance he paid for a woman to telephone her boyfriend, and in gratitude she gave him a good hug.

Nigel didn't have a girlfriend yet, and as all the girls he encountered had partners, only wanted to discuss philosophy, or he couldn't get along with them, he turned his mind to inventing a hugging machine.

At first it caught on slowly, and was installed initially only in orphanages, but later a craze developed and they appeared on every street corner.

Sadly, Nigel became addicted, and after illegally altering the settings on his machine one sultry night in August, he accidentally hugged himself to death.

LAUNCH OF NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT SERVICE AT GUYS

(A WARD MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE;
THE PHOTOS ARE FROM THE
SERVICE'S LAUNCH PARTY
RECENTLY)



As readers of Southwark Mind Newsletter may well be aware, earlier this year the Maurice Craig Ward at York Clinic Guys, divided into two separate services – a new adult acute mental health ward, and a day service based in the York Clinic Outpatients department.

The latter has now been re-launched as an Intensive Psychological Treatment Service (ITPS). Based on Therapeutic Community principles, a high degree of participation and involvement is expected from Community members. The new ITPS aims to provide an active treatment service for people with severe and disabling psychological difficulties, or with so called 'personality disorders'.

In order to target those most likely to benefit, referrals will be taken largely from other parts of the mental health services, although this could also include GPs or other health professionals.

Poet Laureate of Hackney
FRANK BANGAY salutes
the work of the great veteran
survivor folk-rock artist **KEVIN
COYNE**



My first introduction to Kevin Coyne's music came in 1973 on the release of his then new album *Marjory Razor Blade*, I read some interviews Kevin did in the music papers. He was talking about some of the songs on the record. This inspired me to buy *Marjory Razorblade*. Then in 1975 I saw Kevin live for the first time. I have been a fan ever since.

Kevin Coyne was born in Derby in 1944. After leaving school he attended the Joseph Wright School Of Art and the Derby College of Art, studying graphics and painting. His early musical influence was 50s rock and roll. Then at art college he discovered the blues.

After art college Kevin worked as a social therapist at the Whittingham Psychiatric Hospital in Preston. Then in 1968 he moved to London. Here he joined Siren. Formed by piano player Nick Cudsworth and bass player Dave Clauge, Siren were a down to earth blues band, mixing blues and rock and roll songs with original compositions and a little humour. They signed with John Peel's Dandelion label. Here they released two LPs, *Siren* and *Strange Locomotion*. Three more Siren LPs were released in the 1990s.

Siren broke up in 1971. Kevin went on to work at the Soho project in London counselling people with drug problems. During this time Kevin recorded his first solo album, *Case History*. Mostly just himself on acoustic guitar. Often played in a frantic style, it had a directness about it. Songs like *My Evil Island Home* and *Mad Boy* laid foundations for what was to follow. Unfortunately Dandelion ceased to exist and *Case History* disappeared. (It was reissued on CD in the 90s.) However *Case History* did come to the attention of the then new Virgin records, a label to which Kevin signed. In 1973 he released *Marjory Razorblade*. The songs range from the humour of *Good Boy*, through *Jackie and Edna* with its images of boarding houses and seaside piers. There is the punky *Marline*, and *Eastbourne Ladies*, a song that John Lydon (Johnny Rotten) played on a one off show that he did on Capital radio in 1977.

Most notable of all perhaps was *House On The Hill*, a song about life in a psychiatric institution inspired by his experiences at the Whittingham Hospital. *Marjory Razorblade* mixed a blues influence with music hall comedy and a punk edge. Another impressive feature of the record was the slide guitar playing of Gordon Smith. He also played slide on Kevin's next two albums, *Blame It On The Night* and *Matching Head And Feet*, two more impressive records.

Another two fans of Kevin's music in the 70s were John Peel and Sting. In his songs there is an honesty that gets to the point. Kevin has a strong blues voice, but also a sense of music hall comedy. In the 1970s I feel he did as much as Ian Dury to bring music hall into rock. During this period he recorded songs such as *My Mother's Eyes* and *Take Me Back To Dear Old Blighty*. The mid 70s saw Kevin working with a band that included Andy Summers, who was to go on to find fame with The Police, and legendary keyboard player Zoot Money. Then in 1978 Kevin returned to a more stripped down approach making warm intimate records like *Dynamite Daze*. His partnership with Zoot Money continued for a few more years, both on record and on stage where they often worked as a duo. The title track on *Dynamite Daze* was inspired by Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols. Through listening to songs like *River Of Sin* on *Blame it On The Night* it is easy to see how Kevin Coyne influenced John Lydon vocally. *Dynamite Daze* is very diverse in its musical styles. Another track, *Are We Dreaming*, a song about old age, features Kevin singing with just an accordion backing. A beautiful song.

Another delight of Kevin's music from this period is his collaborations with guitarist Bob Ward, for example the acoustic love songs like *So Strange* and *Roses In Your Room* on *Beautiful Extremes*, A compilation of songs Kevin recorded in the 70s that never appeared on any of his other records. I feel the record contains some little gems.

In 1978 Kevin staged a show called *Babble*, a collaboration with German singer

Dagmar Krause. I remember seeing *Babble* at the Rock Garden in Covent Garden. The songs were linked together with poetry. It was a very powerful performance. However when *Babble* was released on record in 1979 it got quite misunderstood in the music press, and also in the Sun. *Babble* dealt with some taboo issues. For example it looked at the relationship between Myra Hindley and Ian Brady, showing two lovers struggle to communicate with each other, while papers like the Sun would continuously give reports on whatever Myra Hindley was up to in prison. And such articles would help sell papers. *Babble*, like the Morrissey song Suffer Little Children from the first Smiths album from 1984 shows that when someone tries to comment constructively on these things the hammer comes down. But during the 1960s alongside the peace and love movement, some dark and turbulent things were going on. The record contained some very strong songs and some strong singing from Kevin and Dagmar.

In the spring of 1980 came *Bursting Bubbles*. Musically it was just guitar and drums and on some tracks saxophone. An intense record that contained some fine songs. On one song, *Mad Boy No 2*, the labelled person is pointing a finger back to the "normal" world. "You're just the human race, I don't feel out of place". I found times when I related to *Bursting Bubbles*: the record has helped me. During 1980 Kevin had a nervous breakdown. The intense nature of his work and heavy drinking were seen as the cause. This experience was to influence his songs over the next few years.

In the autumn of 1980 Kevin released his last record for Virgin, *Sanity Stomp*. It is a double album. The first record is a collaboration with punk band The Ruts. The second record is a collaboration with Robert Wyatt and inspired guitarist Brian Godding, who worked with Kevin during 1980/81.

In 1981 Kevin left Virgin and signed with Cherry Red records, an independent label that at the time was home to artists such as



The Nightingales, Felt, Everything But The Girl and The Monochrome Set. This was a difficult time for Kevin. Recovering from a nervous breakdown, his drinking was taking its toll, his then marriage was falling apart, and he was finding it increasingly hard to get acceptance for his work in England. However he carried on recording and performing. His 1981 album *Pointing The Finger* is a very passionate record. His sleeve notes speaks of the struggles he was having at the time. This was echoed in some of the songs, most notably perhaps a song called *One Little Moment*. Another song, *Sleeping Waking*, reflected England as it was then in the early days of Thatcherism. In 1983 *Beautiful Extremes* was given an official release, previously only available as a Dutch/ Belgian import. Then came *Legless In Mallila*, which was a return to his blues roots. I saw Kevin on stage quite a few times during this period, and creatively he was on fine form. His live work from this period can be heard on *Rough Live* (released on CD in the 90s).

In 1985 Kevin Coyne left England to live in Germany, settling in Nuremberg. It was a good move. He formed the Paradise Band, named after his 1987 album *Stumbling On To Paradise*, a record that reflected this new start. In 1987 he gave up drinking. He also started an alternative career as a painter. However in England his absence

was being felt. His records were becoming hard to find, even in London's megastores. Then one evening in 1988 Kevin showed up in session on the Andy Kershaw show. In the spring of 1990 Kevin toured England with the Paradise Band. Then in the summer he did some solo gigs. Both times he showed himself to be in good voice and humour.

At the end of 1990 Kevin published his first book of short stories *The Party Dress*. The second book *Showbusiness* was published in 1993. In *The Party Dress*, a number of the stories talk about people whose lives are lifted out of the ordinary by strange startling experiences and little insights. In *The Land Of The Satin Dolls*, Henry's bed goes through the ceiling When he arrives in the land of the satin dolls he meets all his ex-girlfriends. In another story, *Angel*, an old artist comes back from heaven and finds himself on the Streatham High Road slightly at odds with these modern times. Some of the stories also deal more directly with some of Kevin's personal experiences. *Showbusiness*, like the title suggests, is a collection of stories about the music business, a subject he sang about in *Having A Party on Millionaires And Teddybears* in 1979. A world of phoney agents, crooked businessmen, artists who hang on in there despite it all. There are some very entertaining stories. One of my favourites is *Visitation*. Here Elvis comes back from heaven to an English village to visit one of his most loyal fans, and helps to bring him together with a young woman whom he loves but is unable to chat up. A nice way to think of Elvis.

In 1991 A Peel sessions LP was released featuring tracks Kevin had recorded for John Peel in the 1970s. This for me is one of the important Coyne records. It shows his talent for improvisation and features tracks that don't appear on any of his other records *Eye Up Me Duck* and *The Miners Song* are two humorous pictures of life up north. On *That's Rock And Roll* the first two verses are based in the 1950s. The last verse however shares empathy with Johnny Rotten, then in the Sex Pistols. *Rivers of Blood* speaks of England as it was in the 1970s, with the National Front making their intimidating presence felt,

especially in poorer areas of our cities. *The Peel Sessions* also includes powerful versions of *Lunatic* and *I Only Want To See You Smile*, both from *Dynamite Daze*.

Another LP of previously unreleased material from the 1970s that was released in the 90s was *Elveria: Songs From The Archives*, a sequence of songs about the life and death of Elveria Barney, an English debutante and high society girl. She shot her violent boyfriend. Her last months were spent living a drunk and lonely life ostracised by friends. The songs are stark, acoustic and direct. *The Archive Material* is five rough diamonds from 1983. However the 1990s saw Kevin releasing a number of new records as well. In 1995 came *The Adventures Of Crazy Frank*, A collection of songs about the life of Lancashire comedian Frank Randal. This was a collaboration with Friedl Pohrer, guitarist at his acoustic gigs at the time and bass player in The Paradise Band. In 1997 came *Knocking On Your Brain*, a double album of musical experiments featuring some top German session musicians. A couple of tracks also feature collaborations with Garry Lucas, an acclaimed guitarist who has worked with Captain Beefheart, Lou Reed, and Jeff Buckley. The cover also features some great Coyne artwork.

In 1999 came *Sugar Candy Taxi*, recorded with his two sons Robert and Eugene. On the sleeve Kevin Coyne describes the record as one of his most honest records in years. Around this time Kevin wrote a number of delightful true-life love songs, like *Day And Night* on *Knocking On Your Brain* and *Highway Of Dreams* on *Sugar Candy Taxi*. Alongside the dark subject matter of a number of his songs there is humour and also a sense of spirituality. This is a quality that I have seen grow in Kevin's work over the years.

In 2002 Kevin teamed up with guitarist Brendan Croker. Together they recorded an LP called *Life's Almost Wonderful*, a limited edition of 500 copies. It is a collection of songs about growing up in England in the 1950s and the changes rock and roll brought to people's lives. There are also songs relating to having a childhood during the Second World War.

It features some moving songs, and also lots of Coyne's humour and some great guitar playing from Brendan Croker. A wonderful record that deserves a wider release. *Carnival* from 2003 is another collaboration with his son Robert. Alongside his original compositions it features interesting versions of two blues standards, *Rolling and Tumbling* and *Sugar Mama*.

Kevin's gigs are always an uplifting experience with his onstage humour. No matter how I am feeling beforehand, I always go away from Kevin's gigs with a smile on my face. Last year Kevin was diagnosed as suffering from lung fibrosis, a condition that causes severe breathing difficulties, an experience reflected on his new album *Donut City*.

Over the years Kevin has shown himself to

be something of a survivor. His creative flame still burns brightly. Kevin turned 60 this year. In early spring I approached Kevin by email asking if he was interested in doing an interview. He expressed interest. The interview was conducted by email from CORE Arts in Hackney, East London, an arts centre that helps people realise their creative dreams in whatever form of creative expression they choose, while helping break down the prejudices around mental health. I would like to thank the people at CORE Arts who helped me through my inexperience with computers. I would also like to thank Kevin for his patience in waiting while I got this together. For more information about Kevin's records, books, paintings, contact his web site at www.Kevincoyne.de.

Frank Bangay

October 2004



A Summer Garden

I wandered round the garden
hope was in my heart
I drank in the scent of flowers
and felt a little sad.

Why does the human race
cause so much destruction
when such beauty unfolds,
Angels will light the way
if we let it be so.

I paused in wanderings
and sat upon a bench
there was beauty all around me
let that beauty have strength.
I saw butterflies and bees
hovering over flowers
birds go on with their working day
I felt soothed by their melodies
the songs they sing.

Some birds come here from the countryside
as their habitat is lost
I am glad they have found a sanctuary
we must respect GODS wonderful earth.

I left the garden
with peaceful images in my mind
I saw plants growing out of a wall
finding the nourishment to survive
and offering such beautiful flowers.

I sat in a grabby train carriage
I watched the scenery pass by
terraced houses
with sculleries and satellite discs,
tower blocks, trees and fields.
I thought of the competitive human race
the speed at which it goes passing by.

I return to the summer garden
where I feel at peace
I thank you GOD.

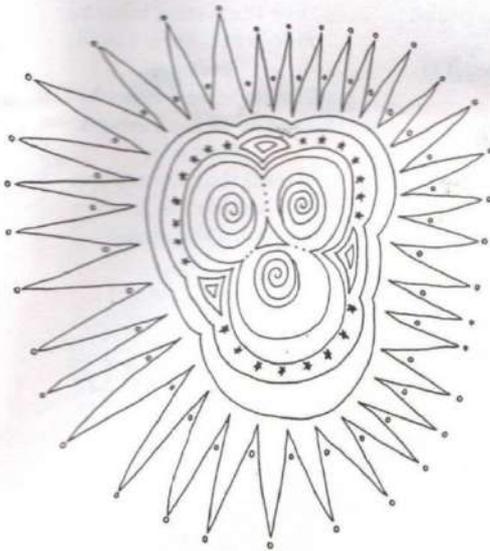
Frank Banguay
December 97

MIND SHOP HAS LOCKS SUPERGLUED

Police are fingerprinting anonymous letters sent to three charity shops and a newsagent recently, threatening to vandalise their premises if they carry on selling Christmas cards out of season. A Mind shop targeted this August by the vigilante "Movement for the Containment of Xmas" has temporarily withdrawn bargain cards left over from last year, after its door locks were superglued, costing £100 in repairs. Don't worry, though: the shop in Dulwich is safe, because the "keep Christmas seasonal" direct action is taking place way up north, in Leeds.

Police have been phoned by a man who claims to have carried out the attack, saying that it would happen again if cards continued to be sold "far too early." The brief notes, delivered by hand, say: "This is a very polite but very serious reminder not to display Xmas cards until 1st Nov. We will put superglue into your locks if you do. Peace and goodwill."

One Southwark Mind member commented on the targeting of the shop in Leeds: "Well, what the hell do they expect? It's not even bonfire night yet."



CD REVIEW - FRANK BANGAY: SONGS, POEMS AND PRAYERS (2009)

Legendary survivor poet Frank Bangay's fourth full-length album consists as the title suggests of 16 songs, poems and prayers, and it's a welcome addition to the man's canon accumulated over a 35 year career. Frank began as a performance poet in London's coffee houses

and folk haunts during the 1970s, and became a leading light in the nascent mental health "user movement" in the 1980s as one of the key figures in the Campaign Against Psychiatric Oppression. Around 1990, he was one of the four co-founders of inspirational arts group Survivors Poetry, and he built a reputation as a poet taking him beyond the confines of the mental health scene, leading to the publication of his book *Naked Songs and Rhythms of Hope* in 1999. During this decade, he's been performing his poetry accompanied by an eclectic cast of musicians, most of whom are involved with Hackney-based mental health charity Core Arts. Many of them, including long-term collaborator guitarist Tunde Busari, provide musical accompaniment on this LP.

Frank's poetry will be known to Southwark Mind Newsletter readers, as an issue rarely goes by without a contribution from him. His lyrical themes have changed a little over the years: they've come to contain more of a spiritual, even religious emphasis, and Frank's interest in gardening, nature and the weather has come more to the forefront. These themes are reflected on this record; however, for every plant forcing its way against the odds through concrete, there's still a tramp sitting on a park bench and a grim tower block looming not too far away in the distance. And Frank's rage against injustice and his angry, compassionate take on the mental health system are shown here once again with the poems *A Proud Rhythm*, about "the problems that are faced after leaving a psychiatric hospital: it can be tough being labelled and stigmatised when you're trying to fit in with the rest of society;" and the haunting *Those Shuffling Feet from the Past*, which reveals "industrial therapy" as being nothing more than simply "putting things in boxes."

The album opens with something of a pastoral feel, the windows being left open at Core Arts' studio during the recording of *Morning Prayer* to allow the sound of the rain and the birds singing outside to accompany a gospel-tinged female chorus, Frank's gentle, slurred and impassioned voice, and his aching harmonica playing. *Johnny Rock On*, meanwhile, celebrates the life of *Shaking All Over* singer Johnny Kidd, a quiet boy at school according to my dad who was in his class, and this uplifting song is helped on by a mean trucking beat and edgy, suitably rocking guitar heroics. In contrast to Frank's early records which consist of poetry set to music, this and some other tracks are written and arranged specifically as songs. The tracks are populated throughout by rebels, gardeners, and decent honest folk struggling to survive, and at their best, also including the chugging barroom blues *This Song Has a Lot of Soul* and the piano gospel *This Autumn Evening*, they display a singular beauty. A unique and authentic voice from the bewilderment, Frank Bangay and his work are as relevant and compelling as ever, and once again, he's come up with the goods. If you'd like a copy, you can contact him at: frankbangav@yahoo.co.uk – and you might also be interested to know that copies of his acclaimed book are fast running out, so if you'd like a copy of that too, now could be your last chance.

Robert Dellar

PEACE AND LOVE

The evening the aliens
landed
I was sitting at home
With my feet up on a
chair
It had been a busy day.

The flashing lights on
their spacecraft
Woke up some birds
Who were roosting in a
nearby tree
They started chirping
loudly.

The aliens were a good
natured bunch
Eager to get rid of the
alien tag
"We may look different
from you
But GOD created us as
well"
Said their main
spokesperson.

It is true,
They had two pointed
ears
Two eyes and a mouth
Two arms and two legs
They had green and pink
hair

"This is not a punk
statement
But our natural hair
colour."

"Our planet has cities like
yours
Mountains and hills
Valleys and forests
Rivers and oceans.
Space mermaids sunbathe
on the beaches,
And you should try our
tea
Grown on rainy hillsides
It's up there with Tetley's
And PG Tips.
It is true our trees have
pink bark
And blue leaves
But they are still trees."

The police were there
with guns and riot shields
"They could be
dangerous"
Said one officer.
"We have come to
exchange cultures"
Said the aliens' main
spokesperson.

The next day the Sun
reported
Dangerous aliens land on
Hackney Marshes
Two got arrested
Are we safe from these
alien invasions?
The Daily Mail reported
something similar.

I was sitting in the café
waiting for
A set no2 breakfast
When I read the news
The reports weren't true
The aliens came in peace.

The next time the UFO
landed
I was standing outside
Tesco's
Waiting for a bus home
A little chill in the air
Had replaced a calm and
sunny day.

This time the UFO landed
on the Kent marshes
Somewhere to the east of
Gravesend
The aliens brought a
barbecue with them
Offering to share some
hospitality
With the old bill.

FRANK BANGAY

CRAZY

I'm crazy for feeling the
way I feel
I was crazy for falling in
love

Crazy because I know
nobody can help me get
better
So I'm crazy for trying to
be true
I know what I have to do
if this is living then I want
no part of it
If not then I want to be
able to live my life out
completely
I know I'm crazy for
wanting to be happy
It's a crime nowadays to
be happy
As the system expects
everybody to be sad
Otherwise they say there
is nothing wrong with you
Being crazy is living the
true life
That was given to me
The system says that
people do not slip through
the net
Then the system must be
more crazy than I shall
ever be
I know I live a crazy lie
One day I shall meet a
crazy wife
So until that day comes I
will just have to live my
crazy life alone

RON CLARK

HOME AGAIN

Isn't it good to go home
again
To your friendly nervous
chatter.
I'm nervous, too,
Not having seen you in
ages,
Chatter and into the
brightly lit kitchen,
Where once I used to sit,
Nothing seems to have
changed,
Apart from the new
microwave,
Now into the front room,
With the warm fire

Those Shuffling Feet From The Past

*What nice grounds
the Victorians gave the insane
the funny farm
suitable for labour.*

*Then came industrial therapy
putting thing in boxes
putting things in boxes
putting things in boxes.
putting things in boxes.*

*A few bob at the end of the week
twenty cigarettes
it keeps the mind active
or so it was said.
The watchtower
to keep an eye out
for any escapees
the year of struggle
that beat the spirit down.*

*Those shuffling feet
keep on walking
an endless road
along psychiatric corridors.
Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
breaking through the walls
of discrimination.
Our song will rise
our song will rise
tearing at the walls
of exploitation.*

*So here we are
in this cruel age of spinning
where those on top
seem to keep on winning
compassion is a word
so rarely spoken
money is made
out of every possible opportunity.*

*“Such spacious grounds
the Victorians gave the insane
the trees still blossom
the birds still sing.”*

*I say
“lets turn these dark institution
into luxury flats.”*

*Cries from the past
hear them echo
shuffling feet
on hospital lino
keep on walking
smoking another cigarette
cigarette smoke
coming through the air vents*

*Admissions
Sections
acute ward
Long stay ward.*

*Now you can rent
or buy a home here
how could anyone
set up home
in an ECT room.*

*On medication
we feel drowsy
on medication
we pace up and down
speech becomes slurred
we get the shakes.*

*Those shuffling feet
always on the move
the spirit struggles
the spirit struggles.*

*Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
breaking through the walls
of exploitation.*

*Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
tearing down the walls
of discrimination.*

*So as you walk round
this property developers dream
you walk alongside
those shuffling feet
from the past.*

*Those institutionalised clothes
never became a fashion item
but our daily struggles
can lead to nervous breakdowns.*

*So as you walk
round the grounds
around the grounds
if someone comes up to you
and says
“have you got a fag
have you got ten pence”
don't be alarmed
they are just trying to communicate
just trying to be your friend.*

by Frank Bangay



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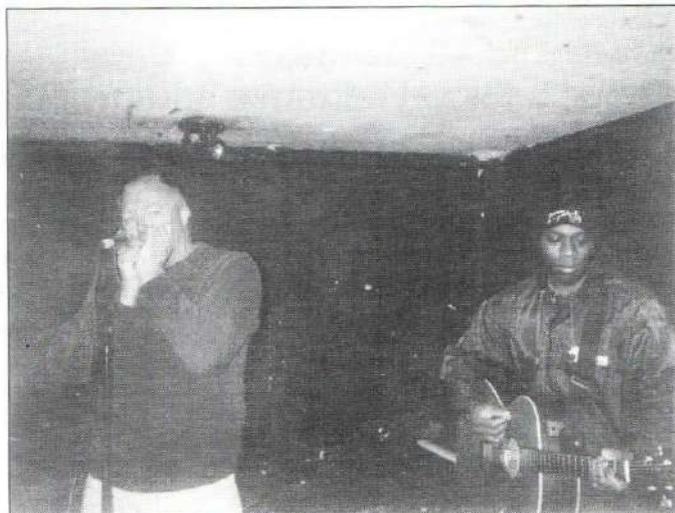
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FRANK BANGAY featuring *Tunde Busari*



1. Mad?
2. Tough Guy Gets Sensitive
3. That Place on the Hill/A Shuffling Work in Progress
4. Our Melody
5. The Park Song

AND THEY WILL STAY BEAUTIFUL

Where Vikings once landed
Now UFOs are spotted
And I like to believe it is true.
What was once wild marshland
Has been reclaimed
But history still shows through...

Country plants grow on the riverbank
In spring and summer they tower
Showing beauty in their strength
Flowers pollinated by busy bees.
Butterflies perform a delicate dance
Many different birds sing from trees
A symphony so much sweeter than the urban
din.

Trains rumble in the distance
I listen to the far away tune

Amongst the foliage
I nearly forgot about the city.

When the conflict of noise and pollution
Gets too much to put up with
And I need space to breathe,
Let me walk amongst the weeping willows
Along the banks of the muddy river
The Lea valley flowing out into Hertfordshire
And beyond,
Let me be at peace.

What once was wild marshland
Has become beautiful again
The past stirs from its slumbers
Let the beauty keep flourishing.

Hackney Marshes
A little spirituality
In an often soulless world.

FRANK BANQAY





THE POET WALKS

The poet walks
In tired shoes
He has stars in his eyes
The stars give him a vision
He looks at beautiful skies
No cold overcast day
Can dampen his spirit
An old lady walks with carrier bags
Through city streets
Once a happy family fragmented by poverty

A bobby stands on a night time's street
Looking for something suspicious
Bracing himself against the cold
He goes about his beat

The smell of burgers and grilled onions
From an all night café
Tea in plastic cups
A bag of chips
A plastic seat to rest in
A little paradise
In the lonely city

Beware the property developer
As he stalks these streets
Looking for land
On which to build his fortune

Men behind closed doors
In halls of power
Make rules that affect our lives
We worry
We fret
You know it don't seem right

The poet walks in tired shoes
He will replace them sometime
A poem unfolds in his mind
He thinks it's a poem that could change the world
Let him keep believing

FRANK BANGAY

DEATH OF A MODERN NATURE POEM

Tonight,
It lies alone, the dirt

Of its fingers, unwashed,
The light of its will, unspoken.

The mouth's words
Laid to rest, do not redeem air.

The tongue
Of eyes, the lips of text, require water.

I watch it die,
On breath lines, unopened, unreleased.

I scatter its ash,
In a garden of worlds, of names, unwritten.

The silence, growing
Out of unused water, perfects its anxious lives.

The poem,
Suffering religious neglect, is spared creation.

On fresh paper,
Its obituary, clear: a modern nature poem is dead.

Humming,
I send it to a famous editor: the poet is no longer alive.

AUSTIN MCCARRON

THE KING OF STONE

The patient,
On the floor of air,
Collects distance, follows ends.

In a fall of light, a winding extremity.

The camera
Sings in a bloodless eye.
He listens to its neon voice, softly murmuring.

Green as spinach his face drops a lip.
To the rise of language he hammers air.

He is all method, moved by his predicament.

I capture it all,
The oldest words, of exile, unmanned gardens.
In a corridor of snakes, his bite is new.

The stone smiles: I follow its frown of death.

I find you, with my free hands,
In your faceless moment, tricked of possession:

Jewels in the Poundshop

(CD available from Frank Bangay, 28a Edgar House, Kingsmead Estate, Homerton, London E9 6QE; 020 8985 1859; frankbangay@yahoo.co.uk: £10 + p&p)

Produced at **Core Arts, Homerton**, *Jewels in the Poundshop* (1966) is the second CD of Frank Bangay with musical accompaniment, his first being *This Topsy-Turvy Life* (2004) – which certainly adds a new dimension to his work. Frank has long made a point of scrupulously learning most of his poems by heart, for oral presentation. The excellent facilities of Core Arts have enabled many to extend the range of their expressiveness. Frank Bangay has in many ways pioneered this development, and given great encouragement to many others. Like its predecessor, this collection shows the great collaborative potential of Core Arts.

Mad questions the concept of madness, a label which is often tagged on to any expression of real feeling. There are two exciting changes of tempo here, slowing down for the reflective middle part, and speeding up again for the conclusion. The instrumentation includes Frank's own slide guitar, and some skilful use of percussion in the concluding part.

Little Boy is gentler in style, introducing the acoustic guitar sound of **Tunde Busari**. This is later augmented with a xylophone sound, with penny whistle, and finally a penny whistle chorus combined with xylophone. A happy evocation of the questing roamings of childhood.

Edwardian Summers – pleasant fairground nostalgia. Some very imaginative keyboard work here by **Tina Pinder**, who switches to $\frac{3}{4}$ time, evoking brass bands in parks, and accompanying Frank's take on The Last Waltz – and another tempo change for the finale, very original.

Dreaming Blues – exciting 50s railroad guitar rhythm. Frank is extremely good at moving back and forth along the lanes of living memory, shades of the skiffle era and the teddy boys! Some really exciting codas on lap steel guitar from Tina, as Frank takes us on a conducted tour of the Northern Line.

Jewels in the Poundshop – this song provides the link with the cover motif. There is a pleasantly sentimental guitar and accordion accompaniment in a minor key. Frank's slide guitar provides some emphasis, including percussive effects at the end. Lyrically, the number wistfully traces the neighbourly association between Mrs Jones and Mrs Baxter. Leisured, rummaging shopping expeditions are crucial foci of social exchange. And Poundshops are often treasure-troves of old heirlooms. Interesting imagery of discarded food wrappers and a diver in the lake on the nearby common.

Our Melody – this has a heavy grunge-chord blues backing. Very forceful – though perhaps some bass and drums might have augmented it.

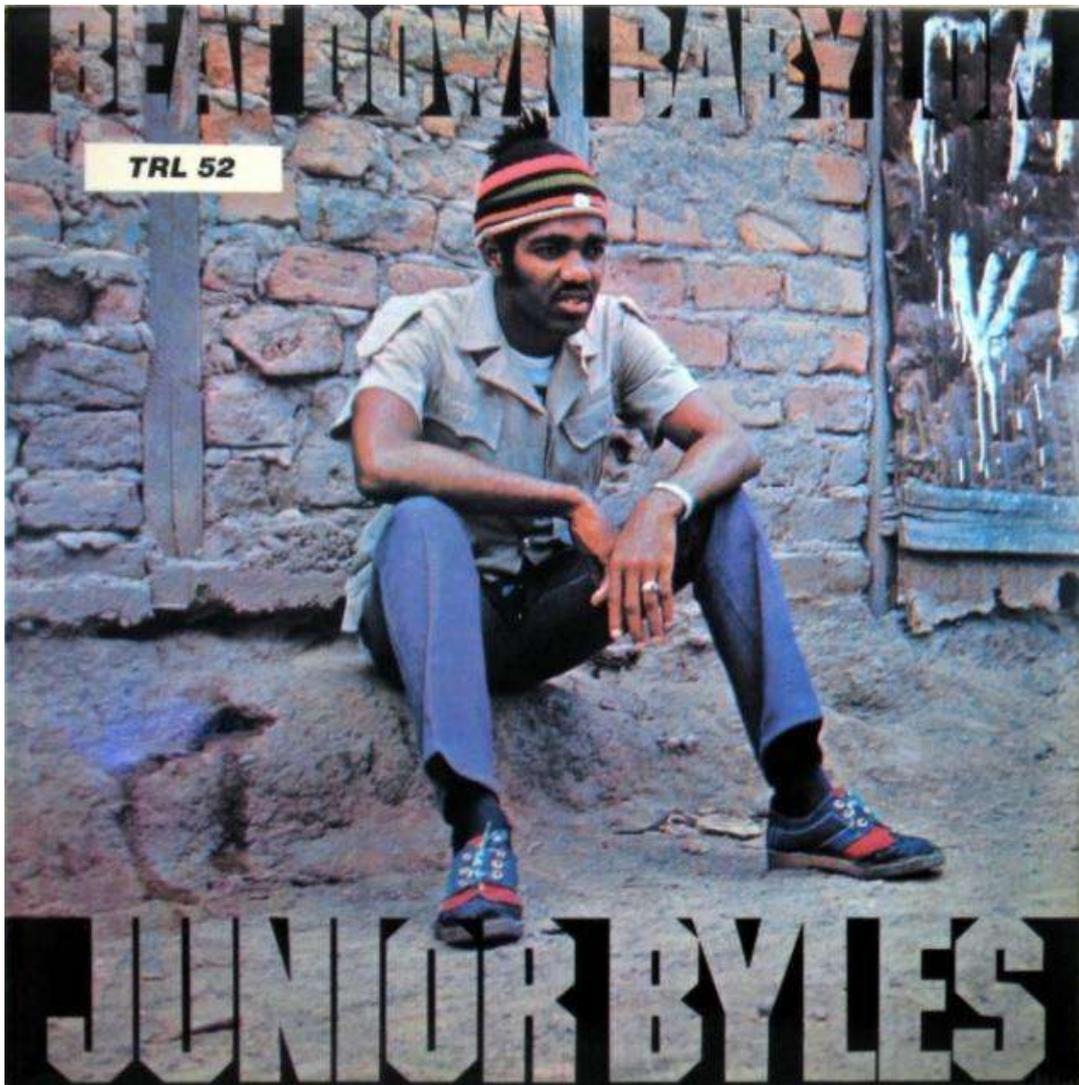
I Love My Home – the inclusion of Mel Green’s voice adds a tender sensitivity to this number, which touches on the utter universality of the home environment. Almost anywhere can be a home – even if it happens to be a bleak hospital room. Extremely effective, though the final guitar fade-out is perhaps a bit over-long.

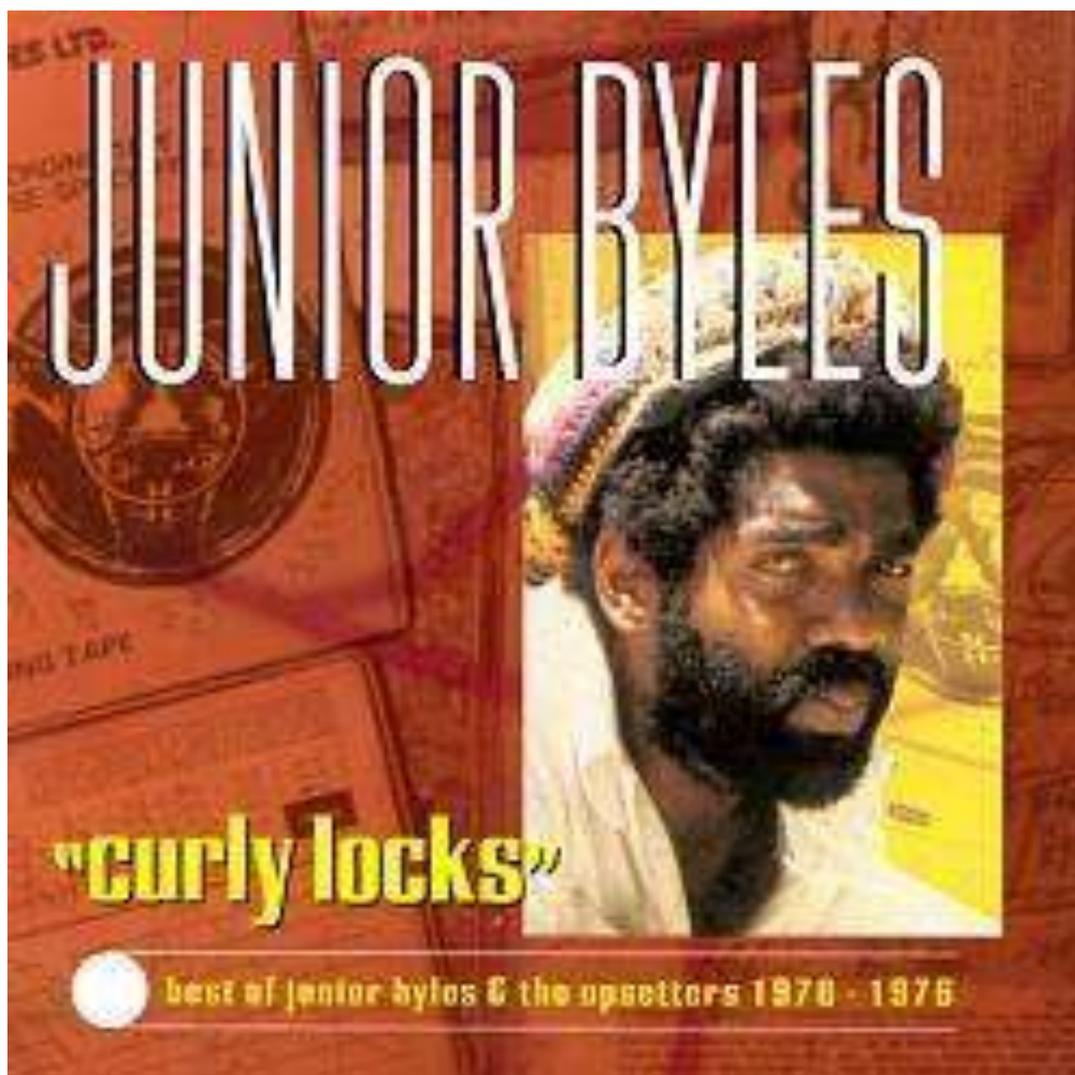
Throughout Frank’s work, there is an emphasis on a warm and familiar urban world – one, of course, which is threatened by redevelopment.

Dave Russell

JUNIOR BYLES

a Roots Reggae Pioneer





Earlier this century I bought a copy of MOJO magazine. It had a free reggae competition with it. One of the tracks on the CD was A Place Called Africa by Junior Byles. The song is a heartfelt cry on the Rastafarian theme of repatriation. Listening to it reminded me how good Junior Byles is. This made me check out some of the man's other work. We will return to his music shortly. First I will tell you a bit about Junior Byles.

His full name is **Kerrie Byles Jr.** He was born in 1948 at Kingston's Jubilee Hospital, and grew up in the city's Jonestown ghetto. His father worked as a mechanic and his mother was a school teacher. His family were devoutly religious, and his early musical education was singing in church. In 1967 he co founded a vocal trio called the **The Versatiles**. At this time he was also working as a fire fighter. At the time Lee "Scratch" Perry was working as chief engineer for producer Joe Gibbs. He was scouting for talent for Gibbs new Amalgamated label and on hearing the group signed them. Two years later they went on to work with Lee Perry, who by this time was establishing himself as a producer. Then they moved on to work with Duke Reid for his Treasure Isle label. Also other producers such as Laurel Aitkin.

In 1970 the Versatiles split up. Junior Byles while still working as a fire fighter returned to working with Lee Perry. Other members of the group would sometimes

provide harmonies on his recordings. Then in 1972 The Wailers left Perry to sign with Island. Perry needed someone to fill the void, and Junior Byles fitted the bill. He gave up his job as a fire fighter, and over the next five years their partnership would produce some of Perry's most highly regarded work. Every bit as good as the work he did with The Wailers.

In 1972 Junior Byles was one of several reggae artists who offered support for Michael Manley's General Election campaign. One of his songs *Joshua Desire* was addressed to Michael Manley while another song *Pharaoh Hiding* was addressed to Hugh Shearer leader of the ruling Jamaican Labour Party. Manley was elected, but changes for Jamaica's poor were a long time coming. Junior Byles addressed this with the scathing *When Will Better Come*. These songs were released on his first album titled *Beat Down Babylon*. With musical backing from **The Upsetters**, this album showcases his song writing talents, and his haunting tenor voice. The title track has an anthem like quality to it, in another track *Curly Locks* he sings about how his girlfriend's parents won't let him see her because of his dreadlocks and his Rastafarian faith. There is the previously mentioned *A Place Called Africa*, while *Poor Chubby* hinted at his unstable mental health. The record also includes a version of the Little Willie John song *Fever* – a song made famous by Peggy Lee. While he was working with Lee Perry he was also self producing and set up his own Love Power Label. In the mid 1970s Junior Byles left Lee Perry to work with other producers. Among the recordings from this period was a song called *Fade Away*. Some people consider it to be his finest work. "He who seeks vanity and no love for humanity shall fade away". A couple of years later the song was featured in the reggae film *Rockers*. In 1976 he released his second album *Jordan*.

However, by 1975, Byles' health started to decline. He was suffering from depression and became deeply affected by the death of Hailie Selassie. Unable to reconcile this with his belief in Selassie's divinity, he attempted suicide. He survived and was admitted to Kingston's Bellevue Hospital. It has also been suggested that he had been overworking, and that this contributed to his breakdown. After the admission his health continued to deteriorate. However despite regular spells in hospital he continued to record. But by the end of 1976 he had vanished from the scene.

He attempted a comeback in 1978 and recorded two singles for Joe Gibbs. However it was clear that he was still not well. He didn't re emerge until 1982. Work on a planned new album went slowly. Then he suffered much tragedy when his mother died and he lost his home in a fire. His wife and children also emigrated to the United States. Apart from a few singles Byles would release nothing until his album *Rasta No Pickpocket* in 1986. The album sadly did not see a long lived upturn in his fortunes. The next year he found himself living on the streets, scavenging for food in dumpsters and begging from passers by. He did resurface in 1989 recording a couple of singles. Three years later he played a few shows with Jamaican guitarist Earl China Smith. In 2004 he returned to live performing in Jamaica. These performances received positive reviews. This led to a short tour of the United Kingdom. I don't know if Junior Byles' career is still active, but I wish him well. His

recordings from the 1970s show him as being one of the pioneering voices in roots reggae, and are well worth listening to.

Frank Bangay
February 2015

There is more information on Junior Byles on the internet. A lot of his recordings are also on YouTube

When Hailie Selassie passed away in 1975 it caused a lot of controversy amongst the Rastafarians, some felt that Jah had put away his physical presence and was around still in spiritual form, while others didn't believe that he had passed away. Rastafarians see Hailie Selassie as a living God.

The Progress We've Made

The other night I went to YouTube and watched a reggae concert from 1973. The concert took place in Edinburgh. The audience ranged from teenage to middle age, the audience was mostly white. The acts performed in a variety of styles. The Cimarons sang Ain't No Sunshine by Bill Withers and backed most of the other artists. There was Nicky Thomas, Winston Groovy. Then came Dennis Alcapone one of the early Toasters. I remember hearing him toasting the following sentiments, "war is ugly, love is beautiful", here he sang praises to Cassius Clay. The Marvels were a vocal group two men and an attractive woman singer. The Pioneers were backed by a group of long haired white musicians. Judge Dread was the MC, a white guy who knew the artists. At the end of the evening he wished us all God Bless. Nicky Thomas was particularly dynamic, he sang "Something's Holding Me Back Is It Because I'm Black." A sentiment that he could no doubt relate to. But I feel he wasn't projecting it on to the audience. The skinheads who bought those reggae records and helped get them into the charts often lived on the same housing estates as their Caribbean brethren.

A few years later reggae became popular, punk bands and reggae bands started working together. Dennis Bovell produced the Pop Group and the Slits. "Black skinned blue eyed boys ain't going to fight no more wars" sang the Equals at the beginning of the decade. We had made a little progress. There were setbacks, there always are. Scheming minds trying to corrupt white working class youth. Too often they succeeded in their aims There was still a long way to go but we had made some progress.

Over the years I have got to know and make friends with people from different parts of the world. It has felt good to learn and share a little of each other's history. It is always good to learn something new. Black and

white people become neighbours, in the same street, on the same housing estate. We talk and moan about life, our struggles with the housing association. The beautiful summer sunshine, the miserable English weather, when it keeps raining. There are reasons to greet each other with a smile. We stand in the same supermarket queues we get on the same buses. If we should stumble and fall, it's nice when someone helps us up. It is good to have a friend, someone to offer a helping hand. When that happens I am grateful to you whoever you are, I will say thank you for your help.

In this world of constantly changing terminology buzz words and mind games that divide and control. Privileged white lives some will say. But many of us are not privileged, we have experienced hardship, we've had our struggles. Poverty, slum housing. dead end jobs, we have worked hard to make our way. Many of us have travelled that lonely journey through psychiatric corridors, there are struggles we could share, help lift some of the burdens'. All lives matter, don't they, don't they? All lives matter that is what I would like to say. We could be working together towards more hopeful days. Is it possible to build on the progress we've made?

Frank Bangay

July 2020

In case you are not familiar with Dennis Bovell I will explain. He was part of a South London reggae band called Matumbi. Formed in 1971 and based in the Brixton, Clapham and Battersea areas. Dennis Bovell also made some acclaimed dub albums under the name Blackbeard. He also produced some punk and new wave bands like the Pop Group and the Slits.

The scheming minds mentioned in this piece is a reference to far right political parties like the National Front and the British Movement. They did a lot to exploit white working class youths. They did manage to create a lot of friction. In the late 1970s things were getting tough and people had many frustrations. However it has been said that a lot of the youth who were into two tone music were fans of the music and didn't like the way the far right were exploiting them.

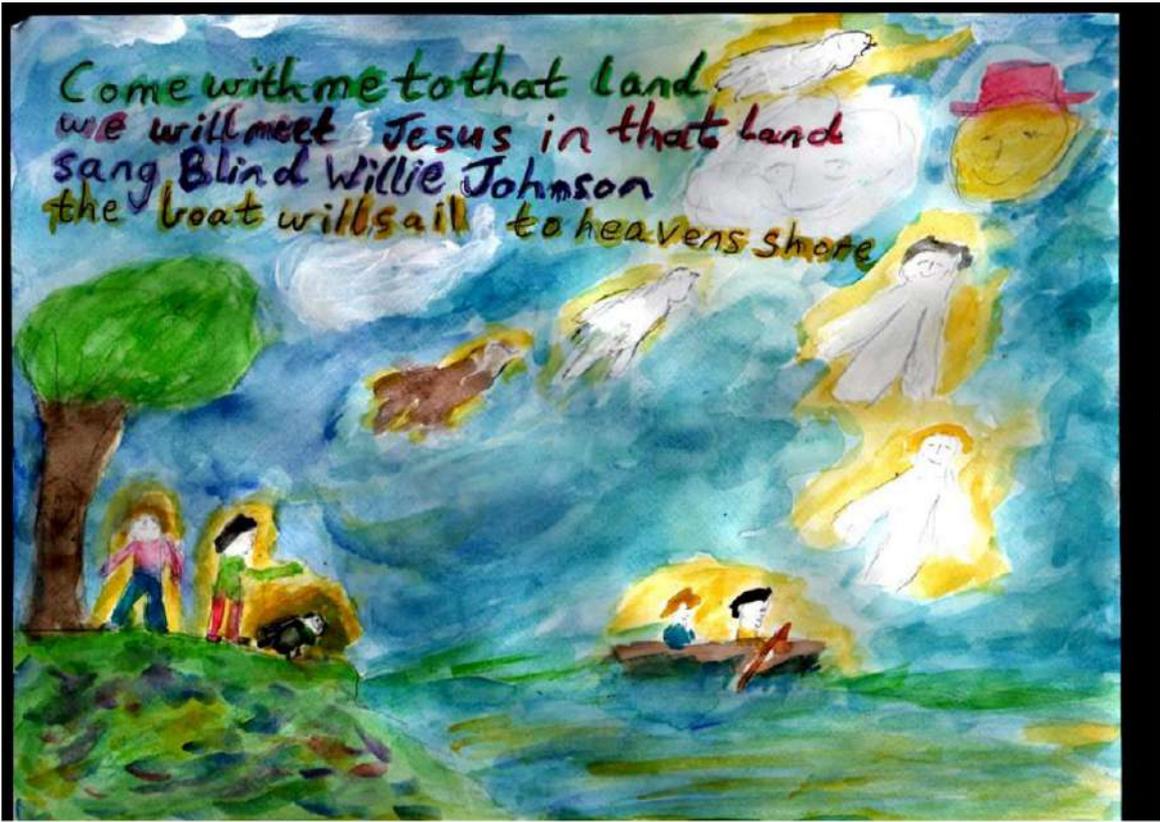
This piece of writing talks about some of the good things that have happened in Brittan since the 1950s in attempts to bridge racial barriers. Mixed race musical collaborations in Brittan go back to that time, the post war years. Some of the black jazz musicians from the 1950s have been quoted as saying that they felt marginalised. That is no doubt true, these were early days and we had a long way to go

Trinidad born piano player Winifred Atwell came to England in 1946. In 1953 she appeared in the last film made by music hall comedian Frank Randall titled *It's A Grand Life*. Throughout the 1950s she had many hits in the pop charts with her boogie piano playing. This included two number 1 hits. Keyboard player Keith Emerson has described her as an influence on his piano playing. Two mixed race singers in Britain in the 1950s were Shirley Bassey and Cleo Lane. Shirley Bassey was born in the Bluetown area of Cardiff from a Nigerian father and an English mother. Bluetown is also known as Tiger Bay, and is situated near Cardiff docks. Since early last century it has been a culturally mixed area. Shirley Bassey's musical career started during the 1950s. By the 1960s she had established herself as a popular singer having various chart hits. She also sang the theme song to three James Bond films. Cleo Lane was born in Uxbridge Middlesex from a Jamaican father and an English mother. She grew up in the Southall area of West London. She married British jazz musician John Dankworth and sang with his jazz band. She also developed an acting career appearing at the Royal Court Theatre in London. The Royal Court Theatre was home to modern playwrights of that time such as John Osborne and Harold Pinter.

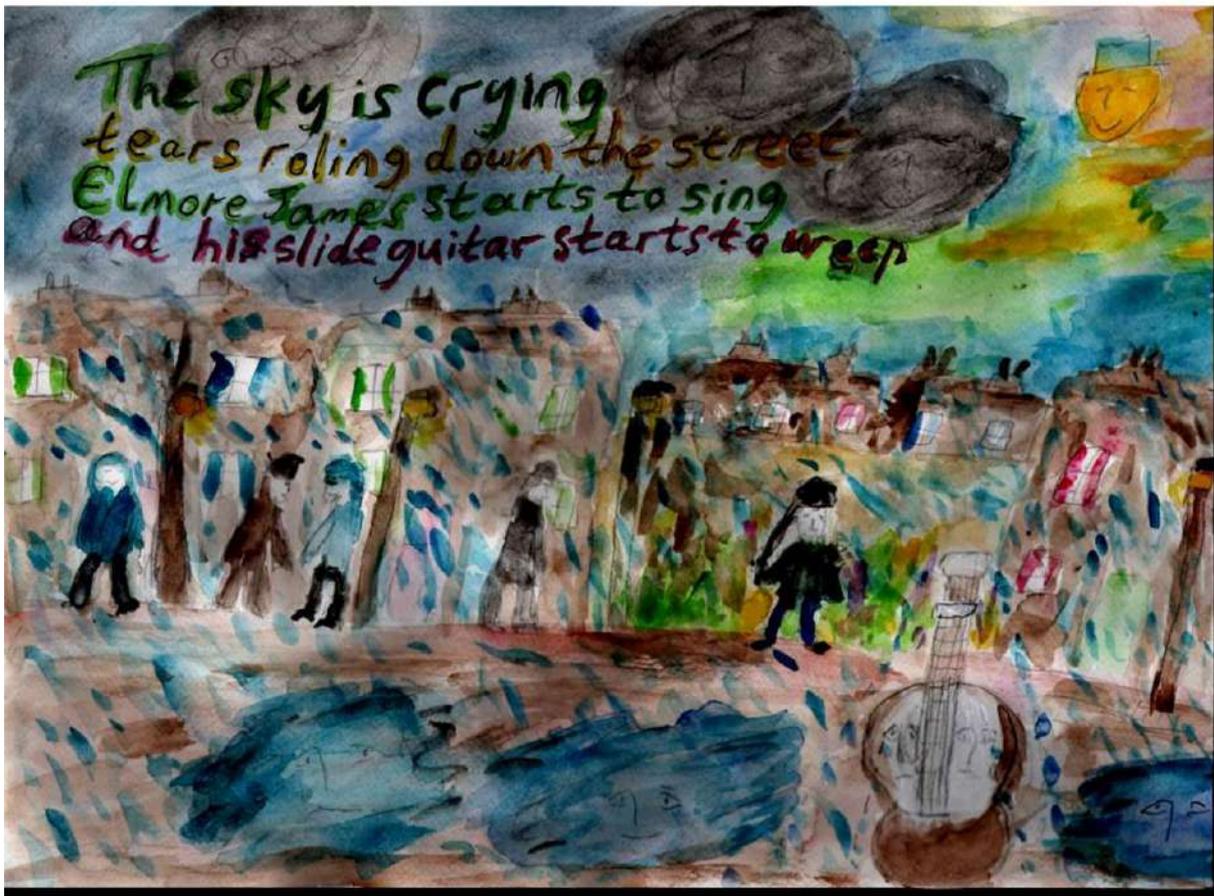
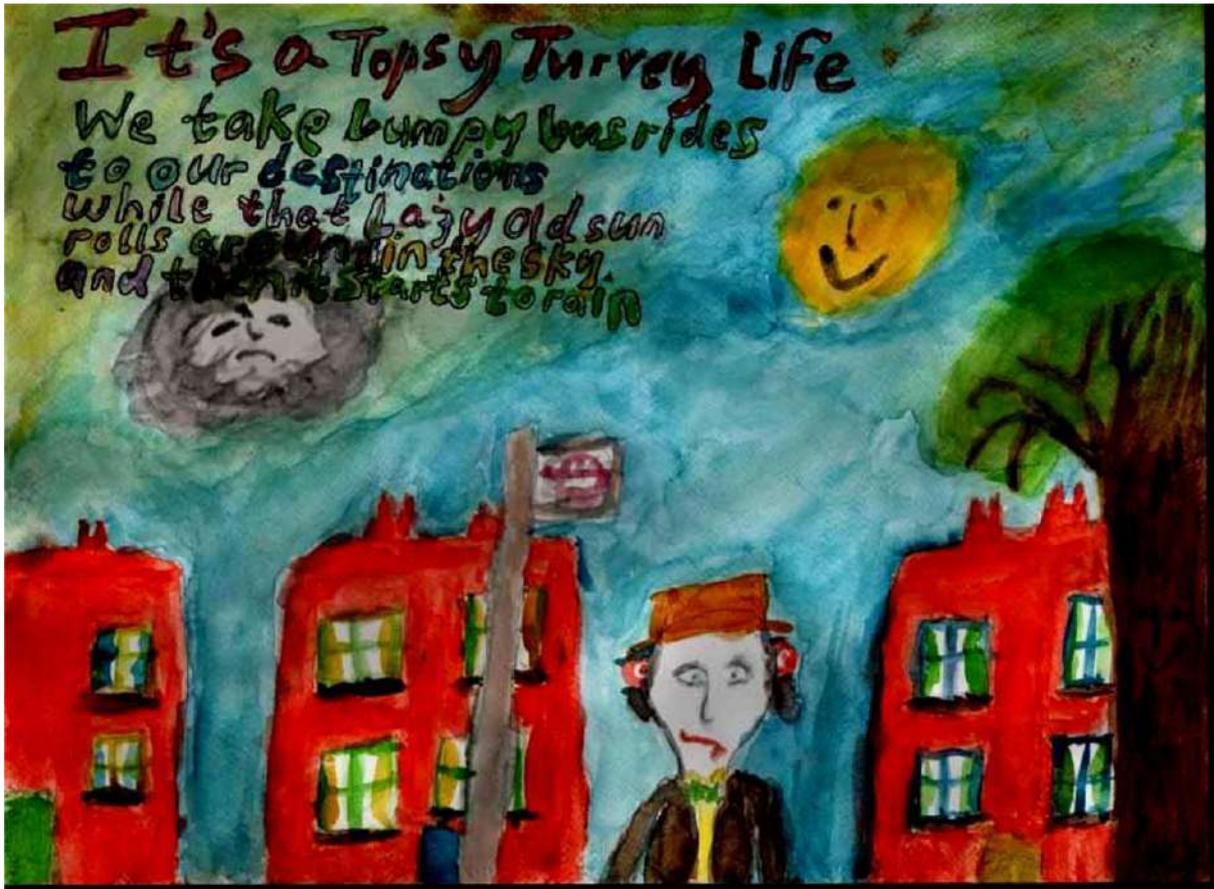
In the 1950s Teddy Boys were listening to black artists such as Fats Domino, Little Richard and Chuck Berry. Fats Domino was also popular in Jamaica and an influence on Ska. Teenagers from this time were also discovering the blues and formed skiffle groups where they would be playing songs by people like Leadbelly. Jazz musician Chris Barber and blues musician Alex Korner brought Big Bill Bronzy and Muddy Waters to Britain. This paved the way for the many blues artists who visited Britain during the 1960s. In the 1960s the musicians union made a ruling that visiting American artists couldn't bring their backing groups with them. As a result when these blues and soul artists toured in Britain they would be teamed up with a British band. During the late 1960s blues music would find a hippy audience. The mid to late 60s blues boom would find many British bands playing the blues and many blues artists making visits to Britain. If anyone knows about other mixed race musical collaborations that took place in the 1950s, or any mixed race musical collaborations that took place before the Second World War I would be pleased to learn about them.

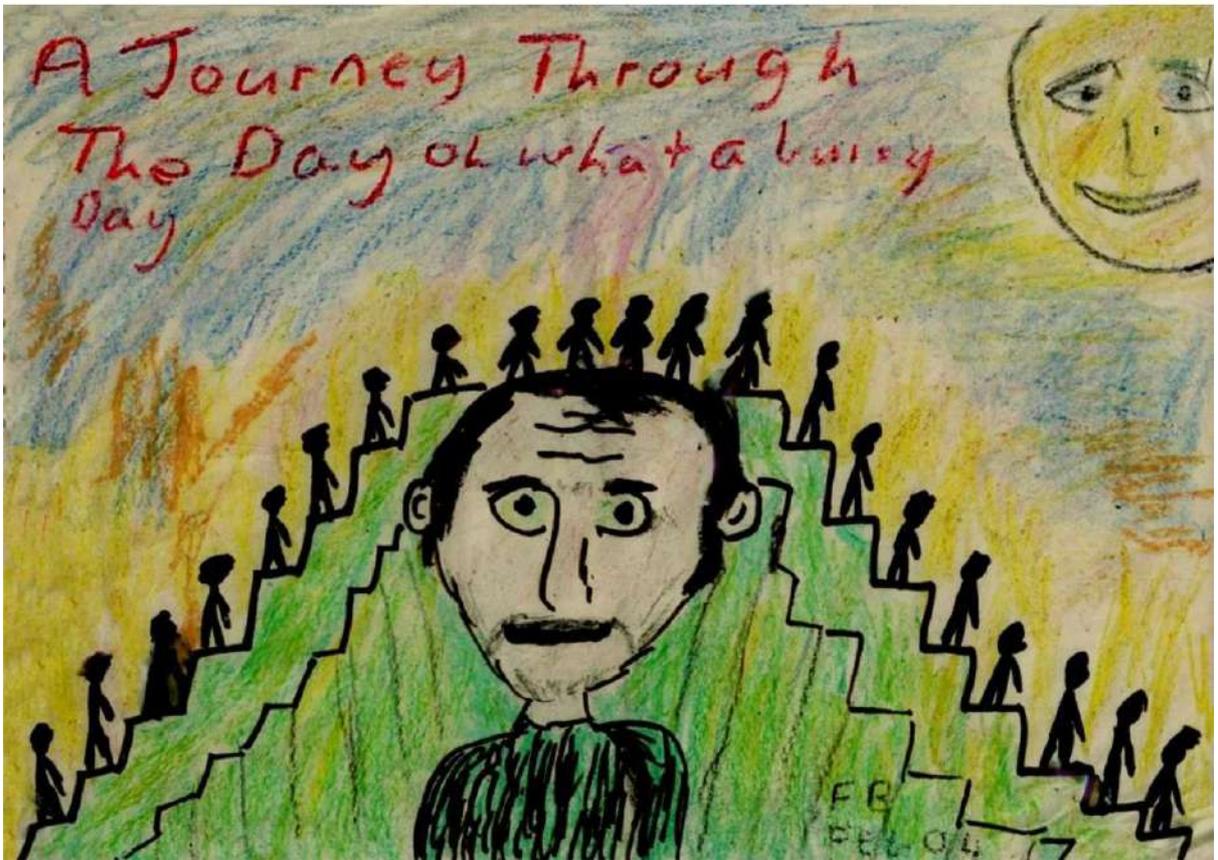
Through the mods, skinheads and the punks, youth who loved black music in its different forms more mixed race collaborations would take place. There were no doubt other things too. We made a little progress and it would be nice to think that more progress could be made.

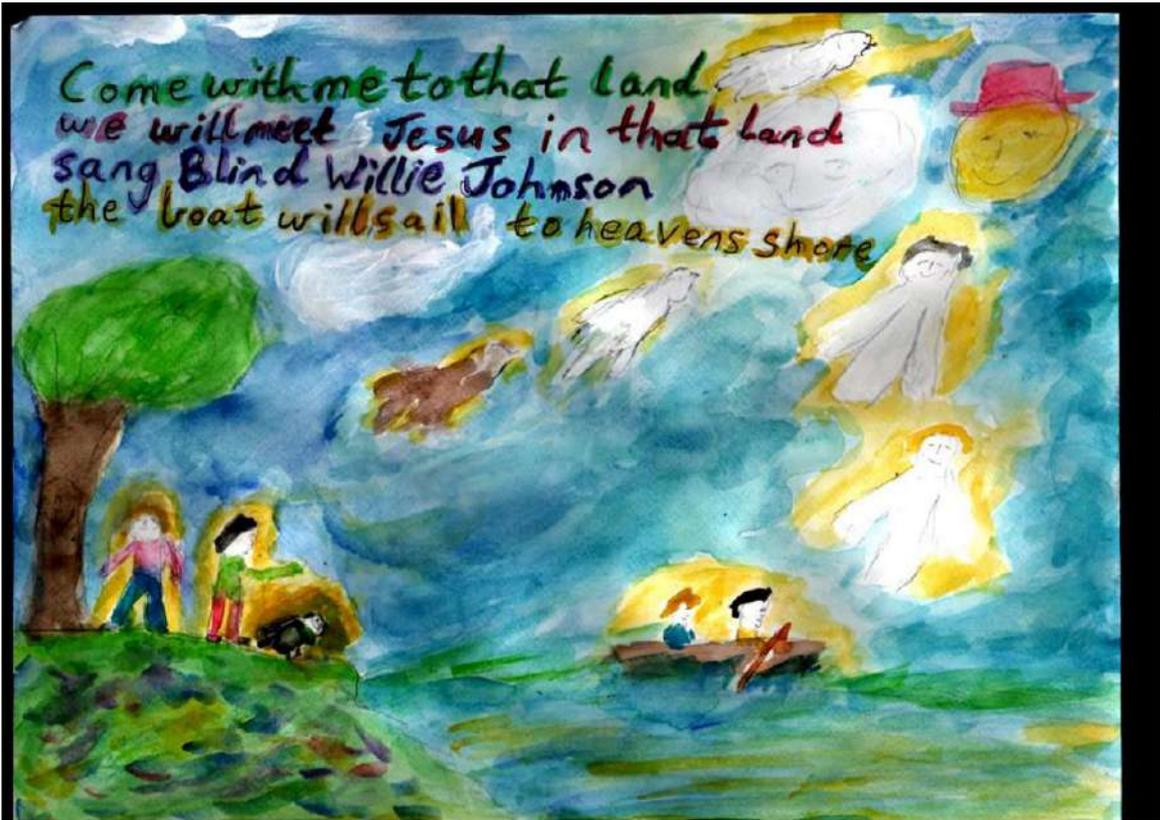
Peace and Love Frank



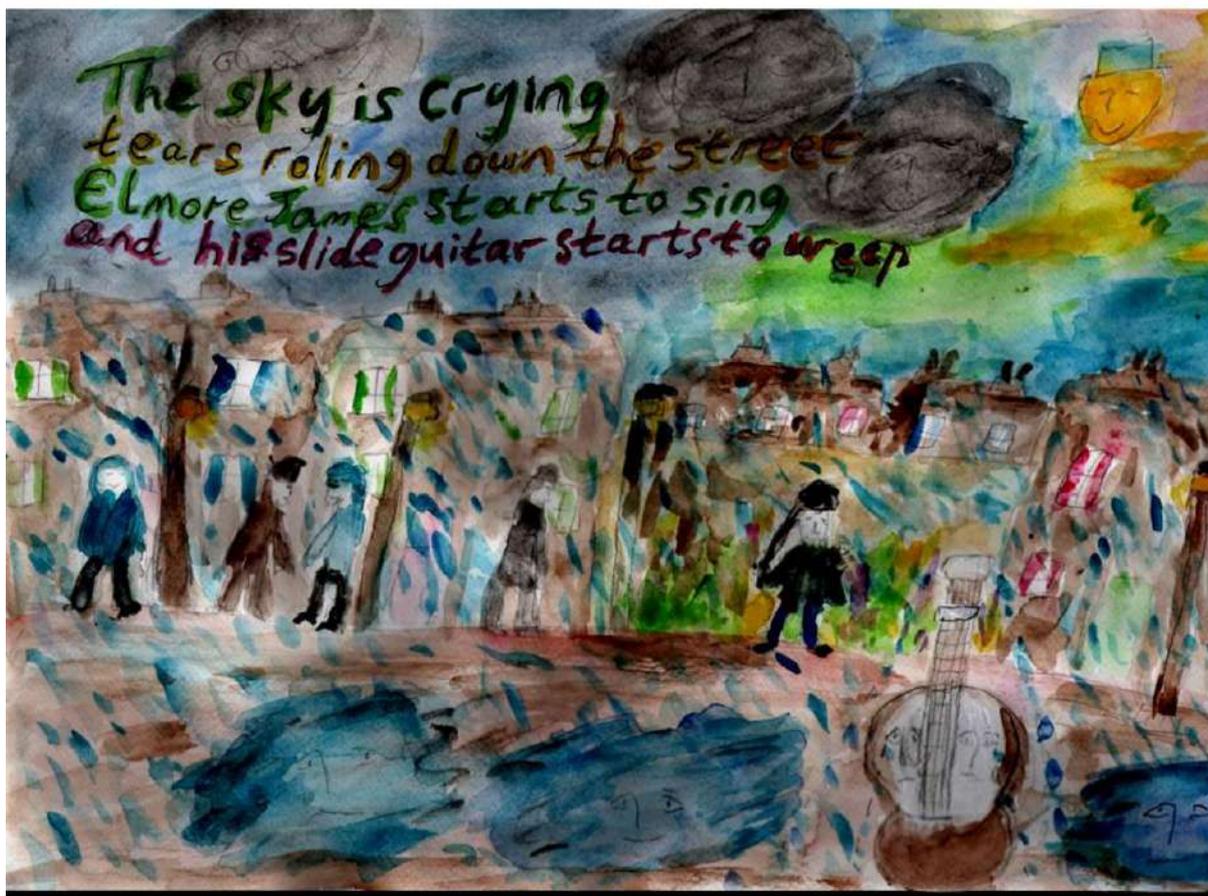
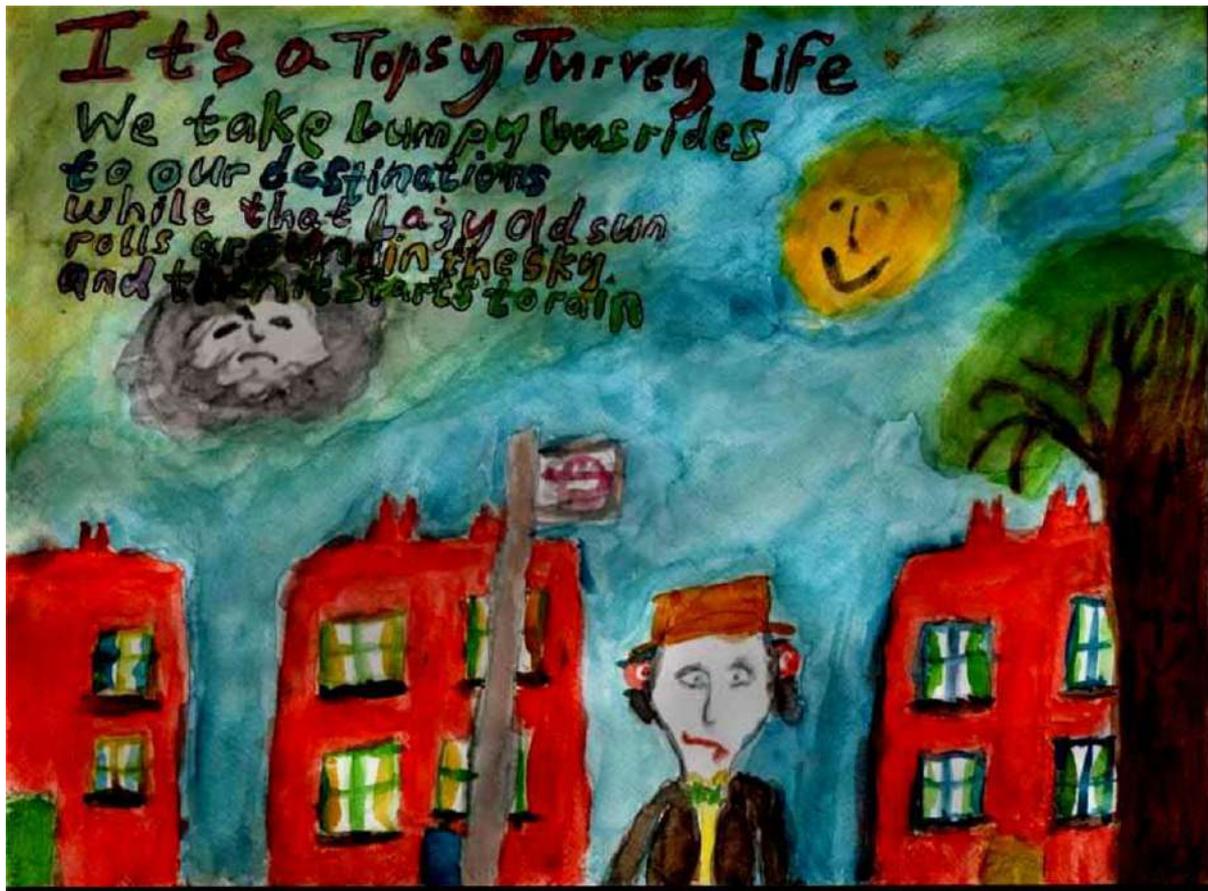


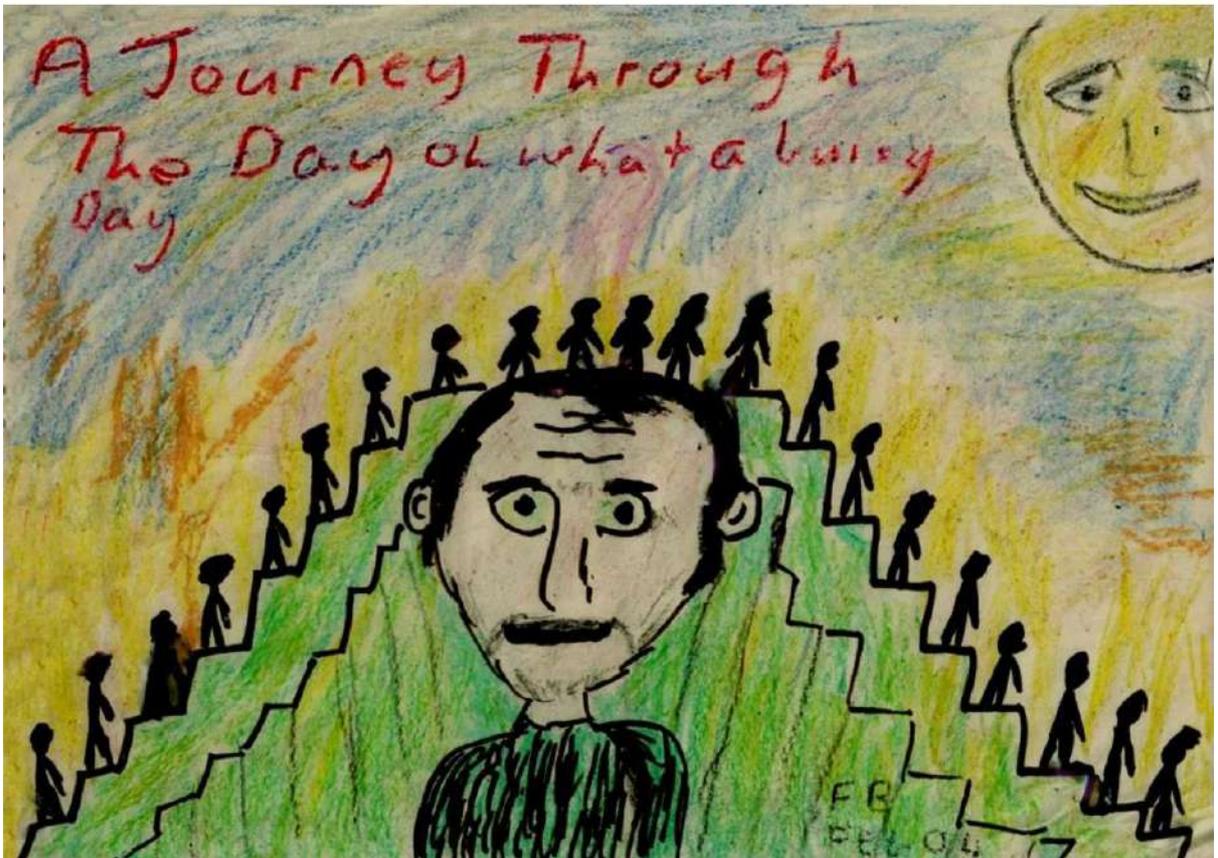












A FEW WORDS ABOUT MY ARTWORK

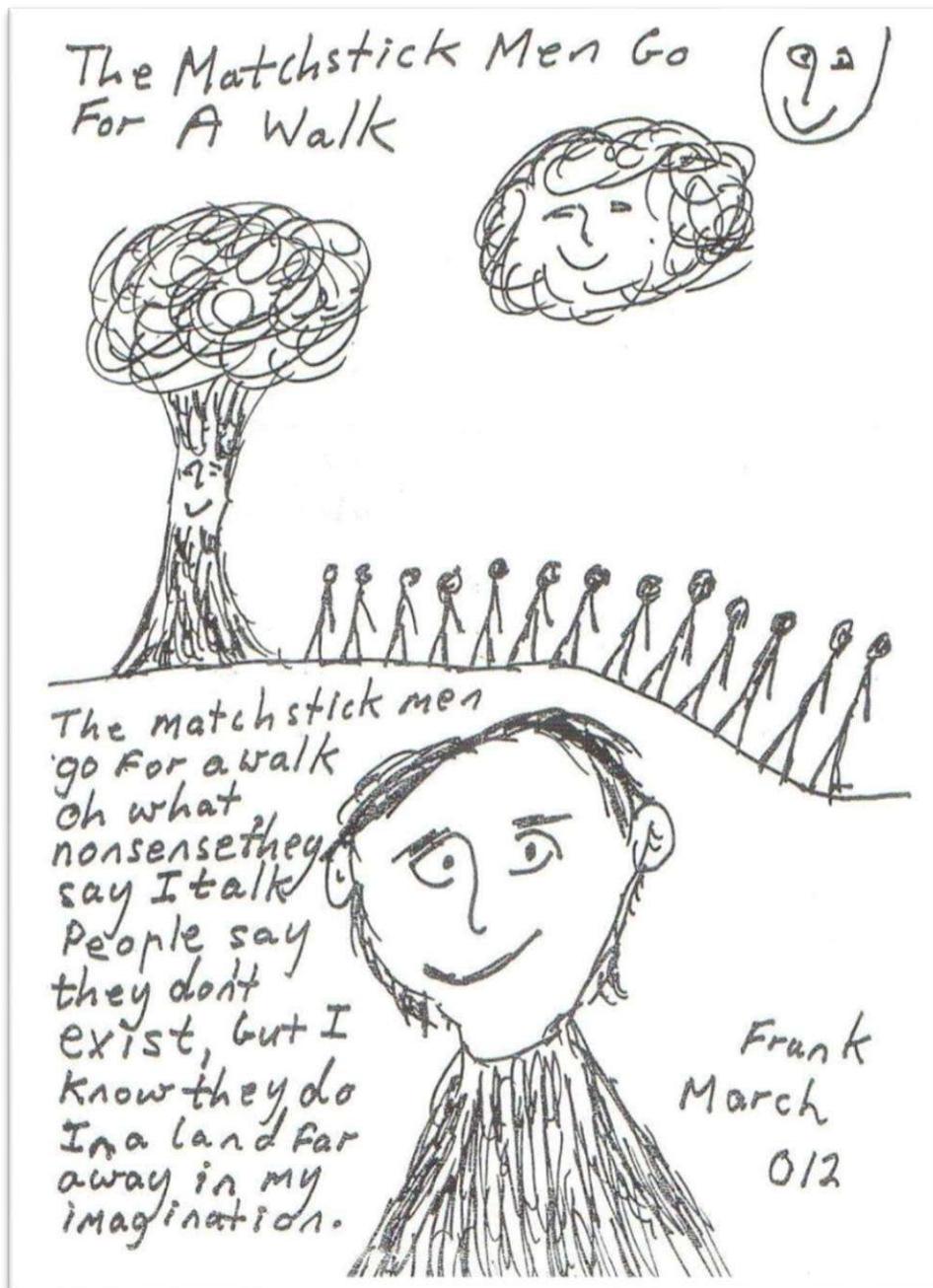
My interest in art started in the late 1970s. An early influence was Kevin Coyne, on occasions his albums would have his artwork on the covers. In later years all his albums had his artwork on them. Then, as is the case now, seeing Kevin's artwork inspired me to pick up a felt tip pen or crayon and have a go at something myself. Over the years I grew to appreciate the work of many other artists.

My early artwork was mostly done with felt tip pens and crayons. I drew a lot of pictures featuring tower blocks, corrugated iron fences and waste ground. This was very much a reflection of what London looked like at the time. I went on to do some oil paintings. For these I got a lot of inspiration from places like Richmond Park. I carried on drawing mostly with felt tip pens. During the 1990s I started using crayons as well. I draw from the imagination, but it is inspired by the world around me and the way I see life.

The inspiration behind my current artwork started last year. I had not done any drawing for a while. I seemed to have lost confidence in my artwork, but I felt frustrated by this. At the time I was putting together my latest CD *Good Morning World* which was recorded at Core Arts. As part of a Core Arts creative work plan I decided to put some of my artwork on the cover. I was encouraged to do a water colour painting for the cover. It worked out ok and I started to get ideas for other paintings. With support and constructive suggestion from people at Core my artwork continues. Some paintings have been inspired by the weather and the seasons. One of these paintings was done during February when we had constant rain storms. It was also inspired by blues legend Elmore James. Some paintings are inspired by things happening around me.

One painting was inspired by a baby pigeon in one of my window boxes last year, and watching the parents care for the bird. Some of my artwork is of a spiritual nature. A couple of paintings are inspired by felt tip pen drawings that I did earlier this century, I felt I could developed the ideas in watercolours. I feel blessed to have this outlet. Included here are some crayon drawings that I did some years back.

Frank Bangay, 2014



MUSIC REVIEWS

KEVIN COYNE: "Blame It on The Night" (1974, Turpentine Records, www.kevin.coyne.co.uk, 2013)

In the early 1990s Kevin Coyne's Virgin back catalogue was reissued on CD. For some reason *Blame It on The Night* was forgotten about. It was first released in 1974 and sandwiched between his 1973 album *Marjorie Razorblade*, and the hard rock sounds of 1975's *Matching Head and Feet*. At the time, some reviewers preferred the more conventional band sound of the latter and in particular the following album *Heartburn*. Now is the time for *Blame It on the Night* to be appreciated.

On this album we see Kevin going deeper into the tangles that he sang about in the song *My Message to the People on Case History*. The opening song *Rivers Of Sin* is driven along by slide guitar and saxophone. It is a song about Catholic guilt. It has been said that this song had an influence on John Lydon. A couple of years back, Lydon sang Kevin Coyne's praises in *Uncut* magazine. Towards the end of the next song, the acoustic *Sign of the Times*, Kevin sings "My hands are clean, they are never dirty. But I wear something and it hurts me." Kevin's song-writing takes interesting turnings. For example one song *Poor Swine* is about a mining disaster where seven miners died. However Kevin still manages to find some compassion for the boss of the mine, who is heartbroken by the disaster but has to face the wrath of his workers. Musically *Poor Swine* rocks in fine fashion. In another song, *Light up Your Little Light*, Kevin sings: "Your past history is well known, to everyone in this particular home." Was he referring to a past spent in a psychiatric hospital? *Right On Her Side* has an upbeat tune and is about a lady who has "never been known to swear, what would she do if a man was there?" However, later in the song Kevin sings "You never see the wheels, the life scars that never heal."

One thing that strikes me about this album is that some of the songs have upbeat tunes, an example of this being *I Believe in Love*. The song was released as a single back in 1974; Kevin's band at the time was led by guitarist Gordon Smith. I felt they had an organic sound that had warmth to it. While they could

rock, they still had room for acoustic guitars. I also felt that they were close to the blues. The harmonica-driven *Take a Train* is an example of this.

There are four bonus tracks at the end of this CD. Of special interest are the live versions of *Poor Swine* and *Marjorie Razorblade*, both from a 1974 free concert in Hyde Park. They show what a powerful performer Kevin Coyne was. The package includes a second CD called *River of Sin*: this was the working title for *Blame It on the Night*. This includes alternative versions of the songs on *Blame It on the Night*. At the end of the disc are three outtakes from the recording sessions. *One More Drink* is a brass-driven rocker. *Heart and Soul* has a catchy tune and I like it a lot. *Stoke the Oven* and *Let Your Fire Burn* clocks in at twelve minutes, but it keeps your interest. It is a fine way to close the album. Kevin Coyne liked to look beyond the neatly-cut lawns of suburbia. Beyond the masks we wear to try to be normal. He does that really well here. I feel *Blame It on the Night* is one of Kevin's best albums.

FRANK BANGAY



FRANK BANGAY: "Good Morning World" (Core Sounds, mail@corearts.co.uk, 2014)

Poet, performer and long-term newsletter contributor Frank Bangay releases his new album *Good Morning World*, recorded at Hackney's Core Arts. Like its predecessors it features Frank declaiming his poems about nature, faith and everyday survival against a backdrop of sounds created by various musicians including guitarist Tunde Busari and, notably, violinist Jane Hall who gives the opening track *A Prayer for England* an orchestral feel. Both *Peace and Love* and *Foreign Heads Human Hearts* reflect critically on "the

propaganda that the newspapers print about asylum seekers and other immigrants," while *Smile* is a spiritual duet with singer Sophie Mirel. Also featured are cover versions of Kevin Coyne's *Looking for a River* and classic blues standard *John the Revelator*. Some of the poems featured on this album will be familiar to regular newsletter readers.



UNIT: "The Colours of Life" (DNA, www.unit-united.co.uk, 2013) / VARIOUS ARTISTS: "Godspunk Volume Thirteen" (Pumf, www.pumf.net, 2013)

If you ever wondered why vibraphones and marimbas aren't typically used as lead instruments in pop music, Unit's new album will either show you why or make you think they should be used more often; it's brimming with them, and they sound a bit like glockenspiels. Unit are the brainchild of Hackney Patients Council's Andy Martin, best known musically for his work with 80s art-punk band the Apostles. Unit have a cleaner sound than the Apostles, though the approach is equally experimental and at times slapdash. Alongside digressions into poetry and jazz-rock, this record includes covers of songs by Wire and Tubeway Army, and demonstrates Andy's skewed pop sensibility and lyrics that veer between bitterness and exuberance, always from an outsider's perspective. Unit also provide *Friends*, the best song on Volume Thirteen of ex-Ceramic Hobs guitarist Stan Batcow's *Godspunk* series, which also features six tracks from his own band *Howl in the Typewriter*. This compilation will appeal to fans of bleeps, squalls, drones and other funny noises.

FOREIGN HEADS, HUMAN HEARTS

There is a foreigner living in
my head
We argue with each other
In fact we spend many hours
in conflict.

There is prejudice in the
newspapers
Distorted stories to make us
angry,
There is prejudice in my head
We fight each other daily.
Yes there is prejudice in my
head
A nasty little person
That I don't ever want to be.

In these tough times
The sun doesn't seem to smile
much
It likes to hide behind
Great clouds of depression.

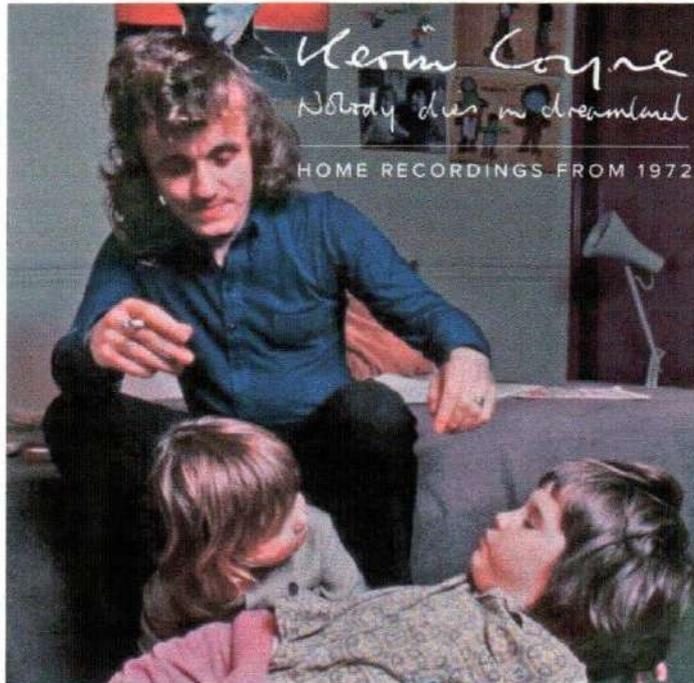
My friend,
It seems that there are a lot of
burdens to bear
But this blame culture of today
It don't do anyone any good.
Always looking for easy
targets
Never looking for reason
The further down the ladder
you are
The more you get blamed.

There are contradictions in my
head
He's a decent chap like me or
you
De does his best to be
understanding
But is in many ways confused.

I have a companion in life
We come from different parts
of the world
But we get on together,
We are no longer foreigners
Just good friends.

FRANK BANGAY

KEVIN COYNE
NOBODY DIES IN DREAMLAND
TURPINTINE RECORDS



These recordings were made in 1972, after Siren the band Kevin was in had split up. Also shortly before his first solo record Case History was recorded. The story behind this record is as follows. Someone gave Kevin a one track reel to reel tape recorder. In his rented flat in Clapham South London where he lived, he recorded these songs. His guitar and harmonica being the only musical accompaniment. It is a stark setting but there is warmth and humour too.

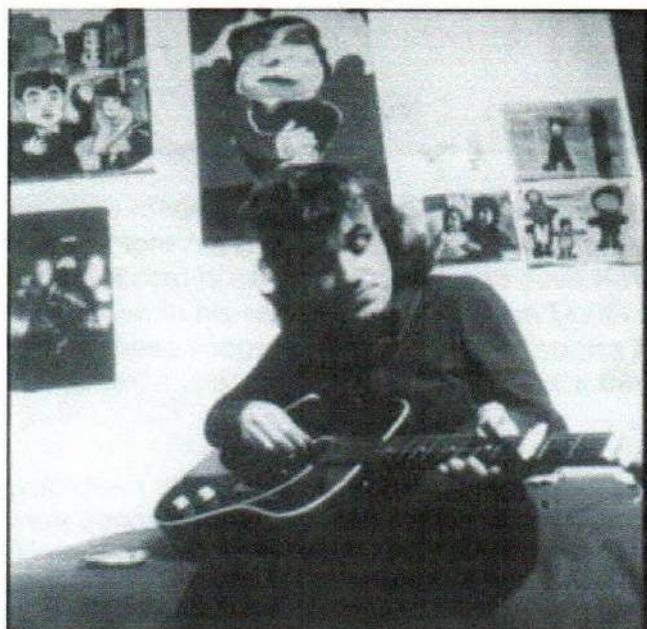
While Siren played down to earth rhythm and blues and rock and roll. Every so often there were songs that hinted at the direction that Kevin would travel in during his solo career. For example the first Siren album contains a song called Asylums. Based on his experience working as an Art Therapist at the Whittington Hospital. Here he sings from the point of view of an inmate looking out at the so called normal world. In the 1990s some unreleased Siren material appeared on CD. I felt that Let's Do It with its poetry and acoustic songs, and The Club Rondo, were close to some of what Kevin would do during his solo career.

Anyway back to Dreamland. Some of the songs would appear on Case History. The opening track Black Cloud appeared on his 1984 album "Legless In Manila". Here the lyrics are slightly different. When Kevin sings about black forms appearing around his bed, it makes me think of the Blind Lemon Jefferson song Black Snake Moan. The second song Distant Desert features Kevin on slide guitar. Kevin very rarely played slide guitar, so it is interesting

This CD features some colour photos of Kevin in his flat in Clapham. Also some sleeve notes from Eugene and Robert Ferguson, plus quotes from Kevin and from Al Clark. It helps to keep the spirit of Kevin Coyne alive. In his songs he sometimes sang about subjects that few other people did. Uggys Song remains relevant, with the terrible plight of homelessness in our cities, and what often seems like an uncaring attitude put across by governments, towards this ever growing issue. Hopefully this album will reach a few new people. If you like the delta blues then this record is worth listening too. If you like Lo Fi music then I think you will like this. Like the Virgin Anthology box set from 2010, it is a testimony to the talents of a much missed national treasures.

This record was released on the 4th^h of June. To purchase a copy go to Kevin's website at email info@kevincoyne.co.uk. Hopefully this record will also be available in some record stores. For more about Kevin Coyne and his long prolific career visit Pascal's Kevin Coyne website at (kevincoynepage.free.fr)

Frank Bangay
May 012



11) Those Shuffling Feet From The Past

What nice grounds
the Victorians gave the insane
the Fanny Farm
sutable for labour.
Then came industrial therapy
putting things in boxes
putting things in boxes
putting things in boxes
putting things in boxes.
A few bob at the end of the week
twenty cigaretts
it keeps the mind active
or so it was said.
The watchtower
to keep an eye out
for any escapies
the years of struggle
that beat the spirit down.
Those shuffling feet
keep on walking
an endless road
along psychiatric corridors.
Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
breaking through the walls
of discrimination.
Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
tearing at the walls
of exhibition.
So here we are
in this cruel age of spinning
where those on top
seem to keep on winning
compassion is a word
so rarely spoken
money is made
out of every possible opportunity.
"Such spacious grounds
the Victorians gave the insane
the trees still blossom
the birds still sing."
I say
Let's turn these dark institutions
into luxury flats."
Cry from the past
hear them echo
shuffling feet
on hospital lino
keep on walking
smoking another cigarette
cigarette smoke
coming through the air vents.
Admissions
sections

acute ward
long stay ward.
Now you can rent
or buy a home here
how could anyone
set up home
in an ECT room.

On medication
we feel drowsy
on medication
we pace up and down
speech becomes slurred
we get the shakes.

Those shuffling feet
always on the move
the spirit struggles
the spirit struggles.

Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
~~break~~ breaking through the walls
of exploitation.
Our songs will rise
our songs will rise
tearing down the walls
of discrimination.

So as you walk round
this property developers dream
you walk alongside
those shuffling feet
from the past.

Those institutionalised clothes
never became a fashion item
but our daily struggles
can lead to nervous breakdowns.

So as you walk
round the grounds
around the grounds
around the grounds
if someone comes up to you
and says

"have you got a fag,
have you got ten pence"
don't be alarmed
they are just trying to communicate
just trying to be your friends.

Frank Burgay

January 2004

Started December 2003

a little pause for inspiration

Finished January 2004

