



GLASS EYE

FREE

**ST. HELENS
HERITAGE**

**ISSUE NO 1
DECEMBER 2024**



RE-DOCK



Creative Underground
Exploring the Heritage of our Arts and Culture

GLASSEYE

FIXING THE PAST

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Barry Gore's photo-essay
about the St. Helens music
scene in the 1980's

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CONTACTING US

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New Dreams for Old - far horizons....



We take for this first Issue of a new magazine lyrics from a 1980's song by Liverpool band The Room.

"GLASSEYE" is a "zine", partly a fanzine in the spirit of early punk, - also maybe a culture-zine. It's for people who are keen on heritage, but heritage as the sediment of the past and the building materials for the future.

Its focus will be St Helens but not in a narrow way. It aims to be a bit cheeky, a bit eccentric and to raise as many questions as it answers. It needs contributions from YOU. And it is currently FREE.

Share your old and new dreams HERE. This first issue is mainly devoted to a collection of photographs taken by Barry Gore during the period of St Helens' Creative Underground 1980-95. A lot of material from the "Creative Underground" Project has ended up in the St Helens Archive and more is to come. We'll be drawing on that for some of the zine's content, but as much on what you send us. If you have some-

thing to say about all this or a contribution to offer get in touch at

glasseyemag@gmail.com

We are currently looking for photographs and reminiscences of people and events from the period.

We are also offering here a celebration of the life of Mike Parker a stalwart of the scene who we lost this summer past, and an announcement about the public on-line launch of the film "Another Country" which was produced last year for the Borough of Culture celebrations. This first issue of Glass Eye is funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund via St Helens Archive Service's 'Creative Underground' project, we thank them for their support.

www.heritagefund.org.uk

You can also find out more about the project to date by visiting

www.legacy82-95.co.uk

And for people with an interest in heritage generally, you can find out about heritage attractions, groups and organisations across the borough as well as contributing digital artefacts to the 'community archive' at the Heritage Hub:

and finally you can find the St. Helens archive service here;

www.sthelens.gov.uk/archives

Barry Gore introduces Fixing the Past

I wish I'd taken more photos. Black and white film seemed expensive at the time and although I didn't have much money I did have plenty of opportunities to point my camera at interesting scenes and people.

Time turns simple photos into something more interesting perhaps, but this was a great time to be in St. Helens.

This photo-essay is all about the bands (of which there were many) that played in St. Helens around the late 1980's / early 1990's and the people and

places that allowed this creative activity to happen. Maybe you're in there somewhere?

Barry Gore



Now
Read
On.....





Back To Mono outside the
Dead Fly rehearsal rooms,
Ravenhead

Dave Evans, Niall Lambert,
Andy Cave and Pete
Luddon.

Formed from two of St.
Helens most successful
bands, the Tractors and
Old Ma Cuxom.

THE BANDS



Mr. Stretles Piano

Dead Fly rehearsal rooms,
Ravenhead, 1989

Alan Wyatt - Vocals
Terry Bibby - Drums
Neil Hawley - Bass
Stu Blackburn - Guitar
Shaun Hawley - Guitar





BIG GLORY / BIG GLORIA

Big Glory who later changed their name to Big Gloria in an attempt to make prospective punters think there might be a stripper performing!

Formed by brothers Terry and Kevin Donald (top picture), they also including Mike Parker, Ken Glover and Dave Robinson. This photograph shows them performing at the Windlehurst Festival, 1988.

Sadly Terry died in 2023 and Mike passed away in 2024.



Poisoned Electrck Head

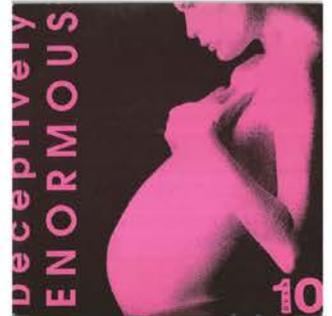
Arguably St. Helen's best and most popular band.

Poisoned Electrck Head played Windlehurst Festival as a favour before loading up the van and setting off for another gig the same day.

Keyboard player, Brian Carney and bassist, Paul 'Bun' Bunyan were the owners of the Dead Fly rehearsal rooms in Ravenhead.

Poisoned Electrck Head continue to play gigs and recently headlined the Recharged gig night at the Citadel.





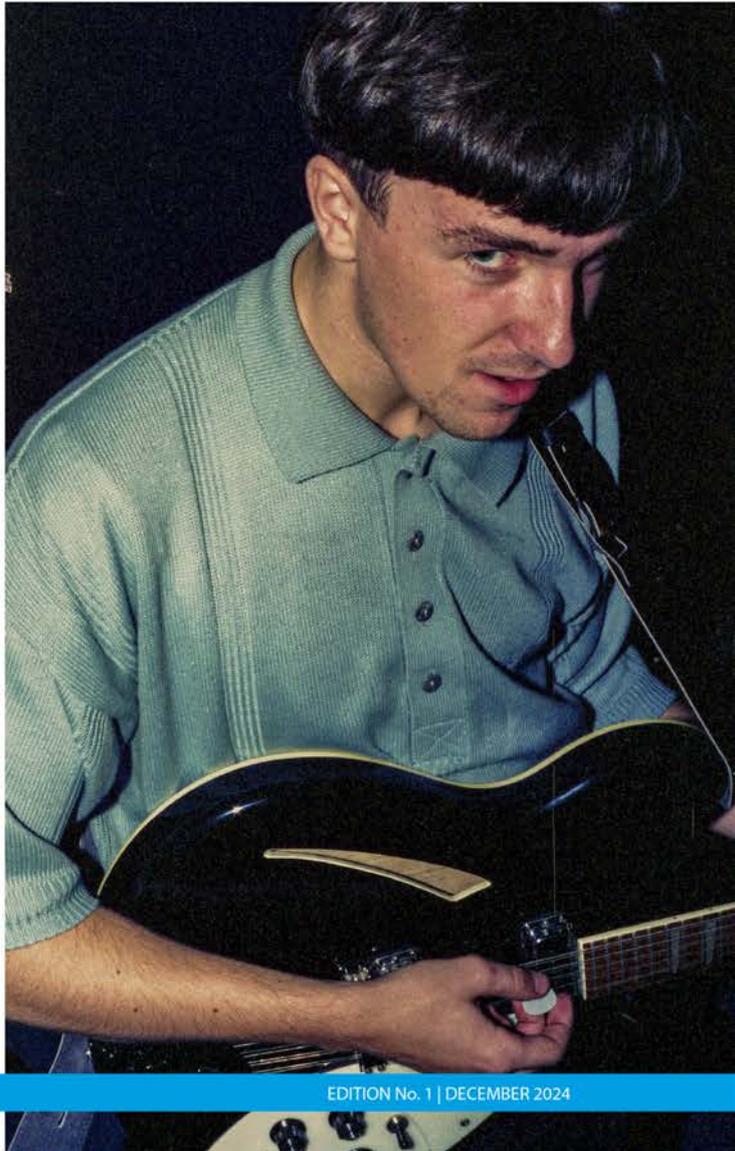
THAT MAN

Originally started by Ray Green and Stu Rayner whilst at Cowley school, That Man went on to become a popular local band.

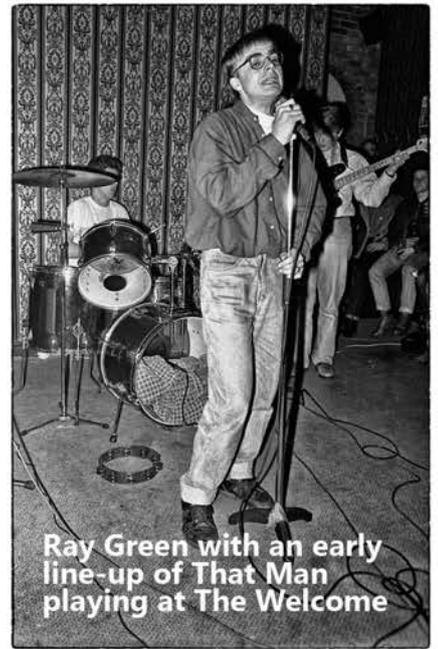
Along with Mr. Strettle's Piano, Redo Zebri and Hubba Hubba featured on the Musicians Collective 7" EP 'Deceptively Enormous'.

Ken Nelson (above), studio engineer at Amazon studio, Liverpool and the man who discovered Coldplay.

Chris Layhe, bassist in the Icicle Works with Ron Jackson (below left), working on the song 'Gaoled Heart'.

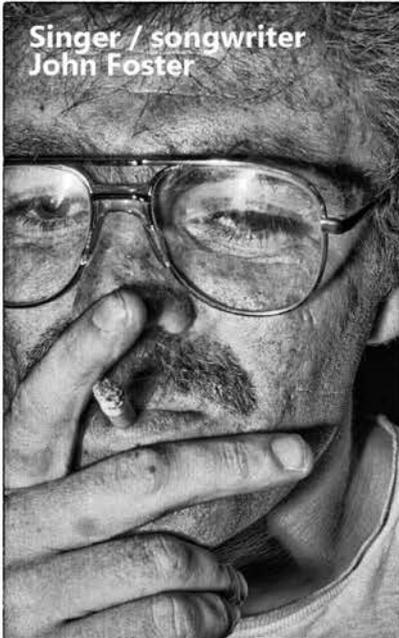


**Flex performing at the
Windlehurst Festival**



**Ray Green with an early
line-up of That Man
playing at The Welcome**

**Singer / songwriter
John Foster**



**In From The Storm
playing at the
St. Helens Show,
Sherdley Park**



The Happy Gauls at The Citadel



**Lee Van Cleef
performing at the
Windlehurst Festival**



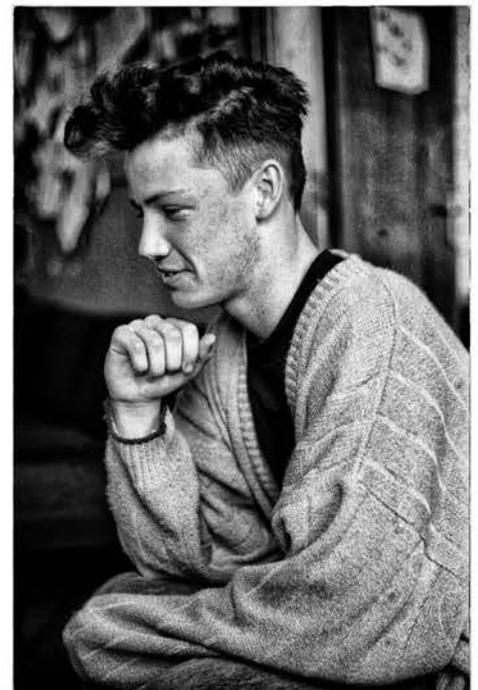
Clockwise
Flex performing at the St. Helens
Show

All Of Everything performing at
the Windlehurst Festival

Mark 'Tut' Hutton, lead singer
with The Jars and Out Of
England.

The Jars supporting
Electrafixtion at The Citadel

Shaun Lowndes performing with
All Of Everything at The Citadel.





Old stuff. Who cares? or
Whose Culture? Whose
Heritage?

This is written for those
who care about Heritage...

Last year we initiated "Creative Underground 1982-95", a National Lottery Heritage funded project to recover the energy and momentum and social vitality of the arts scene in St Helens in the 1980's and 90's and to offer it up as inspiration for future cultural enterprises. I might call it for now "Raiders of the Lost Art". You have Harrison Ford in your mind's eye? Well, it is a quest, or a mission, an Odyssey even, to re-find our buried treasure, a treasure which brings with it the promise of power and influence and magic, just like that lost Ark. In the spirit of Jason and the Argonauts local people set out to re-capture a Golden Fleece of a heritage and travel back with it into a preferable future, so filling in a big gap in the town's Archive where the lost art wasn't. Back to the Future, then? We have started the work and now it needs to be sustained

But, Heritage?

The French word is "Patrimoine". For me this has hints of "patrie", - homeland, fatherland, - and suggests something grand and national. France has created huge projects round the idea of "patrimoine", like Pierre Nora's "Lieux De Memoire" and Charlotte Delbo's "Days and Memory", concerning her time in Auschwitz, so that memory over there is a way of exploring alternative landscapes. We in the UK, by contrast, have our "heritage" but our Department of National Heritage is now called the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the connotations of our national heritage seem to be not landscapes and communities but "inheritance" - which in many minds suggests old stuff, jumble from the loft or attic, hoarded and handed on. Actually "handing on" is also the underlying meaning of the French word but the overtones of bric-a-brac are our very own.

History and Memory are separate things, as Pierre Nora spent a lifetime emphasizing. Somewhere in between we have Heritage. Heritage, Culture, the Arts - they never quite go away but they never quite arrive. Last year St Helens was Borough of Culture and was in receipt of money from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for heritage projects. The Council has an Arts Development Manager and an Archive Service. Expressing and remembering have been on the local agenda for decades, but how much does that matter to the average local? St Helens has its history, - of course, - a remarkable history - but it's what you do with and about history which matters. -

This is all tied up with our national story, such as it is, which covers the distance between

those two "Last Night of the Proms" favourites "Land Of Hope And Glory" and "Jerusalem", - between on the one hand "glory" and an ever-widening influence and building Jerusalem in our green and pleasant land on the other. Outwards and inwards. What they have in common, and which marks out their heritage dimension, is that they look to the past to generate a brighter future.

Heritage, then - the best of the past realized in the future through our actions in the present? So much depends on how we view and relate to our past. In the Hope and Glory or Jerusalem? debate - we fetishize our history without truly understanding it, so we often make a mess of our future. As historian Tony Judt pointed out we arrived in the 21st Century ready to jettison the bad old previous century, and with it went the past (and history as a subject in schools and colleges) without our having learned from it. To compensate for that failure we have now elected to suffer from the fetishization of the New.

**St Helens has its history, of course,
- a remarkable history - but it's
what you do with and about history
which matters.**

Meanwhile we have Archives, listed buildings, museums, galleries, and our ever-increasing attics-full of stuff (not forgetting a climate-endangering proliferation of server-farms and land-fill sites) - what's the point of all this retention?

Heritage does answer to some basic human needs, like our need to remember things. Since we have outsourced memory and therefore our capacity for recall to our phones (and museums, and server-farms and clouds) we continually need to create our personal database of the past. In the process, we may have forgotten that we were free and happy, but there are always more immediate questions - what did I do with that warranty document they mailed to me? Where did I put my keys?

We need Heritage for comfort, for a sense of having, of possession, and to legitimize our discontent with the present, - our sense of "better times" - and so to assist us in complaining about it. Heritage also provides an alibi for that human mania for collection, for abstract accumulation, for shelves of ornaments, drawers full of trinkets and warehouses crammed with old lawnmowers.

And of course Heritage fuels nostalgia, a retreat from the present. All of this is very human, very material, very forgivable. And it leads to a kind of old-fashioned conservatism (or maybe conservationism) - we spend a lot of time keeping destruction at bay, saving

ELEGANCE, CHARM AND DEADLY DANGER

ST. HELENS BANDS, 1986



Picture Credit: The St. Helens Reporter / St. Helens Archive Service

In 1986 a selection of St. Helens bands got together to make an album. It was released on the **PUSH** label which was an acronym for *Promotional Umbrella for St. Helens*.

Elegance, Charm and Deadly Danger featured sixteen local bands including early incarnations of Poisoned Electric Head, The Tractors and All Of Everything. Also featured was an early line-up of The La's, who went

onto achieve major success.

ELEGANCE, CHARM AND DEADLY DANGER TRACK LISTING

Old Ma Cuxon And The Soapchoppers / Don't Cry Darling (Daddy Had To Drown The Cat)
Wake Up Afrika / Love Died In The Road
The Riotous Hues / Happen

Us / This Year
Dixie Cartoon / Big
The Howitzer Brothers / My Girl (Mave / Samantha F
Kingston And The I
Post Mortem / Pity
The Aristocrats / B
5,000 Spirits / Saig
Cassio Viletone / F

AND DEADLY DANGER



Bucks
ers / Real Man
Sits Like A Reindeer)
Rox
Hunters / Heart And Soul

allistic Boogie
on Rain
ingerless Gloves

The Academy Of Unrest / Sensitive
The Happy Gauls / Bad Night At
Malibu Beach
The La's / Sweet 35
The Romulan Cloaking Device /
Terry Fields And A Pint Of Guinness
Mave / Thania (Come Down To
Victor's With Me)

ELEGANCE CHARM

3000 Spirit's
Academy Of Unrest
Aristocrats
Cassio Viletone
Dixie Cartoon
Happy Gauls
Howitzer Bros.
Kingston And The Hunters
The La's
Mave The Post
Old Ma Cuxsom
Post Mortem
Riotous Hues
Romulan Cloaking Device
Ust
Wake Up Afrika!

AND DEADLY DANGER

PUSH

things, recovering things, defending things. But surely we just have too much stuff? Every year more art, more paintings, more writings, more history, more memorable moments, more digital memory, more server-farms – how can we attend to it all, or reduce it to something manageable? H G Wells, in an early novel, "In The Day Of The Comet", envisaged a social movement towards a better society which organizes huge Beltane bonfires on which to burn all the unnecessary and encumbering accumulated junk, in a dejunking to surpass all previous dejunkings. Since some of the detritus in question consists of books many commentators have rejected this Well-sian vision, but anyone who has attempted a domestic or work clear-out will recognize the momentary impulse to obliterate everything. Meanwhile our oceans are a whirlpool of undegradeable rubbish and the man down the road has made his house a fire-risk with his hoarding. Do we have it in us as a society, as individuals, to clear the spaces for action? Or will our children's inheritance be to drown in an overwhelming excess?

- examine the effects of the past on us, compare past and present through poetry, stories, drama, film, photography
- derive alternative perspectives – head back to the committee room or pub table with a better idea about what we're doing, a truer story
- create new associations – clubs, collections, archives, friendships, sharings
- renew creative energies – music, bands, dance, magazines, teams
- learn lessons – the problems of the past reviewed
- deconstruct – take all that past stuff and take it to bits to make...whatever

I have recently brought together my collection of material relating to LGB and Trans and created a web-archive to make it all available for others to learn from. It is in one sense an archive of myself but it is also a provocation, feeding the impulse in others to create and re-create. This is how I would see the future of a collection of local patrimonie.

But we do need a future to project into and, by all accounts, St Helens is currently pushing forwards with development on several fronts. Whatever that's new which the town adds to itself though there will always be a need for recovery, for the potent past, for memory. The most relevant image for this comes from the cultural critic Walter Benjamin, writing in the 1930's,-

"Memory is not an instrument for surveying the past but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience, just as the earth is the medium in

which dead cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging."

Do we have it in us as a society, as individuals, to clear the spaces for action? Or will our children's inheritance be to drown in an overwhelming excess?

I'm aware that there's been a lot of abstraction in this piece but also plenty of images. This image is "a man digging" which suggests to me a cultural allotment, a place of planting but also a place of digging up, harvesting. Or the scene is an archaeological site, a place of excavation and uncovering, and as with Indiana Jones (and any buried past) the possibility of discovering some challenging, maybe dangerous secrets. If this is about clearing out it should be to make room for and provide substance for a great leap forward. Since the Maoist version of the "leap" was not an encouraging precedent, let's take all this back into our own hands.

If you spend time on (in?) Facebook you'll know that the staple of personal messages has been largely overtaken by historical memes, in my case posts about old ships and aircraft, buildings, local history, film stories, quaint instances. Facebook proves that we have an interest in the previous, even if only as a relief from the present –a relief probably because the past is reassuringly a "thing", reified, whereas the present is a debateable "something?" over which we seem to have very little influence. Hence after our retreat the need for resurgence. "Reculer pour mieux sauter", as the French say.

How then? This is a recipe for action, not just reflection. What have we at our disposal, if we care enough? We have archives. Conversations are needed, many of them, gatherings are needed, sharings are needed, initiatives need to be taken. Heritage can be a pretext for all of that, but it must be Heritage not as nostalgia but as "the best of the past realized in the future through our actions in the present". And we need to get going, - the future is just over there and approaching fast.

ROGER HILL – October 2024



Photo: John Hollingsworth

Daz Hull & Ralf performing
the official opening of the
Windlehurst festival one
year when Sinbad from
'Brookside' couldn't make it!

WINDLEHURST
COMMUNITY
CENTRE

**THE
PLACES**





Some of the places that became important in developing the music scene in St. Helens; Windlehurst Community Centre, Gamble Avenue. Under the guidance of Bill Tinsley this community centre became a rehearsal and performance space.



The Royal Alfred. Thursday nights were band nights. You weren't paid much but it was a prestigious gig to play.

The Citadel Arts Centre. The opening of this facility in April 1988 was a turning point in the development of the art scene in St. Helens. Offering live music, exhibition and rehearsal spaces the Citadel became a popular meeting place, it also provided local musicians with the opportunity to play with successful and established acts including The Stone Roses, The Happy Mondays, The Charlatans and many more.





**ST. HELENS SHOW
SHERDLEY PARK**



**RAY GREEN AND
GARRY LINDEN AT
THE DEAD FLY
REHEARSAL
ROOMS**



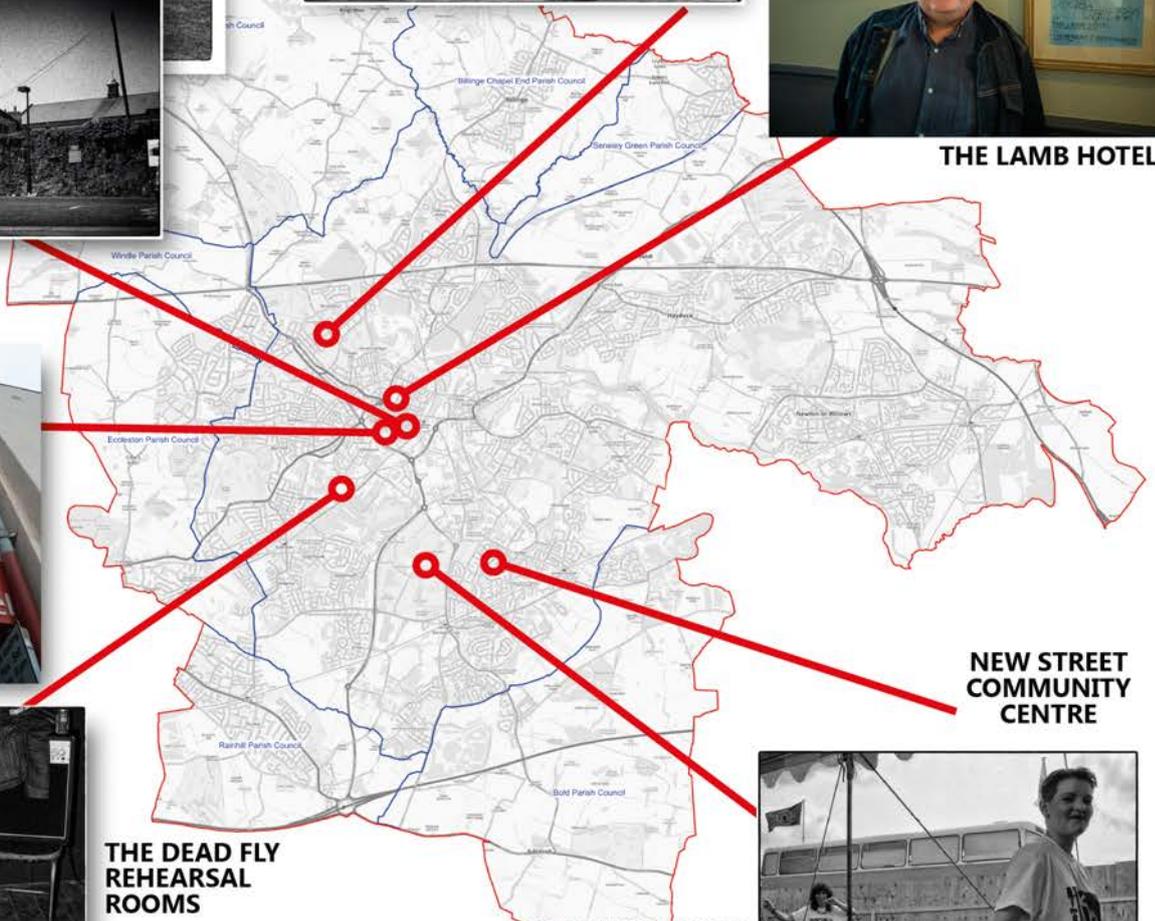
**WINDLEHURST
COMMUNITY
CENTRE**



THE ROYAL ALFRED



THE LAMB HOTEL



**THE
CITADEL
ARTS
CENTRE**



**THE DEAD FLY
REHEARSAL
ROOMS**



**ST. HELENS SHOW
SHERDLEY PARK**

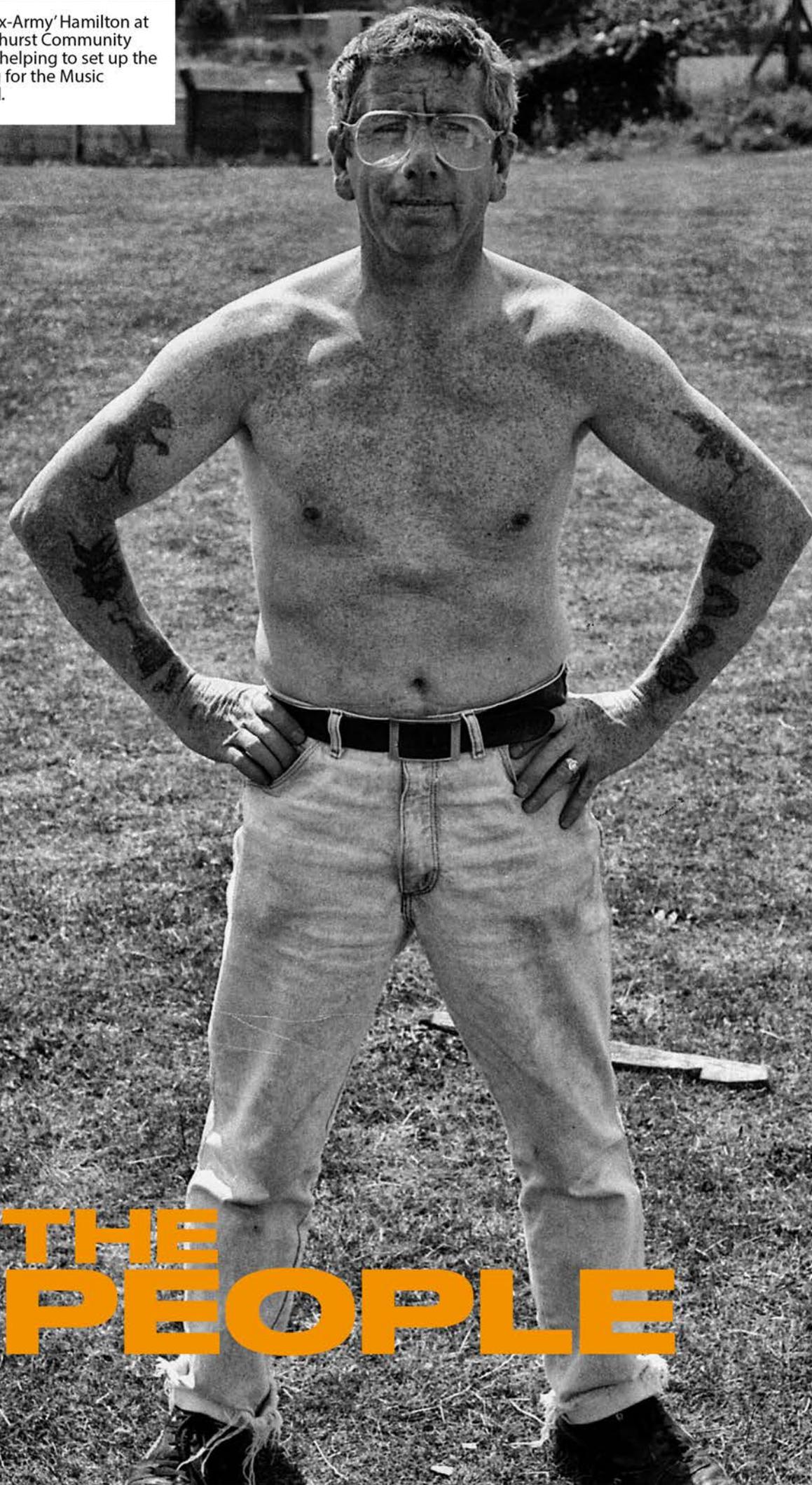


**ANDY DAVIES
(FLEX) AND DAZ
HULL (TOO MANY
BANDS TO LIST) AT
WINDLEHURST
COMMUNITY
CENTRE MUSIC
FESTIVAL**



**EILEEN & BILLY WITH A
COUPLE OF SAINTS PLAY-
ERS AND 'WELIPHANT'
OPENING THE WINDLE-
HURST MUSIC FESTIVAL**

Dave 'Ex-Army' Hamilton at
Windlehurst Community
Centre helping to set up the
staging for the Music
Festival.



**THE
PEOPLE**



Esther and Paul Wilson



Andy 'Mav' Mather and Daz Hull watching The Volunteers and Joey the Punk at the Derbyshire Hill Bank Holiday Fun Day.



Three legends of the St. Helens music scene;

Dave Evans, Joey the Punk and Terry Donald.



Janet Forrest and Edwina Allcock backstage at the St. Helens Show.



A very young Dan Wilson watching at the bands at Windlehurst Music Festival and (left) Dan playing with his band The Counterfactuals at the Recharged gig at the Citadel.

Francean Doyle, stage managing
at the St. Helens Show.



Billy Tinsley, Centre Manager at
Windlehurst Community Centre

REMEMBERING MIKE PARKER

Known for decades as the life and soul of our punk / pop / alternative party, "The Captain" Mike Parker was always up for something that hadn't been done before (or, occasionally, unapproved).

His houseparties in the 1980's were infamous — for truly wild reasons. His late 1970's onward love of good punk/new wave/alternative music was a passion he loved sharing with friends. The matinee's at Eric's Matinee's (aged 13), the dancefloor hogging whenever something super special came on — Mike always did his stuff with style.

Rarely was there any holding back — when the tunes beckoned... he was up.

Once we'd left school, he began a YTS scheme at St. Helens College Of Technology as an Audio-Visual Technician: he operated the lights when The Fall played there in February 1981 (now an officially released LP).

Mike rehearsed with his first formative band on that stage, in his folks' garage, in Chad Jacksons' barn — mostly playing Velvet Underground and Psychedelic Furs covers (and a few woeful gigs).

After that, with five friends (as RedCar), he presented out-of-town groups at The Black Bull, The Lamb, Transport Club, The Alfred, Royal Raven and other venues — bringing The Membranes, Benny Profane, Walking Seeds / Mel-o-Tones, Housemartins and dozens of others to young St. Helens crowds — with local bands supporting — and Mike could often be seen with a heavy Pro BetaMax video camera on his shoulder.

The guy was a legend even then. We won't go into his wilder adventures now (for they were many).

He was a leading light in the founding of The Citadel. He wrote the Music Technology course for the college — which became University accredited as a pioneering course, later adopted by other UK universities and seats of higher education — a groundbreaking accomplishment of which he was justifiably proud. Just one of the many accomplishments of his lifetime.

As was the succession of St. Helens bands he played in for four decades.

Appropriately, "The Captain" was the star of many people's lives — a personality



brimming with charm and character and charisma; a versatile one-man riot. A force of nature. His deep love of music encouraged countless youngsters to do the same.

Facebook eulogies from kids whom he took under his wing and gave them their first job surfaced upon his recent death. He encouraged hundreds more to pursue their musical abilities and careers further than they thought possible.

He had a punk, DIY attitude: unconventional but always fun.

He loved his students, regardless of their quirks or disadvantages. This was Mikes' nature — to share the knowledge, whatever they were individually about or trying to do. He facilitated that.

Similarly in the rest of his life, he was a well-known character all over the region.

Mike built his own soundproofed recording studio and rehearsal room in his outhouse in Haydock. Ever the musician, he wanted a place for musicians of all ages to practice and record their own music and songs.

He had a punk, DIY attitude: unconventional but always fun.

The gratitude we feel to have known and loved him is equalled only by our grief that he is gone.

Ste Arkwright



400 FF XT



ISO A3200



ning the QR Code. The film was made to provoke new activities. Let us know what you're up to.

It was also made to open up the debate about local culture and is available for public showings. Its makers might be available to contribute to such events.

Photos of the launch night of "Another Country" courtesy of Keith Saha



By the time you are reading this the film "Another Country" will be available on-line and for free, courtesy of the St Helens Arts Service.

What's it about? Well, here's what it says about itself-

"“Another Country” tells the story of a not-so-quiet revolution. It is a documentary account of a particularly memorable period of music and culture in St Helens, a township among the many which sprang up across Northern England in the Industrial Revolution,”

In the 1980's and 1990's an exciting, unexpected and uniquely wonderful scene developed in the town, apparently from nowhere, and here it is in all its wayward spontaneity, as told by the surviving "actors" in that scene, with material from the period, and brought into the present with an optimistic glance into the future. Can culture make history? And then make it again? "Another Country" says Yes."



▶ 13



▶ 14



400 FF XT



ISO A3200

St Helens

Past, Present and Future



FIND OUT
MORE SCAN
THE QR CODE

In the next
issue of
GLASS EYE

- Mauds at Work
- Performance Poetry in the early 80's
- Lovers Town Revisited
- Remembering - St Helens Show

* date to be confirmed

And YOU.....!?

We're looking for

- excellent photographs with stories attached
- your memories of studying / slacking at The Gamble
- a feature on "St Helens On Film"

Any Eye-deas you have, or just feedback
or offers of support get in touch at,
glasseyemag@gmail.com

