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Original design & layout by Matt Jones.

Enjoy the read.
EDITORIAL.

Our sixth issue marks a full year of existence for Now Then, which has flown by with all sorts of interesting snippets of Manchester written by our ever-growing list of contributors.

This time we’ve crammed in plenty of interviews, picking the brains of local hip hop clan The Natural Curriculum and our featured artist for this issue, Peter Et Le Wolff, as well as comedy’s Norris and Parker and theatre director Trevor MacFarlane. Manchester MULE listens to the concerns of London Road Fire Station campaigner, Adam Prince, and Manchester Scenewipe returns to the pages to have a word with a bedbound BC Camplight.

Elsewhere, we have an ode to the chippy decorating the food pages and the Bad Language team has handpicked some fine poetry and prose, and there are all sorts of other worthy reads to be found betwixt and between.

We always welcome feedback of any sort, and one opportunity to have a chinwag with us will be at our new Now Then Social, kicking off at the Deaf Institute bar on Thursday 22nd August, where we’ll be selecting some tunes and inviting a healthy mixture of live acts and DJs. It’s free entry, so don’t be shy. We’re also entering a team into a charity football tournament on 1st September, so if you can support the cause financially or just feel like coming along to cheer on our questionable sporting skills then please do get involved – more info on the Favourites pages, 44-45.

Enjoy the read.

IAN.

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Our Pick of the Bunch.
London Road Fire Station is one of the grandest buildings in Manchester and a lamentable sight. Built for civic use, the Grade II listed terracotta Edwardian structure has been shut off to the public and used as an ad hoc warehouse by owners Britannia Hotels for the past 27 years.

A string of attempts to bring the building back into use since it was bought by the hotel chain in 1986 have failed, and a campaign to rescue the site has gathered this year and speaks to the depth of public feeling. Over 2,800 have signed an online call for action, and campaigners are planning an exhibition on 25th August backed by local musicians and featuring art, history, talks and workshops to explore imaginative ways forward.

"I was just sick of seeing the sight of it," explained petition author Adam Prince, a psychotherapist who lives opposite the building. Prince, who describes himself as "a complete novice at campaigning", criticised Britannia’s "destructive long-term ownership". After "27 years of broken promises" he claimed that the chain had "forfeited the right" to cling on to the property.

The station is also a grievance for Manchester’s image-conscious political and real estate establishment, who wince at the thought of it being the first thing people see when stepping off a Piccadilly train. Britannia insists that the long-term plan is to "develop this fine building into a new city centre hotel". But negotiations repeatedly foundered, with one sticking point understood to be the desire for a live music venue in the courtyard on the part of the Town Hall, and the battle between Britannia boss Alex Langsam and council Chief Executive Sir Howard Bernstein.

English Heritage marked down the station as "at risk" in 2001, and in 2006 rival developer Argent published alternative £25m plans to renovate the space as, ominously, a "world class music venue". Manchester is a city in which regeneration priorities have notoriously been driven with monomaniac single-mindedness but an attempt by the council to compulsorily purchase the site were roundly rejected by Communities and Local Government Minister Eric Pickles in 2011.

In the inspector’s report to the minister evaluating the purchase order it was clear there was no love lost between the council and the firm. It was "plain", according to the summation of the council’s case for compulsory purchase, that the station “has not been developed because Britannia has chosen to direct its energies elsewhere, driven by a desire to maximise profit”. While the firm had been granted planning permission in 2010 to develop a four star 227-bed hotel, the council warned that there is "no certainty that Britannia will proceed".

Britannia hit back, pointing out that the building’s state had not prevented development in Piccadilly from taking place. It also claimed that the council paying the costs of holding on to the building for two years before it could be handed to Argent could amount to "unlawful State Aid" if the costs were not passed on to the developer.

The inspector, possibly with a faint touch of weariness, concurred that the station "has not been a priority for Britannia". However, the council’s insistence on a "Where Music Lives" project and "the inherent difficulties of matching two uses that do not easily sit together" may have "slowed progress". With Britannia holding planning permission and Argent expressing interest but lacking a fully worked out business plan, the inspector concluded that work "would be more likely to come under Britannia’s auspices than the council’s", leading Pickles to quash the application.

Three months later, Britannia ditched their plans to develop the site. For campaigner Adam Prince, however, the failure of Plan A provides an opportunity. Argent’s contributions to Manchester include the next door Piccadilly Place, most notable for vacant office blocks and bored looking people in suits, and Prince argued that the developer "shouldn’t have been the only choice".

"Why wasn’t the city consulted to show their passion?" Prince asked. He claimed that “nobody wants a hotel”, and said that when Britannia’s latest planning permission expires in September the campaign will be angling for a “total public access building” with arts spaces and “maybe with some social housing inside”. Too often in Manchester people are not listened to, he said, noting the ongoing controversy around the proposed demolition of Century House in St Peter’s Square.

Resources are admittedly tight, but he felt that with fairer arts and culture funding in a London-centric country some could be made available to rescue the building. Perhaps. In a city in which so much is ‘driven by profit’, as the council might put it, it would be a shame to see the fire station remain another victim.

MULE is a Manchester based non-profit independent media project, looking to promote social justice by getting out the news and views you won’t find elsewhere, from the rainy city and beyond. They are currently recruiting volunteers for various roles, from editors and writers to campaigners.

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RIOTS AND RESPONSE.
DAVID DUNNICO.

“The argument of the broken window pane is the most valuable argument in modern politics,” argued the suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst. She was born in 1858 in Moss Side, the area of Manchester which in July 1981 saw rioting alongside Brixton in London, Chapeltown in Leeds and Toxteth in Liverpool.

The Scarman Report into the causes concluded that, without “urgent action”, disadvantage might become an “endemic ineradicable disease threatening the very survival of our society”. Mrs Thatcher, then Prime Minister, would later famously comment there was “no such thing as society” and encourage a free market, credit-driven, consumerist society. 30 years later, in August 2011, rioting broke out across London, and then in cities including Birmingham, Bristol and once again Manchester. Politicians and the media dubbed these “shopping riots”, blaming criminals and opportunist louts looking for a chance to rob shops. The truth was more complex and, for those in power, more worrying – what if everyone just took instead of paying?

As in the 1980s, there was a distrust of police, contempt for politicians and a belief that things would not get better. But by now communities had become mere consumers and people’s post-industrial worth was based on what they owned. Some of those rioting later justified what they did as being no different than what they saw bankers and politicians doing – helping themselves and taking advantage of the situation. Others saw the rioting as a laugh, or something to spice up humdrum lives that lacked purpose. In Manchester the day after the riots, hundreds of people turned up after a social media appeal, wanting to do something to help. After a largely symbolic “blitz spirit” photo op sweeping up glass, the only thing left to do was to see if there were any bargains in the opportunist “riot sales”. In this they were heeding New York Mayor Giuliani, when the day after 9/11 he said people should take to a passerby because he didn’t like the coffee flavoured cornet.

Another was given 16 months in jail for licking an ice cream then giving it to a passerby because he didn’t like the cookie flavoured cornet. Responding to their posts, but their sentences were what people got for people in court in the days after the riots were given sentences 30% longer than for similar cases. An 18-year-old was imprisoned for one day for stealing two Burberry t-shirts, while in another court a 23-year-old rioter got six months for stealing water worth £3.50. Two men were given four years in prison for telling people to riot on Facebook. No-one responded to their posts, but their sentences were what people got for holding someone at knife point, grievous bodily harm, or sexual assault. Another was given 16 months in jail for licking an ice cream then giving it to a passerby because he didn’t like the coffee flavoured cornet.

This would not have surprised Emmeline Pankhurst, who had said, “There is something governments care for far more than human life, and that is the security of property.”

The ultimate punishment for those convicted was yet to come; they were to be banned from shopping. A CityCo press release announced: “The Business Crime Reduction Partnership will use its powers to exclude convicted criminals from over 400 stores that sign up to the ‘Manchester Brand’ and how this might affect business. The local council had encouraged commercial redevelopment of the city centre, privatised services and given away public housing. Now after the riots, perhaps again inspired by New York, Marketing Manchester, the advertising agency subsidised by the City Council to the tune of £1 million per year, launched an “I Love MCR” campaign, borrowing, without a trace of Mancunian irony, Milton Glaser’s 1977 trademark for New York State.

The truth was more complex and, for those in power, more worrying – what if everyone just took instead of paying?

Here, the post-riot discussion focused on the damage it had done to the “Manchester Brand” and how this might affect business. The local council had encouraged commercial redevelopment of the city centre, privatised services and given away public housing. Now after the riots, perhaps again inspired by New York, Marketing Manchester, the advertising agency subsidised by the City Council to the tune of £1 million per year, launched an “I Love MCR” campaign, borrowing, without a trace of Mancunian irony, Milton Glaser’s 1977 trademark for New York State.

What Manchester’s campaign didn’t ask was what it was about the city that was loved. It seemed overly concerned with the shops that made up the city centre. Most of these were actually the same identikit chains people complained had destroyed the individuality of modern cities. The rioters had targeted big chains of sportswear retailers and fashion brands. Talking of which, some entrepreneurial citizens launched “I Love MCR” (without the heart graphic), an “online lifestyle magazine for people who love Manchester”. A photograph featured models from Cliché Model Management pretending to sweep up broken glass in their “I Heart MCR” t-shirts, which by then were available to buy. The reality of life for people in Manchester was not “cool, cultured, cosmopolitan”, as their tagline suggested. Vacuous consumerism was not the solution to the real problems many Mancunians faced.

Manchester is ranked fifth worst in terms of health and disability derivation, fourth most deprived local authority in England, third worst in terms of employment, second worst in terms of income and the Manchester Central Ward has the worst level of child poverty in the country. Manchester has the second highest rate of prescriptions for anti-depressants in the country, the suicide rate of young men is twice the national average and life expectancy is the lowest in England and Wales. A third of people sentenced for rioting came from the poorest 10% of areas in Greater Manchester, not one came from the richest 10% of areas.

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David Dunnico is a documentary photographer from Manchester who is displaying photos at Nexus Arts Café during August.
dunni.co.uk
I arrive at my auntie’s funeral an hour ahead of the rest of the family and to stave off the chill of the air I decide to walk around the town; a tiny Northern town much like any other, a place where I spent most weekends of my youth at my grandmother’s pebble-dashed council house. My life’s knowledge of the place was really limited to my grandmother’s street, the toy shop, and the graveyard where my nan and I would talk to my grandad’s gravestone whilst she proudly washed it down. We explored much further of course but these are the only places I committed to memory and could point out to you now on a map – everywhere else was an adventure of anonymity; a walk in a nameless forest, a mysterious country lane where my doll fell under the tyres of a car. My world was contained within a few hundred metres and my boundaries were marked, not by street names, but by a tree or a lamppost and so it shall remain nameless in this: its obituary.

My nan had died a year before my auntie and her house, which I have to pass en route from the railway station, is now occupied by a young family. It struck me, as I imagined new life in the old building, how her walls, once covered in that textured Anaglypta wallpaper which I’d take so much pleasure from pushing the crescent tip of my thumbnail into, were likely smooth and modernised and that my last ties with the town were being cremated later today – I’d never come here again. This was a new grief. A grief of brick and stone, dated shopping precincts, antiquated corner shops, and railway tracks leading away from me into a town and time intangible.

I first of all visit the library – the modernist block of ghostly-grey brick that even as a child seemed little taller than I was, and has a smell never replicated in any building I’ve been in since. It was here the most radical change of the town played out before me; a train carriage had been attached to the rear of the building serving as both an innovative extension and as a museum commemorating the town’s railway. Next I approached the precinct, a cluster of shops that I had always eyed with suspicion for in the precinct there was no toyshop, no sweet shop and no one my nan deemed worthy of showing me off to. I thought that now, at the age of thirty, it was time to pay the place a visit. You can imagine it – a precinct like any other; fairly brutal in its 60s modernity and darker now than the planners’ untainted vision of it. The precinct is much like the library in its minute stature yet I’m surprised to notice that there’s an upper floor. Dashing up a staircase at the rear of the grounds the private mezzanine level reveals itself as a cluster of squat, little flats with net-curtained windows and all the space and intricacy of a shipping container.

I don’t have time to go any further than that, other than an intuitive visit to the corner shop where I stand at the magazine rack as if hypnotised – searching for my out-of-print adolescence in the pages of Mizz, Sugar and Smash Hits magazines only to be brought back to my thirties in those of Cosmopolitan and Vogue. The bell jar of nostalgia is already cracking, and that’s why I’ll never return.

Technology, or serendipity, is on my side on this one – Google’s Street View cars have neglected to drive down my grandmother’s street. You can just glimpse the neighbours’ windows in the distance as the car drives on by, but her own house is obscured by the bloom and berries of a Rowan tree, thus suspending the street of my childhood in all its pebble-dashed glory.

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Although our household was godless we were firm believers in the Friday Fast, and it was with mouth watering anticipation that every Friday I would try to contain my disco-leg as Dad drove Mum and me to the local chippy. Gone were the stuffy table manners – gone was the table for that matter – gone the limits on ketchup, gone the polished cutlery and gone the plates. Instead, it was hello to the crunch of fried batter, hello the quivering flakes of cod, hello soggy chips, hello oodles of condiment, hello the wooden fork, the newspaper, the tang and tut of salt and vinegar, hello unrivalled, unregulated, unadulterated joy!

However you take them, whether with curry sauce or gravy; whether you pour your mushy peas or use them as a dip; whether you litter the ensemble with scraps or sneak a pickled egg between your Coley and your tatties, the stock combination of fried fish and fried chips is a gastronomic revelation. It is, they say, the nation’s favourite. How can this be? Well, their effect on me is quite tangible. Just the whiff of them sends me on numerous Proustian excursions. They take me to the seaside and glittering moments amid weekends dulled by rain. They take me to the football match and the wanderings through town after another predictable loss. And they invariably transport me to the comforting memories of a childhood happily blessed by this indulgence.

Before you accuse me of misplaced rhetoric let me attempt to convince you that the status of the Chippy is loftier than often thought. I shall prove my love is bona fide with a well informed plea…

To invest passion into any object we absolutely must tie to it some provenance. Unfortunately I cannot tell you when the fried chip was first united with fish in one dish but I can impart some detail as to the origins of its respective components. There are various theories as to when and where the fried fish first came to these shores. The prevailing narrative is that the method of deep frying came over in the seventeenth century with Jewish refugees from Portugal and Spain, the original name being pescado frito. (Although my use of Wikipedia may diminish the integrity of this piece I want to inform you that deep fried food is altogether ubiquitous thus making the task of pinning its origins to a certain point on the map a somewhat frivolous pursuit.) That aside, I would like to say with some confidence that the first recorded use of the word ‘chip’ in reference to the deep fried potato is to be found in Dickens’s *A Tale Of Two Cities*, published in 1859 (I quote the OED on that one), so even if this dish has no literal health benefits, it has strong literary stock. Is this all a bit tenuous for you?

Well, what about the indomitable blue plaque in Oldham that proudly declares, “Tommyfield, home of the first British fried chip”, and goes on to explain that, “The first chips were fried in Oldham around 1860, from which the origins of Fish and Chip shops and the ‘Fast Food’ industry can be traced.”

Now there’s a heritage we can be proud of, no? It is with great pride, I believe, that we, humble denizens of the North, can hold our chips forth and say, “we created this!” thereby propelling ourselves into the role of innovators. Furthermore, imagine the moment when that first chip slipped into the smoking vat of fat and began to sizzle and brown; it must have been like some kind of wizardry to the lucky onlookers.

Here’s a fact: did you know that during World War Two fish and chips were one of the few foods not to be subjected to rationing? Indeed, with fish stocks plentiful and railways expanding, this hallowed dish became a healthy staple for the working classes. It’s even reported that some of the first shops were carpeted and had waiter service, giving your regular mill-hand the unlikely opportunity to ‘dine out’, as it were. Of course we are under no illusion of the complexity of the dish, and attempts to dress it up inevitably fail. However, it is a home truth discovered by many a new gastro pub that, amid all their Michelin posturing, an honest plate of fish, chips and mushy peas outsells every other creation on the menu. There’s no accounting for taste, or is there?

The simple fact is that this dish is delectable. It soaks up the beer and makes you swell with satisfaction. And to be fair it’s not that unhealthy, it is fresh fish after all. Do I hear a resigned grunt of consent? And if you’re wondering how this article fits in with an ethically minded magazine such as this, then appreciate that this page may well achieve the enviable end of cradling someone’s succulent dinner tomorrow night. Oh, how I long to see my words smudged upon my scran.
**FISH ‘N’ CHIPS.**

Of course the best fish supper is from your local chippy, but Michael’s piece inspired me to take to the fryer. If it’s afterhours or you just fancy trying your hand, here are a few simple tips to make a sublime fish and chips platter.

**FISH.**

It is well noted that cod and haddock are the most traditional and popular choice for your fried fish, and with good reason. But if you fancy swimming against the tide, try hake. It’s a big sea fish so it has that meaty bite and fresh, zingy flavour. Its succulence is exemplified when steamed and packaged in a crisp golden batter.

**BATTER.**

Not only should your batter be flavoursome and crisp, it should act as an encasement to protect the fish from the hot oil. The batter should soufflé around the fish, not stick to it. This way the batter stays crisp and the fish inside is gently steamed. Stay away from complicated recipes. The best batter is the simplest.

225g self-raising flour, sieved
300ml lager

Add half of the lager into the flour and whisk well until smooth, then add the rest of the lager bit by bit, keeping the batter thick. Season with a pinch of salt.

**FRYING.**

In a large pan, preheat your oil to 180°C. Leave the skin on to hold your piece of fish in place when placing into the fryer, season with salt and lemon juice and one at a time run the fish through the batter. Don’t allow too much of the batter to fall off the fish before submerging the fish into the hot oil slowly, only one inch at a time. Once three-quarters submerged, the batter will soufflé and lift the fillet. Cook until golden brown all the way round. A regular fillet of fish should take 8-10 minutes.

**CHIPS.**

The best potatoes to use for your chips are Accord or Maris Piper, which are enjoying a new season right now. Preheat your oil to 140°C. Cut your chips to chip shop size, then blanch in the hot oil until the chips start to go crispy but do not colour. They should be cooked through and soft in the middle. Drain the chips off and let them rest whilst you bring the oil up to 180°C. Re-fry the chips until they are golden brown and crispy.

**PEAS.**

Your mushy peas do not have to be that pile of clay-like wartime green sat on the side of your plate drying to a pale crust. Only marrowfat will do, and if you cook them properly they can be soft and moist. With a little hint of vinegar they are great to dunk your fish into.

300g marrowfat peas
2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
Salt and vinegar

Soak the peas in water overnight in a large pot to allow the peas to swell, then after 12 hours add cold water to cover. Add the bicarbonate of soda and bring to the boil. Simmer for about half an hour until the peas are soft and mushy. Season with salt and a dash of vinegar if you like that extra bite.

If you follow these few pointers your fish and chip supper will be a crispy revelation. If you’re after that ‘soggy in the bag’ authenticity you get from a real chippy, simply soak the lot in salt and vinegar.

Recipes and photo by Samuel Buckley.
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They run a monthly night that features a special guest and the opportunity for an open mic slot on the last Wednesday of every month at The Castle Hotel. For more information or to get in touch contact badlanguagemcr@gmail.com.

They are made up of Nicola West, Daniel Carpenter and Joe Daly.

badlanguagemcr.wordpress.com
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HOW TO CRASH.

Merely step onto a plane and the mechanics of movement will bear you upwards. We trust in the engines, we trust we will not crash. When we do we look for reasons, the rubble that fell from lofty thoughts-the panic stricken plummet.

They say it’s like that, falling in love, you cling to your partner like a life jacket. You suck at their mouth like oxygen, you praise the heavens, you become a believer in trust.

Rebecca Audra Smith.

A BADLY-DRAWN HEART SHAPE
(FOR ANDRÉ CASSAGNES).

A badly-drawn heart shape for André Cassagnes, his passion, his vision, his rock-steady hands and his singular angle on mapping the world that we see: where possible, ninety degrees.

He gave us the Etch A Sketch, now chiefly known as a relic in attics of every home in the universe. I picture the hearse, its windows all misted in silvery grey or his ashes - a red plastic two-inch-deep tray with his last wishes scratched out in unbroken lines like a circuit board plucked from more innocent times, passed by a lawyer to Renée, his wife, and outlining his parting thoughts on their life:

'I don’t care what I missed, looking right, looking left, in the curve of horizons, the sweep of your breast; love was for me - you’ll recall, ma cherie - a more angular deal altogether, and you were the most perpendicular girl I met ever.

North, south, east and west...these were the waypoints that I loved the best. I don’t care what goes on between points of a compass, so take up these ashes and dump us wherever you fancy.

Oh, and lastly? It’s not who else gathers around when I go; a circle of friends always was, as you know, a quite troublesome concept for me. So you see, it’s not about guestlists, or where I get scattered - what matters to me on this solemn last day, as my footprints erode and my shadows erase, and you stand with your thoughts somewhere, holding this tray is that you can lock down a poker-straight face when I ask, for the final time, flip me and give me a shake.’

Mark Powell.

MARK POWELL.

A BADLY-DRAWN HEART SHAPE
(FOR ANDRÉ CASSAGNES).

A badly-drawn heart shape for André Cassagnes, his passion, his vision, his rock-steady hands and his singular angle on mapping the world that we see: where possible, ninety degrees.

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Mark Powell.
LUCKY.

They were unlikely soul-mates. Pepper was an incorporeal human-shaped girl from Mars while Lucky was the greatest human experiment of his age, a lone man remaining on the red planet during a two-year resupply mission.

Pepper waited until he was alone before beginning her carefully worded diplomatic speech. However, her credibility was entirely undone by choosing to deliver it from the middle of the oven where Lucky was cooking his supper.

There followed a tedious bit of back and forth over her being a figment of his imagination. Tempers flared and there were two injuries: a sprained neck and a burnt thumb, both suffered by Lucky in the course of an acrobatic reaction to her sudden appearance.

Lucky finally accepted that he’d lost his mind; Pepper was of the opinion he hadn’t much of one to lose.

“Why are you see-through?” he asked, hoping she would realise her own impossibility and disappear.

“I’m not see-through,” she said, “you’re just not looking.”

Earthlings, she told him, focus on the wrong bit of reality. It’s like looking in instead of up.

She made him practice. He didn’t know what he was practicing but he figured he should go mad as thoroughly as he did everything else. Eventually, he found himself devoutly hoping she was real and he would lie awake thinking of things that might make her laugh. They talked about her life in the shadow of a war-hero sister and how she understood his desperate act of lonely bravery.

After months of this, he woke to a different sky. Outside, a lush forest and distant skyscrapers replaced the endless red, every bit of it alive. He briefly considered fainting but he felt soft, cool hands on his face and, at long last, the kiss of an improbable girl.

Trisha Starbrook.

90% OF RESTAURANTS FAIL IN THEIR FIRST YEAR.

Chocolate heaven was on the dessert menu. I was 25. I had a non-profit job where I had to promote safe sex in the South Asian community, while pretending I wasn’t promoting any kind of sex at all. Because it was in the South Asian community. I was grumpy.

“Sure, heaven would be fine,” I said, “if you could just decide it’s just chocolatey,” I said. “Sure! But really, heaven’s probably boring. All clouds and ugly white robes and harps. The only reason that people think heaven is somewhere they want to be, is because they’re comparing it to the red hot and poky other place.”

He said. “It’s the choice between a really bad restaurant and a mediocre one. For eternity. Thing is, no one ever thinks, I’ll just open my own afterlife. Problem with that is... most afterlifes fail within the first year.”

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A few months back, I was on a date with a charmingly queer Australian gentleman. At the end of the night, after considering my grubby jeans, messy hair and English reserve, he said, “You’re not very gay are you, mate?” I didn’t really know what to say. I really am very gay, but exactly how gay do I have to be? I suppose what he meant was that I’m not really camp; the behavioural model of the modern gay stereotype: effeminate, extrovert, flirtatious and very sexual.

After the immense courage and bravery of the gay liberation movement, which fought for the individual’s right to express their feelings publicly and without fear, it’s paradoxical that a mainstream gay identity has been established which leaves me and many others within the gay community feeling alienated and uncomfortable.

In the 60s, what used to be, “Hush-hush, keep it behind closed doors and for God’s sake don’t get caught pants down with Jonathan” is now “I’m just so gay! Look at me everyone, look how gay I am!” I was standing next to a woman who jokingly shouted those very words at the party bus going past at the Brighton and Hove Pride festival last summer, having a laugh with her friends. There was no malice in the remark, but it was odd to be laughing with them. In a sense, the secrecy, compulsory discretion and feeling of danger of covert homosexuality in the 1960s feels almost appealingly adventurous in comparison. There’s really nothing like a bit of danger to drive two individuals together; to make their love more passionate, more taboo, more precious. Danger and adversity affirms the reality of love and makes it stronger. It’s what makes Romeo and Juliet and countless other love stories so tender and moving.

Obviously it isn’t constructive to think along these lines, and I’m certainly not advocating the re-criminalisation of homosexuality. The watershed of civil rights and legislative reform for gay people in Britain is a triumph of liberal democracy. As a British gay man I’m entitled to civil partnerships and, as of mid-2014, same-sex marriage; legal protection from discrimination in the workplace and the trade of goods; freedom to join the armed forces and equal access to In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and surrogacy. It’s complacent to agonise over gay life in Britain when in many nations people still face the death penalty, severe sentences or just violent discrimination for being openly gay. But inevitably, one wonders where the LGBT movement is headed next, if not abroad. At least in Britain, the war is being won.

So we can all relax. No, wait. Now we can all have sex! And we can all flaunt our sexualities publicly, shamelessly and safely. The industry which has boomed alongside the advances in LGBT rights in the last 20 years is extraordinary, attracting mixed emotions of jubilation and apprehension. Take Gaydar for example; a kind of randy Facebook for gay men. You upload your vital statistics and profile photos, you decide how sexually explicit you want it, and then browse for potential match ups in your local neighbourhood. Twinks, chubbies, bears, preppies, muscle men – the categories are endless. The sexual preference list is equally intriguing, including breath control, glory holes, vanilla, and my personal favourite: vacuum pumping. ‘What you want, when you want it’, the slogan reads. Despite the obvious convenience of a potential hook up being just a mouse-click away, any day of the week, Gaydar’s unromantic presentation of sex merely as a commodity is a portentous example of the marketisation of homosexuality. But as my brother recently pointed out: “If the chances are only ‘one in ten’, then isn’t there a need for quite a lot of marketing?” He certainly has a point.

With the civil and legal rights now secured, and the encouragement from the likes of Gaydar or the latest “geosocial” networking smartphone apps like Grindr, gay clubbing districts and Pride festival weekends, now the debate seems to be more focused on how to ‘be gay’ and the public performance of sexuality.

Following the courageous act of coming out, I’ve witnessed many individuals abandon their individuality for the perceived social requirement to ‘be gay’. It suddenly becomes the only thing that matters. In the process, a lot of what has defined their character since early childhood is then rejected in favour of broadcasting their sexuality to the world. This is where I take issue: ‘coming out’ shouldn’t have to entail a sacrifice of individuality.

I understand the need to perform homosexuality: we’re few and far between and no one, especially when young, wants a life of involuntary chastity. It is hard work being gay, but if you subscribe to the preeminent model of behaviour you may limit the development of your own sexual persona. Humans are socially defined by their skills, opinions and interests, as well as sexuality. Individuality is sacrosanct. Why rush into a generic sexual identity? Surely it’s worth taking your time over. After all, there’s nothing more attractive than originality.
Aside from conjuring an alias that suits many of his colourful, storybook drawings, Peter Et Le Wolff has meandered from ‘sketchy’ style at college to product design at university, and back to an illustration technique that he’s comfortable with.

The Manchester-based artist’s skills have often been influenced by other art forms. Under his name are designs for T-shirts - one of which developed Welsh songwriter Sweet Baboo’s lyric, “Let me love your brains”, into a zombie design - and illustrations for a poetry collection entitled There Is Something About Being Alive, featuring one that evolved from a drawing sent to Sweet Baboo in response to his Girl Under A Tree EP. Other designs have focused on outdoors and cycling imagery, and he has been selected as one of the featured artists at the Artcrank exhibition in London at the end of August, a touring and locality-specific poster specialist group tying together art and cycling that recently adorned the walls of 2022NQ in Manchester.

You can also find his work on cards, prints and more, on his stall at events like Islington Mill’s Carbooty, as well as at his new Levenshulme art shop and gallery space, Unfoldshop.

What initially drew you to art?

My parents would always take me and my sister around art galleries when I was younger. My family is full of creative people too. I guess I’ve always been more interested in pictures than words as you can often see something straight away, but then other more hidden elements begin to filter through if you study an image for longer.

What’s your working process when starting a new piece?

I always start with a small sketch or a keyword or phrase on whatever I have within my reach. If there’s not a deadline looming I’ll put it away for a few days or months, occasionally a year or more to let it brew. Then I’ll do a bigger, neater, more detailed sketch on paper, sometimes some pieces won’t work on A4 or A3, even if they’re not particularly detailed, so I have to go bigger. After that I’ll pen the sketch with Uni Pins, rub the sketch out and scan it in. I’ve started experimenting more with different media recently, so I’ll use anything like paints, inks, pens, pencils and pastels to get the desired effect and scan those in separately, then layer it all up and fiddle with it digitally until I’m happy with it. I want to get more into just getting pieces down without fiddling with them digitally, but I think that will come with time.

What themes and motifs do you find yourself returning to?

The most constant theme running through my work is cycling and general outdoor surroundings, whether it’s urban or natural. I’m also a massive fan of old things. I love big old cars and hotrod culture because it’s all handmade and hand painted, and also my background is product design so the engineering and design before safety took over really appeals to me. Other themes that feature a lot in my work are animals, severed limbs, greed, life, death, frustration and optimism. There’s also a poetic element that often creeps in, in the form of calligraphic style handwriting. I try and let the image speak, but sometimes it needs something extra to prompt a response.

Is it the themes of cycling fashion and appearance, or the motion itself that interests you more?

Fashion is so prominent in cycling it’s difficult to get away from it, whether it’s from a practical aspect or a way of showing off. But for me fashion is more of a way of showing what style of rider someone is and therefore what the personality of my images are going to be.

Did you attend the Artcrank Manchester exhibition?

Some of my favourite artists and designers have been part of Artcrank. It’s great how such a diverse range of pieces can be created from the same theme, which has inspired me to approach my own work from more directions. It was great to see familiar names within the Manchester art scene being represented and what they had come up with. I have been accepted to feature in this year’s Artcrank London at the end of August, which I’m very excited about.

Which other artists or art forms inspire you?

People I most often look to for inspiration, other than illustrators I know personally, are Timba Smits, Escif, Sickboy, Roa, Miss Van, Yoko Shimizu, Twoarmstinc, Smithe… I could go on forever. I think the main things I like are images in a graphic style with bold lines, colours and textures. All forms of creativity inspire me though. I have collaborated with a poet and conceptual artist on a book, and I am currently working with a photographer on a zine. Collaborations are the best way to push myself artistically as they force me to visualise things that wouldn’t necessarily come from my own thought process.

How has your art changed over the years?

Since I was young I’ve always wanted to inject plenty of colour and explore different mediums. Sometimes it’s been successful, others not so, but I’d rather try something and fail than not at all. My teachers at college said I had a ‘sketchy’ style. I more or less gave art up at uni to concentrate on product design, though there was always a sketchbook or piece I was working on slowly throughout. When I came back to art and illustration properly I mostly went 2D in rebellion against working on mind-numbing 3D software. The 3D sketch element is starting to creep back in now using the classic product design sketching techniques I learnt at uni.

What are you working on at the moment?

As well as various client work, I am in the process of setting up a design-led, artist-focused shop and gallery space in Levenshulme called Unfoldshop. The main aim is to promote the people involved, work with local manufacturers, push our art in directions we want it to go or might not think of going, and have fun doing it. I’ve got to work out what I’ll do for this year’s Artcrank London. I’d like to try using homemade or unusual inks with screen print and letterpress. I’m also working on a bunch of collaborative zines, not only with a photographer, but a bunch of artists and illustrators, and maybe a poet or foodie soon too.

Good advice you wish you’d been told earlier?

Don’t do what you think other people want you to do, and nothing good comes easy. Don’t rush too much.

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“We used to play music for fun. Much more than now. Now nobody picks up a guitar unless they’re paid for it.” Leonard Cohen.

Wine, Women and Song. Depending on your point of view, this may be a formula for happiness or a mantra for hedonism. For many it is the former, for some the distinction is negligible. Either way, these days, any good booze could be substituted for “wine” and I think it must be right that you can transpose “women” for any kind of lover, but the “song” part remains essential. Music is found in every known culture and its ability to explain, express and induce emotion is arguably the strongest of any art form. As such, the makers of music, the bringers of such pleasure, will always be loved and admired.

But noises about the current state of the popular music business – I am careful to make this distinction, but have no intention of defining it – are usually depressing affairs, especially when written by aspiring but-as-yet unsuccessful musicians, as is quite often the case. Music is not what it used to be; the quality is poorer; fans will steal rather than buy; and the small amount of money that is left is taken by glorified karaoke stars and grubby little men with high-waisted trousers. Many a time have we seen a social media moan from a frustrated musician about the lack of reward for their efforts or their perception of the success of other much less worthy individuals. Even successful musicians have waded into the argument. Radiohead’s Thom Yorke has recently pulled his music from Spotify, the streaming site, citing its fiscal unfairness to emerging artists (though I note he has endorsed an alternative streaming website whose fairness is as yet unknown). It is true that since the dawning of the purely electronic digital audio era (mp3s and that) there is less money in music than there used to be. But is it fair to say that music is in a worse state than previously and, if so, when previously?

Before sound recording was invented in the late 19th century, popular music, which we would perhaps now call folk music, was performed and passed down through generations for free, or performed for modest pay in the troubadour-minstrel-chansonnier tradition. When recorded music made its way into the home via the gramophone in the first half of the 20th century, the exploitation of popular song became an industry.

With the coming of Elvis in the 50s and The Beatles and The Rolling Stones in the 60s, it became big business. Record sales increased, live performance became less important (or in the case of The Beatles, impossible) and the studio album became an art form in itself. With the inherent richness and fame, playing music became a more attractive proposition than ever. Wine, Women and Song became Sex, Drugs and Rock ‘n’ Roll.

While the pull of popular music has not waned, the last 20 years have seen significant advances in music technology. Does this mean the end of music produced in a physical format – which costs real money – and, therefore, the album as an art form? I don’t think so. There are enough romantics out there, of which I am one, who will always be prepared to part with cash for a record or CD, which will keep such production profitable. But perhaps it will be seen as more of a luxury, consigning the notion of making very good money from recorded music to a 20th century phenomenon. If so, no matter how great they think they are, musicians will have to accept this and their sense of entitlement will also fade. Making music might, once again, be seen as a vocation.

Irrespective of the financial reward, playing music is fun and sharing music is a pleasure. Marketing music is another matter, where money and connections that a record label can offer will make a real difference. But the demand for new music is still huge and online resources have facilitated the best ever time for musicians to reach their audience directly, especially those who are prepared to persevere. The live scene is thriving and, if you are lucky, creative and hardworking, a living can be made from it.

Most emerging musicians I know, while by no means well off, have a wonderful, free, creative, enjoyable and fulfilling life. That the big money has largely gone might even help get rid of those who are involved in music for the wrong reasons. I make no comment on the nobility, validity or likely longevity of musicians only in it for the Sex, Drugs and Rock ‘n’ Roll, but they might find it progressively shabbier, dirtier and less relevant (respectively). Wine, Women and Song, however, will forever endure.
Youth Lagoon, aka Trevor Powers, has become known for his soft vocals, and for the hypnotic power of his songs. This is his first visit to our fair city, and it couldn’t have been better weather to welcome him. Entry to Youth Lagoon at Gorilla, nestled in the arches of the railway on Great Marlborough Street, feels reminiscent of the Warehouse Project in the Store Street days, but a very different kind of concert takes place this evening.

The set is composed mostly of songs from **Wondrous Bughouse**, Youth Lagoon’s second album which was released in March following his debut **The Year of Hibernation** in 2011, though there seems to be no difficulty in the second album for Youth Lagoon. A little more ambitious, you’d be happy if Wondrous Bughouse were the soundtrack to your life. It is full of dreamlike awe and optimism.

‘Sleep Paralysis’ leads us into a mood of drowsy enchantment which lasts for almost his whole performance, prompting Powers to ask if we are having a good time. Stirring somewhat from our peaceful daydream on direct approach, we rouse momentarily to give a deserved cheer of appreciation. The warped fairground stylings of Wondrous Bughouse fit perfectly with the summer heat. The crowd, mellow and relaxed, soak up the soothing synth of the four-strong group and bask in swirling pink and green lights.

Songs flow flawlessly from one to the other, though it is probably more accurate to say that Youth Lagoon has mastered the art of the ambient interlude. ‘Posters’, a track from the first album, elicits the loudest cheers. Powers’ voice, which seems so small and delicate on record, has a hidden strength that I did not expect. He commands the music and the audience, and we are all quite entranced, bopping and swaying in unison.

His encore of ‘Dropla’, the most upbeat song on Wondrous Bughouse, gently wakes us from our reverie, and thus we are sent back out into the cool summer’s evening, tranquil and content.
MOGWAI.

19TH JULY.
ALBERT HALL.

REVIEWER – IAN PENNINGTON.

The first time I saw the Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait film, which is scored by Scottish instrumental rockers Mogwai, was at the Cornerhouse when it was first released. For the first half an hour after the lights dimmed and the reel rolled I struggled to get into it, but the transfixing qualities of both its soundtrack and imagery then took hold.

Or, on reflection and rediscovery, perhaps it was the addition of Zidane’s philosophical musings as subtitles that reappear around the half hour mark after briefly setting the scene early on. “You hear what you want to hear,” he says, meaning the football crowd’s whispers and shouts, cheers and jeers, coughs and claps. This could equally define the film’s live score by the band within this setting at Albert Hall – a venue we’ll be hearing more about when it officially opens next year. For the most part it’s Mogwai being heard, with breaks when the film’s focus is on the immediacy of Zidane’s relationship with the cavernous Bernabéu Stadium – the sharp whistles contrasting with occasional glimpses of silence. The five musicians all concentrate on their individual small screens, complete with timers accurate to the millisecond, offering their sounds when they want to be heard. Elsewhere, there are murmurs from tonight’s audience as the film wears on, seemingly restless and unattached to the visual aspect in the same way that a cinema setting would dictate – backing up the idea that this is a show at the audio end of the AV spectrum. There are distractions to lure eyes away from the screen. At the other extreme there are one or two who try to bring the banter from the terraces in with them, howling “Zee...” during silent interludes and reportedly snorting half of Colombia during the length of the show.

As with all MIF shows that command substantial soundsystems, earplugs were handed out on entry. Much of Mogwai’s show features mellow dirge and slow builds, but by the film’s intense finale, those little foam bullets are priceless as ‘Black Spider II’ pierces through the rafters of silence. The five musicians all concentrate on their individual small screens, complete with timers accurate to the millisecond, offering their sounds when they want to be heard. Elsewhere, there are murmurs from tonight’s audience as the film wears on, seemingly restless and unattached to the visual aspect in the same way that a cinema setting would dictate – backing up the idea that this is a show at the audio end of the AV spectrum. There are distractions to lure eyes away from the screen. At the other extreme there are one or two who try to bring the banter from the terraces in with them, howling “Zee...” during silent interludes and reportedly snorting half of Colombia during the length of the show.

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LISTINGS

RECOMMENDED BY NOW THEN.

ARBOURETUM.
21ST AUG / SOUP KITCHEN / £5.

It’s as though the aural beacon of flower power never faded in some musical circles, as Baltimore’s Arboaretum attest. Their post-Fairport take on folk rock melds melodic arpeggios with screaming note bends. Local alt-rock noiseniks Easter support.

NOW THEN SOCIAL.
22ND AUG / DEAF INSTITUTE BAR / FREE.

We’ve not staged an event for a while so we’re looking forward this one. It’ll feature sounds from folk and blues to hip hop and electronica, and we’ll invite musicians to play live as well as some musically encyclopaedic record collectors to select tunes. It’s free entry, so come along and say hello. Eyes on our social media for more info.

ABATTOIR BLUES FESTIVAL.
24TH-25TH AUG / CASTLE HOTEL / £7.50.

The city’s blues wheels keep a-rollin’ and this festival line-up welcomes faces familiar to Abattoir Blues fans. Cactus Knife, Euchrid Eurow, Death Vignettes, Old Hands and Tyler Hatwell all performed last year, and there are plenty more across a packed weekend.

LABOLIS: THRESHOLD.
31ST AUG-1ST SEPT / HOPE MILL / £20.

Not strictly a music event – in fact not strictly bounded by any definition – Labolis is an immersive theatrical adventure that merges the mystical, surreal and the fantastical. It’s staged by Manchester duo Ultra Violets, who have toured with Hawkwind’s visual arts team for the past eight years.

PADDY STEER.
8TH SEPT / HILLARY STEP / FREE.

To the naked eye Paddy Steer appears more octopus than drummer when reaching around his DIY, custom-made kit. With 808 State and Homelife on his CV, this Hillary Step pub gig can be classed as an intimate setting, and with more fine ales than many standard gig venues.

RAMSBOTTOM FESTIVAL 2013.
15TH-17TH SEPT / RAMSBOTTOM CRICKET CLUB / £65.

Too many festivals in these parts have sprouted and subsided all too fleetingly, but Ramsbottom Festival has been enjoyable and therefore durable. This year they’ve invited Richard Hawley, The Futureheads and Sinead O’Connor as the crowd pullers, while Debt Records approved artists Walk, Kirsty Almeida and Bridie Jackson are among our picks (see P45 for more info).

JON HOPKINS (AV SHOW).
24TH SEPT / GORILLA / £12.50.

A long-time collaborator with Coldplay, King Creosote and Brian Eno, Jon Hopkins has also dabbled with the silver screen before, including penning an exquisite score to the indie sci-fi film, Monsters. This time he’s controlling both audio and visuals to perform his latest LP, Immunity.

CHAPEL ST FOLK FESTIVAL.
5TH-6TH OCT / BLACK LION / £25.

Chapel Street Studios have rounded up a flock of folies for a weekend of the area’s best in the folk genre. They’re keeping the final line-up quiet, but rest assured there’ll be a hearty dose of storytellers, banjo pickers and acoustic musos.
**MONEY.**

**THE SHADOW OF HEAVEN.**

**BELLA UNION.**

**REVIEWER – STEFANIE ELRICK.**

Having never experienced Manchester-borne M O N E Y I was intrigued to review their debut, *The Shadow of Heaven*, as the chosen juxtaposition of finance and spirituality seemed curious. The band settled on this name after much oscillation, indicative of their non-committal nihilist ethos. With titles like ‘So Long (God is Dead)’, ‘Cruelty of Godliness’ and ‘The Shadow of Heaven’, allusions to His Holiest are not lacking. Singer Jamie Lee scrawls in romantic Blakean prose – possibly with a makeshift quill on a serviette in blood – “As I was in full and celestial flight of my mid-youth I heard a voice to say it was my fate to lose all.” Statement gigs at Salford’s Sacred Trinity Church or his solo MIF appearance in a fountain sustain the mystical spectacle. The hints continue. Publicity shots circulate of band members swan diving out of windows or levitating in hipster serenity, arms outstretched, heads lolling back – martyred icons or enraptured devotees? Time alone will tell how such self-prophesising can play out.

Their self-proclaimed ‘dystopian choral’ sound heightens the theme of the sacredness in the chime laden ‘So Long (God is Dead)’, the first and strongest track on the album. Here their sound ripples its way through tenderly plucked guitars, lulling percussion and airy choir boy vocals. ‘Who’s Going to Love You Now’ crescendos in cylindrical waves as Lee breaks into discordant hallowed moaning. ‘Bluebell Fields’ is a dreamy, searching ode to bygone worlds suspended between watery 60s nostalgia and the indie-psychedelia sublimated as vintage chic. The deliberately minimalist ‘Goodnight London’, with time-worn piano accompaniment, conjures moon drenched Metropolitan wanderings, but Lee’s quivering vocals are uncertain and it’s hard not to hear a mediocre Coldplay rip off. ‘The Cruelty of Godliness’ – more contemporary choral harmonics – is spoilt by warbled off-key notes and is less graceful than the previous example. I imagine the band would legitimise this as the essential imperfection manifest in all earthly endeavours.

The music is soulful and promising but Lee could spend less time wandering the wilderness and more time in rehearsals.

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**MÚM.**

**SMILEWOUND.**

**MORR MUSIC.**

**REVIEWER – FAT ROLAND.**

Múm can be difficult to love. The music they produce is delicate and insubstantial like a pipe smoke ring trying to encircle Saturn, while their last outing *Sing Along To Songs You Don’t Know* tended towards a slightly doused Arcade Fire. The chop and change of personnel perhaps didn’t help, and this first album for four years sees the return of founding member Gyða Valtýsdóttir.

*Smilewound* sees the familiar feather-lite dreaminess of their previous work with a crucial difference. Produced partly on a kitchen table and in an old farmhouse, there is a strength in their sound not heard since *Finally We Are No One*; a confidence in their basic building blocks that sees them carefully lay out their melody among the cutlery and the clatter of an earthly farmhouse lunch. Indeed, this is Múm’s homecooked fayre. They produced Smilewound themselves and it has the naive feel of a great debut album.

The pizzicato strings on ‘Toothwheels’ are one of many hooks on Smilewound. Listen also to ‘When Girls Collide’’s farty bassline, the miniature Josh Wink tweaks sewn into ‘Slow Down’, or the Mew-style driving drums on pop highlight ‘The Colorful Stabwound’. The catchiness makes the saccharine, E-number sweetness easy to swallow.

Sometimes the wilful quirkiness overwhelms, as on ‘Candlestick’, where the tiny drum ‘n’ bass beat is lost in fussy production. And there’s that Arcade Fire tendency on ‘Sweet Impressions’ which may just have you skipping tracks until you get to *Funeral*. But these are asides. Balancing the upbeat with the ballads, this is the closest the band has come to producing a series of definite singles.

The repeating titular refrain of the brilliant ‘One Smile’ is perhaps more sinister than you’d expect, and in this darkness another strength lurks. ‘I’m in love with you,’ sing Múm, which may well be in the context of someone being chased. Allusions to violence pepper the lyrics – “I stab and scratch and spew my bile” – therefore their collaboration with murder ballad songstress Kylie Minogue should be the highlight – but the mittens are off and this fresher, more focussed Múm is finally something.
DR BUTLER’S HATSTAND
MEDICINE BAND
THE ART OF GOOD-TIME MUSIC.
SELF-RELEASED.
REVIEWER – JOHN WIGLEY.

Contrary to the maxim, comedy isn’t hard; at least not when compared to pastiche. Dr Butler and his crew intermittently manage to balance a knowing wink with a genuine connection to the music of the flapper bands and jazz troupes of the 30s. Opening track ‘Bad Butler’ with its witty blend of clipped English and campsite blues and the marvellous ‘Backbiting’ are the standout tunes, but some of the others dip their toes into the waters of a Two Ronnies musical number. That being said, the playing is exemplary and ‘Vicky From The Chippy’ is laced with lovely, near performance poetry wordplay. Worth a listen, if only for those tracks where the charm outweighs the smarm.

THE FAMILY WOLVES.
HOPE.
SELF RELEASED.
REVIEWER – JOHN WIGLEY.

Oh, I like this. It’s a long EP of dry string buzz and parched gospel; a record of dusty but defiantly Mancunian blues singing and playing. Blues is in constant movement but always essentially the same – the push and pull of the sacred and profane – and The Wolves know this. This record is engagingly unpolished with something of the garage about it. It’s beautifully recorded and played, and sung with a rasping passion and a nice line in Manc vocal anguish. ‘Drink and the Devil’ has a lovely repeated piano figure, ‘Give It Up’ and other tunes feature superb guitar work and closer ‘Would You Carry My Baby’ is plain spooky, like mutterings from the crossroads.

MODERAT.
II.
MONKEYTOWN RECORDS.
REVIEWER – DAN COULTAS.

Five years on from their inaugural outing on Monkeytown, Moderat return with the unambiguously named II. The unification of the Berlin techno B-boys and the sophisticated pop artist treads a sonically familiar path, ‘Bad Kingdom’ contrasting subterranean clicks against the brilliant, ecclesiastic falsetto of Sascha Ring. ‘Versions’ is all ghostly murmurs and wails spread across swinging breaks, whilst ‘Let In The Light’ takes on a fathomless vocal pitch as is de rigueur. It’s the avant-garde, melodic techno of ‘Milk’ that provides the defining moment as a bubbling bassline disappears then sparks the track back into life. This is the soundtrack to a warm, misspent summer on the banks of the Spree, suggesting that at least some of this piece of German engineering may have life outside the after-party.

WALK.
WALK EP.
LIBRA RECORDS.
REVIEWER – R MILES SAYER.

Walk open their EP with the affirming ‘Walk’, setting the tone and outlining the blueprint to attentively follow. That is, the marriage of bluesy guitar, subdued yet emotive vocals and off-kilter beats that urge the songs forward. ‘Streetlight’ provides the most engaging moment showing the duo delve deeper, introducing soft strings that give way to their best vocal and lyrical performance. Here we see a departure from the pre-established comfort zone and in this they produce a delicate and beautiful piece that stands elevated. But while this is a strong release, one can’t help but hope for less emphasis on making a progressive blues record and for more of the soaring strings witnessed on ‘Streetlight’, for here Walk truly shine.
The Natural Curriculum is a Manchester hip hop institution. Joey Average, aka Aver, acts as Creative Director – for want of a better title – and the infamous Dayse & Aver EP kicked off a series of releases of which rapper Chalk’s album will be the fifth for the TNC collective and label. One For Being Me is a love letter to hip hop and captures the live essence and inimitable style of his persona, but is also deep with personal circumstance, joy and loss, poetry and soul.

The history of Chalk and TNC is woven into the fabric of the Manic hip hop scene, which shows no signs of winding down after a resurgence in the last three or four years. It’s apt that this release is seeing the light of day at such a fertile time. Chalk not only raps throughout the album, but also produced the vast majority of it, with contributions from Aver and one-time TNC DJ Woli Wols.

How long have you two known each other?
Chalk: 24 years. We went to the same primary school in Withington. Playing footy, being friends. Joe’s the only person I’ve ever had a fight with, and that was over football.
Aver: That’s my second memory of him, actually. The first one was Joe coming up with ‘J-Illz’ or something like that. We were absolutely terrible.

What’s your history with hip hop?
Chalk: I got into hip hop when I was about ten. I was friends with the photographer and filmmaker Joe Gavin. The first time we got into his dad’s car he went, “I’ve got this tape you’ve got to listen to,” and he put it on. I didn’t know what it was but loved it – turned out it was (A Tribe Called Quest’s) Midnight Marauders. After that I started trying to find pirate stations on a little radio I had by my bed, and when I did I just pressed ‘record’ and listened back to the tapes. For years I didn’t really know many artists and that. Early high school days, I got into Wu Tang, was a massive Wu fan. So always had hip hop in my headphones but I never tried to rhyme. Think the first time I tried to rhyme I was about 16. My friend had written a proper shit rhyme, but it made me want to do it.

Aver: Back when you were called ‘Versify’ (chuckles).
Chalk: Yeah, we went to different colleges, but then Joe bought some decks off (future TNC member) Bill Sykes.
Aver: He skanked me badly...

Chalk: He was good at doing that. Will (Sykes) bought a skateboard off me when I was nine or 10 – I was a terrible skateboarder and couldn’t hack it. Sold it him for a tenner, a couple of weeks later I asked him what he’d done with it and he’d sold it for 20 quid. So yeah, I was MC Versify, Joe came up with ‘J-Illz’ or something like that. We were absolutely terrible.
Aver: There’s a bit on the (Chalk) album which is from 2003, 2002. We’ve got 17 or 18 mini discs of awful freestyles, like me battling Sykes
decks off (future TNC member) Bill Sykes.

So that’s how TNC came about?
Chalk: I went to college with Will, doing music technology. Then Will came up with the name ‘The Natural Curriculum’ around 2003. We ran with it, didn’t even know whether we liked it or not...
Aver: I didn’t like it. I preferred ‘Absent Minds’ – he used to be in Absent Minds with Chalk.
Chalk: Oli (Woli Wols) was making beats in college and asked me to get on a beat. His brother was working for Channel M, so they filmed that. From then on I started working with Oli more, I wrote a few tunes and
he came up with the name ‘Absent Minds’ for one of the first Mind On Fire nights.

When did TNC get around to performing shows?
Chalk: Going back to the time when we were still Versify and wotsit. Some guy put us on for a night called Seismic at Dry Bar. When we turned up it was...

Aver: Precarious. We had to do downstairs in the vault. Must’ve been 2005? Sweatiest thing I’ve ever done.
Chalk: Terrible. That was probably the first time we actually did a show. Will took me to Scu Bar one time ‘cos he was friends with (current TNC DJ) Omas, who started a night called Substance that we got involved with. They used to do open mics there, so I’d jump on there a little bit.
Aver: We were playing to a scene with like 10 heads, everyone knew everyone. Same in Liverpool with The Real Dolls, there was literally four people. I remember thinking there was no hip hop scene in the North West.

So given you’ve worked together for so long, why is the album coming out now in particular?
Chalk: I don’t write often. I’m very theme based. I’ll come up with a topic or idea and write that at the top of a page, and say: “Right, one day I’ll write that song”. Other ones come from personal experiences, but I might only do rough recordings at Joe’s. We’d do shows, get out there, and that went well. There’s two or three songs on there from 2006 or 2007 that were worth doing again. The rest are roughly 2011, really only one or two proper new tunes on there. I chose a selection of tunes that all have personal meaning to me, being worthy of an album and being listened to in an order.

Aver: It’s not hit orientated, haha. We were never, ever good at writing choruses, or even wanting to do it.

Aver, how have you seen Chalk progress?
Aver: Everything I know about live shows and showmanship came from him. I think it did for all of us. Writing songs – Phil from Herrotics was saying this – Chalk always writes conceptually, topic based. It’s like Kool Keith and Ultramagnetic MCs, who were sick at rhyming, diverted from it to write songs about ‘Blue Flowers’ and that shit. We’ve always worked independently within TNC, it’s more enjoyable as a friendship thing. We all have different equilibriums with each other. The feeling’s got to be right and you can’t force it, which is why the album’s taken so long. It’s very introspective and it takes a lot for someone to do that. I’ve heard people write songs about loss and joy like this, but not put them out.

Chalk: I’m so indecisive. I find myself picking at things rather than accepting them. A few songs have been like that so it’s taken a while. One song I’ve been wanting to write for years, about being a kitchen porter, just can’t do. The beat’s there, I still want to write it. With TNC, you only get a bit of who each person is. I think my album explains fully [who I am]. When the actual physical vinyl copies arrive, I’ll be buzzing. It’s ten years of wanting to do something actually being realised.

One For Being Me by Chalk is out on CD, 12” vinyl and mp3 on 20th September.

Jamie Groovement runs the website groovement.co.uk with regular interviews and podcasts on hip hop, electronic, jazz and funk, as well as co-running the monthly In The Loop clubnight.
September

Emily Portman Trio + Ottegeart – Friday 6th
Wiley + Angel – Sunday 8th
Tori Kelly – Friday 13th
Motionless In White – Monday 16th
Charlotte Church + Golden Fable – Monday 23rd
Y & T – Tuesday 24th
Art Brut – Tuesday 24th
The Duckworth Lewis Method – Thursday 26th
The Lurkers + Funk DJs – Saturday 28th
CocoRosie – Sunday 29th

October

Reckless Love – Tuesday 1st
The Airborne Toxic Event – Wednesday 2nd
Tonight Alive – Thursday 3rd
Fat Freddy’s Drop – Friday 4th
Black Spiders – Friday 4th
Kids in Glass Houses + Cartel + Propellers – Friday 4th
Wheatus + MC Lars – Friday 4th
Funeral For A Friend – Saturday 5th
Miles & Erica from The Wonder Stuff – Saturday 5th
Manc Floyd – Saturday 5th
Glasvegas – Monday 7th
Sleeping With Sirens – Monday 7th
Ryan Keen – Wednesday 9th
Kacey Musgraves – Thursday 10th
Johnny Marr – Saturday 12th
The Orb Live – 25th Anniversary Show + Special Guests System 7 & DJs – Saturday 12th
Charles Bradley & His Extraordinaires – Saturday 12th
Turisas – Saturday 12th
The South – Sunday 13th
Deerhunter – Tuesday 15th
The Quireboys + Special Guests Bonafide + Bad Touch – Tuesday 15th
Goo Goo Dolls + Flesh for Lulu – Wednesday 16th
Mikill Pane – Wednesday 16th
Ghostpoet – Wednesday 16th
Nina Nesbitt – Thursday 17th
The Answer + Tracer + Cage The Gods – Thursday 17th
Volbeat – Friday 18th
UK Foo Fighters – Saturday 19th
Kate Nash – Saturday 19th
Toyah + Alexa de Strange – Saturday 19th
Orange – Sunday 20th
AlunaGeorge – Monday 21st
Roachford – Tuesday 22nd
Baroness – Tuesday 22nd
The Feeling + Alexa de Strange – Wednesday 23rd
HIM – Thursday 24th
Marky Ramone’s Blitzkrieg with Andrew WK an vocals Thursday 24th
The Cult – Electric 13 + Bo Ningen – Friday 25th
The Pigeon Detectives – Friday 25th
Sham 69 – Friday 25th
John Power (Cast / The La’s) – Friday 25th
The Blackout + Framing Hanley + Blitz Kids – Saturday 26th
North Mississippi Allstars – Saturday 26th
Warpaint – Tuesday 29th
John Newman – Tuesday 29th
Tyler Hilton – Wednesday 30th

Highlights for the rest of the year

The Boomtown Rats – Friday 1st Nov
Public Service Broadcasting – Thursday 7th Nov
Unknown Mortal Orchestra – Friday 8th Nov
Ian Prowse & Amsterdam – Friday 8th Nov
Alice In Chains – Monday 11th Nov
Television – Sunday 17th Nov
Hayseed Dixie – Tuesday 19th Nov
They Might Be Giants – Wednesday 20th Nov
Lee Nelson – Saturday 23rd Nov
Crystal Fighters – Saturday 23rd Nov
Kurt Vile – Saturday 14th Dec
Primal Scream – Sunday 15th Dec

For full listings check out: www.manchesteracademy.net
BC Camplight is a critically acclaimed pop rock sensation from Philadelphia who last year picked up sticks and moved over to Manchester to reignite his latent music career. Speaking from a hospital bed in Manchester, Brian Christinzio talks musical maths, fucking up, foodie metaphors and new beginnings.

What brings you to Manchester from your native Philadelphia? What did The City Of Brotherly Love do to make you leave?

Before I answer, I should let your readers know that I’m doing this interview from a hospital bed in South Manchester. I’ve fucked my leg with some apparent super infection and I’ve been here for four days. In bed. If I die you can’t say I didn’t try to give it another go. As for Philly, I don’t know man. I get a bit fatigued of thinking of simple readable reasons why I do things. I’ll be honest, I turned into a bum when I stopped music in 2008. The couple of years after that were a blurred flash of wasted time. I just got on a plane.

How have you settled into Manchester? Have you found a creative place for yourself in the city?

I’m not one of these people who need to be in a creative space. We all have these friends who want to go out in the woods alone with their four-track and make their masterpiece, then end up coming back with two halves of two shit songs and about 1,000 pictures of themselves ‘writing’. I don’t have a method. I’m just a farmer who wakes up and checks to see if the chicken has laid any eggs. Most mornings I wake up – nope. Other mornings – omelette time.

Given the critical acclaim for your previous work and the six year hiatus between writing, how does the pressure feel?

I wish I felt pressure. I would have gotten back to work years ago. I lost interest in 2008 and really didn’t think or want to put music out anymore. The whole thing just started to become surreal to me. Wait, so I’m making noises and people buy them and people think they are great? That’s a weird job. That neurosis is at least temporarily behind me. I’ve lived life, made mistakes, have regrets. The music is better for it. The next record, out in the fall, makes my previous work look like Ace of Base. No pressure felt.

Who are you making music for these days? Yourself, the fans, the bank or just musical history?

Again, no single answer, though, I can rule out myself. My publisher was a big part of me getting back to biz as they’ve stuck with me since the beginning so I suppose I feel I should do it again partly because they believed in me and all that shit. But mostly because I just want to again. I guess it is fairly simple. Sometimes you’re in the mood for steak. Sometimes you ain’t. While I am, I figured I wouldn’t do it half-assed and put out a record that has its own gravitational pull.

Your use of melody is second to none. Where does your sound come from?

That’s kind. Well, I spent the ages of four to 18 in front of my parents’ piano. I was obsessed. I used to make up melodies to remember school questions. Not lyrics. Melodies. And a lot of times I could use harmonies to visualise maths. That fascinated my teacher. Before anyone thinks I’m trying to come off as some sort of super kid, I was a fucking idiotically terrible student. Should have just bought a calculator.

Is there anything going on in music at the moment that is exciting you or, equally, riling you?

Nowadays I’ll just take any band without an animal name in its name.

What do you do outside of music? We hear you’ve done a little boxing in your time?

I have. I was decent. I like swattin’ every now and again. I am fiercely pacifistic though. As for my spare time, pretty much just enjoying my friends and trying to learn to take in life a little bit.

What’re your plans for the rest of the year?

Tour, comeback record of the year, find a girlfriend, get home to see my family. Back to sleep now. Codeine kicking in.

BC Camplight’s third album, Grim Cinema, will be released in December, preceded by a single in September.

soundcloud.com/bc-camplight
manchesterscenewipe.co.uk

Photo by Phillipa Jasinek
FRIDAY 02 AUGUST — GORILLA CLUB & UNDER WITH...
RADIO SLAVE
10PM: £8.00

SATURDAY 03 AUGUST
£1 PARTY w/ TASTE THE DIFFERENCE
10PM: £1.00

FRIDAY 09 AUGUST
GORILLA 1ST BIRTHDAY
4PM: FREE

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST
MARTHA REEVES & THE VANDELLAS
6.30PM—10PM : £25.00

THURSDAY 15 AUGUST — D TACHED A LEVEL RESULTS PARTY WITH...
APPLEBOTTOM AND PALE
10PM: £5.00

FRIDAY 16 AUGUST — PLAY WITH...
AMINE EDGE & DANCE AND MATT FEAR
10PM: SOLD OUT

SATURDAY 17 AUGUST — D TACHED WITH...
BODHI AND JUSTIN JAY
10PM: £5.00

TUESDAY 20 AUGUST
SLAUGHTERHOUSE (JOE BUDDER, ROYCE DA 5’9, JOEELL ORTIZ, CROOKED)
10PM — 7.00AM (14+)

FRIDAY 23 AUGUST — GORILLA CLUB & EXHIBIT WITH...
NICK CURLY
10PM: £8

SATURDAY 24 AUGUST
NOW WAVE & WHP PRESENT SOUNDS OF THE NEAR FUTURE WITH...
RUSTIE
10PM: £8

SATURDAY 31 AUGUST
GROUP THERAPY COMEDY CLUB
7PM : 18 MEMBERS & NUS / £10 GENERAL ADMISSION

SATURDAY 31 AUGUST — JALUKI WITH...
MIGUEL CAMPBELL
10PM: £12.50

COMING UP
DAUGHN GIBSON
PRETTY LIGHTS
BADLY DRAWN BOY
CAYUCAS / JIM WHITE
GIANT DRAG / THE MINX
SMITH & WESTERN
BEN KENNEY (INCUBUS)

FOR FULL DETAILS VISIT:
THEDEAFINSTITUTE.CO.UK
135 Grosvenor St, Manchester, M1 7HE
Norris and Parker is not a firm of accountants. They are a comedy duo. This pair, comprising of fringe theatre actors Katie Norris and Sinead Parker, has an upcoming show at the Edinburgh Fringe titled All Our Friends Are Dead. Their sketch-based routines have a surreal and energetic quality reminiscent of Reeves and Mortimer, which they combine with a more rehearsed and intense style like that of The League Of Gentlemen, except they are women, thus making it all much more interesting. They are approachable, engaging and finish one another’s sentences like an old married couple.

How did you guys meet?
Parker: I dropped out of uni, went on the dole and I needed a hobby.
Norris: We took a one-year course for people who are not good enough to get into drama school.
Parker: We shared the same birthday so we had to be friends. I immediately liked you.
Norris: But I wasn’t so sure.

How did such a promising basis for a friendship lead to you becoming a comedy duo?
Norris: We were in a play at Bolton Octagon, but we had no lines.
Parker: They couldn’t be bothered to learn our names, so they gave me a pair of gloves and Katie a hat so they could tell us apart.
Norris: We were only on stage for about two minutes. We spent the rest of the time pissing about.
Parker: Then Colin, this Irish actor, said (affects quite impressive Irish accent), “Girls, if you’re gonna do it just do it.”
Norris: So we did it.

How did that first show go?
Parker: We wrote tons of material, we invited all our friends. My Dad kept ringing me beforehand and saying, “Do you realise you might be really embarrassed?”
Norris: All our teachers were there. It was like a school exam. It went really well!

What came after that first gig? Is there a scene for sketch comedy in Manchester?
Norris: There’s not a huge amount going on.
Parker: There’s a lot more for stand up.
Norris: So you end up playing the same places and with the same people, which is nice...
Parker: …but limiting.

Is that why you’re going to Edinburgh?
Norris: Yeah. I went last year as a spectator and thought, “We have to go, we’ve got something and we need to show it off.” Edinburgh’s the place to do that.

Parker: We couldn’t afford to do any of the real things though because we’re poor.
Norris: So it was all a bit last minute. They didn’t tell us they wanted us until the day before the deadline.
Parker: They asked to see some material, so we sent them a video where I look like a fat Charlize Theron with a moustache.
Norris: And I looked like a toad.
Parker: My lines are me saying, “I’m trying to mount my wife,” in a bad American accent.
Norris: (laughing): We had to send something, but we were really ashamed that it had to be that!
Parker: But he emailed us back within two minutes, so it must’ve worked.

How do you go about writing new material for a new show like this?
Parker: We normally start by playing heightened versions of ourselves, talking about our lives being really shit.
Norris: Or about how we have to come up with a sketch show.
Parker: We did a show called Comedy Wake where we tried to write a sketch about a funeral. But we couldn’t. So we ended up with loads of sketches about us trying to write sketches about a funeral.
Norris: Just to get out of it.
Parker: Playing yourself is really liberating, because you can just take the piss. We’re actors, so there’s plenty of things to take the piss out of ourselves about.

Is that how you work together as a duo, taking the piss out of one another?
Parker: Sort of. I tend to get obsessed with getting the right word, and you tend to think about the sound...
Norris: What? “Oh, I write all the words, Norris just makes the fart sounds.”
Parker: That’s not what I meant!
Norris: No, I know what you mean. It tends to be a back and forth, we have different personalities so it works well together.
Parker: I play the neurotic loser weirdos...
Norris: ...and I play the horrible bitches.

Is there anything else you’d like Now Then readers to know?
Norris: We’re not twats.
Parker: We’re really not, honestly.

Norris and Parker have a show at Edinburgh fringe festival and a website where you can find out about their other activities. norrisandparker.com
There is no place on earth more hostile to human life than Antarctica. What a challenge, therefore, to set the entirety of a play there, as was done in the recent production of *South*, written by Ian Winterton.

Set in 1962, the play follows the lives of six members of the British Antarctic Survey living in isolation in Antarctica. This isolation provides the drama, as correspondence takes ten days to reach those back home in Britain. From this grows tension, as no crisis has immediate resolution and so fears and insecurities have time to gestate.

Antarctica is the primary character in the play and controls how the others live, trapping them in conditions that they can accommodate but cannot overcome, like poplars bending in the wind. Bethany Wells’ innovative set design portrayed this perfectly; it was the hub around which the spokes of the play revolved, and conveyed the cold, the crunch of snow and the seemingly endless abyss of ice to great effect. Mention must also go to Peter Swaffer-Reynolds’ immersive score, which seemed to draw you forward in your seat as it swelled and shrank like an icy wind.

What the play did very well was show the pressures of confinement. The dynamics between each of the characters were by turns taut, entertaining and moving, and all of the actors are due a good deal of praise. While each of these is worthy of discussion, to deal with all of them at once was too much to take in a single sitting.

What struck me most about South though was its marriage of opposites: the minutiae of life against the epic quality of Antarctica. This mirrors the contrasts within theatre itself, where highly individual pursuits like writing and acting must be combined into a team effort. How are these seemingly opposing forces harnessed toward a single goal?

The best person to answer this question is a director, as it is their job to yoke these disparate elements, so I spoke to Trevor MacFarlane – the Creative Director of Shred Productions, who has just finished working on *South* – about how a play comes together, from the initial seed of an idea to the full fruit that appears before an audience. He cuts a small, neat figure with bright eyes, and his fresh-faced appearance belies his senior role as the Creative Director of a production company.

First, a production needs to be commissioned. There are all sorts of funding avenues through which this can happen, often with specific objectives in mind, but South was a bit different. “We were offered a slot at the Lowry for free, and they said ‘Do what you want.’ Ian (Winterton, the writer) had been umming and ahing over this idea to write a play based in Antarctica. You see, his Dad worked there, so I asked him if he could get it written and, of course, he said yes.”

As the play had yet to be written this afforded them the opportunity to work on it as a team from the very beginning. “We came up with a one-sheet, a side of A4 with everything that needed to be in the play. Then we got it all on cue cards, and played around with the order of events to see how the dramatic ideas changed. Only then did the writing start, and even that is not the end,” he started laughing in recollection, “Since we went through 15 drafts of our last play.”

Having written a script, the staging, sound and actors have to be fitted around it. It’s not a straightforward process, but it follows a clear hierarchy among the elements: “Everything has to serve the script before all individuals, including – and I know this sounds funny – the writer. Actors come a close second. Without wanting to sound wanky, I really believe in the power of actors, I think they’re incredible people.”

This elevation of actors makes good casting critical, and again emphasises the importance of the team over the individual. “It’s like fitting together a football team. It’s no good having a great centre forward if your midfield is rubbish. So you have to create an ensemble; people who work as a team, enjoy rehearsal, and most of all can play together.”

The focus on preparation and teamwork mirrors other art forms, particularly music, where thousands of hours of practice lay the foundation on which just a few seconds of improvisation are built. So, in order for everyone involved in South to be at their best, Trevor decided that they all had to become invested in the central character of the play – Antarctica itself. “We did tons of research, made mood boards, sent one another weird pictures of ice late at night, got obsessed with statistics. It’s crazy, it has really gripped us all, we’re blown away by the mix of the natural, the extreme, and the beauty. Antarctica is just the biggest and most powerful character.” This preparation then frees Trevor to improvise in his own role of director. “I just try to be instinctive. All the work has been done, so I try to respond to the actors and what they are doing.”

Finally, having organised the set, auditioned the actors and made the music, the play happens. “It’s small and petty on one level, but massive and godlike on another. It’s really about how we look after one another, and the planet.”

shredproductions.co.uk

Interviewer Andrew Anderson and the writer of South, Ian Winterton, both have plays lined up for the forthcoming Contact Compacts series, which takes place on Thursday 22nd and 29th August at Contact Theatre, and is free entry.
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

GRIMMFEST
MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF HORROR AND CULT FILMS
3/10/13 - 6/10/13
Ticket info & line up at
WWW.GRIMMFEST.COM

CINEMA LIVE MUSIC THEATRE
Chapel St.
STUDIOS

SEPTEMBER (ish)
SAT 24 AUGUST - LIVE MUSIC

CITY CENTRE SOUL
Our bi-monthly Northern Soul Night! £3 - 8pm til 2am

JAMES AND THE AUTHOR
Puppet & voice based black comedy £5 / £4 - 8pm
WED 11 - SAT 14 SEPTEMBER - THEATRE

VIP
New comedy play set in a VIP party. £7.50 (earlybird) - 7.30pm

SAT 21 SEPTEMBER - LIVE MUSIC
MONKEYS IN LOVE + WERBENIUK + SPECIAL GUESTS
Music in a space-themed gig from Monkeys In Love! £5 - 8pm
WED 25 SEPTEMBER - SPOKEN WORD
MONOLOGUE SLAM
The ULTIMATE actor's showcase event! £3 - 7.30pm
THURS 29 - SUN 29 SEPTEMBER - LIVE MUSIC

SALFORD MUSIC FESTIVAL
Saltford Music Festival presents two stages at The Black Lion across four days - See salfordmusicfestival.co.uk for line up, ticket details & times.

OVER THE GARDEN FENCE
2 woman theatre co. writing & performing original works £5 / £4 - 8pm
SAT 5 & SUN 6 OCTOBER - LIVE MUSIC

CHAPEL ST. FOLK FESTIVAL
2 stages / 30 bands / Chapel St. Studios first folk festival comes to The Black Lion! 8pm - 1am daily
Day £15 / Weekend £25 - available on Skiddle
WED 9 OCTOBER - COMEDY

THE ALTERNATIVE
New alternative comedy night LAUNCH £5 / £4 - 8pm
Hire our venue for screenings, gigs, club nights, parties, events & whatever else you can think up.
Email bookings@chapelststudios for info.

above The Black Lion
65 Chapel St. Salford. M3 5BZ
@chapelststudios theblacklionsalford.tumblr.com
Manchester doesn’t really do world premiers. It’s not our thing. But when it’s a world premiere for a documentary about the city’s most prodigal sons, we’ll make an exception. The Stone Roses: Made Of Stone, directed by Shane Meadows, is that exception.

Rock and roll legend has it that early blues guitarist Robert Johnson was hitching around the Deep South when one night he stopped for a rest at a crossroads. There at midnight, the devil appeared and offered to buy his soul in return for earthly fame and fortune. Johnson accepted and, true to his word, the Devil gave him a talent for guitar picking the likes of which the world had never before seen. All rock and roll bands have since acknowledged this legend and all tales of earthly rock and roll excess certainly give the Devil credit where it’s due.

But when a young group of Manc chancers with a street gang mentality and a handful of jangly, psychedelic nursery rhymes in their pocket turn up at a studio and record an eponymous debut album with the profoundly sacrilegious opening statement of: “I don’t need to sell my soul / He’s already in me / I wanna be adored,” and close that same album with the glorious blasphemy of “I am the resurrection and I am the light,” something culturally exceptional happened. Looking back, you begin to think that maybe a statement so profound, cocksure and blasphemous was tempting fate and the Devil a little too much as the Stone Roses were from that point damned to ultimately turn in on themselves and gracelessly implode.

A lot has happened since those halcyon, baggy days, when the only advertisement for the band was scrawled graffiti on the side of Central Library and the Hulme squat where Geno Washington urged Ian Brown to just get out there and sing. Internecine squabbles, exploitative management and walk-outs all took their inevitable toll before the band went their separate ways.

The Stone Roses took the street culture of popular music and elevated it to a whole new art form. They didn’t just want to be adored – they demanded it. For three nights last summer, nearly a quarter of a million people turned up at Heaton Park in the pouring rain to tell them that they were, still are and always will be adored. Made Of Stone uses those three nights at Heaton Park to bookend what many will argue is the definitive history of one of the greatest bands of all time. Opening with aerial shots of the crowd and a voiceover from Alfred Hitchcock on the nature of creativity, then cutting to a beautifully shot slow motion scene of Ian Brown prowling the front barrier, the subject of a thousand adoring camera phones before turning one in on himself in a moment of self-adoration, Made Of Stone documents the rise, fall and resurrection of the band through a series of photo montages and old interviews. Much of the film is devoted to the run up to the Warrington and Heaton Park concerts and is undoubtedly and unashamedly Meadows’ self-confessed “love letter”, written in atonement for his failure to attend Spike Island – he gave his ticket away because he was convinced that if he attended he would be eaten by wolves. Acid really has a lot to answer for.

Made Of Stone thankfully avoids the talking heads ethos of the standard BBC Four popular cultural documentary and instead goes for the ‘vox populi, vox dei’ approach of talking to the actual fans, almost all of whom were roundly cheered by the cinema audience as they related what the band meant to them on a personal level.

The music, of course, speaks for itself. The rehearsal of ‘Waterfall’ is a joy to watch and the sole full-length contribution from Heaton Park – I’m guessing the whole gig is slated for a separate release – is ‘Fools Gold’ – quite frankly one of the most glorious pieces of live music you are ever likely to hear.

The Stone Roses never really had a chance to prove how magnificent they could be. The shortcomings of the now legendary Spike Island gig ensured that the Roses went down in history for cultural symbolism but not necessarily for live musical achievement. That’s what made this reunion so different – the need to show that it could be done and that the adoration of the Mancunian magi was entirely justified.

It can’t be often that a film audience applauds and cheers at the end of each scene and it’s even less often the film gets a standing ovation at its conclusion. Whether that’s because the premiere was something of another homecoming or whether it’s a spontaneous reaction that will be repeated up and down the country remains to be seen, but the film is likely to become just as important a cultural document as the music The Stone Roses made, and for that we should be thankful.

When Hegel said, “The Owl Of Minerva spreads its wings only at the closing of the day,” he meant that true knowledge can only come with the passing of an age – that we can never really know the artistic or social merit of one phenomenon until one epoch has passed and another one starts anew. And now we know. We know that after all that anticipation of disappointment and low expectation, the cultural and musical phenomenon that was and is The Stone Roses pulled it off.

The boys have come home.
Burton Road is rightly popular for its thriving bar and restaurant scene. The food choice is endless: Indian, Nepalese, Thai, Persian, French, modern English and on and on and on. And then there are cocktail bars, wine bars, tiki bars, free houses; it’s amazing that this part of the city hasn’t already been eyed up by the corporate prospectors, and thank Jehovah it hasn’t, because amidst all of this great nightlife is a cool and vibrant gem in the form of Mary & Archie.

Run by brother, sister and mother, Mary & Archie seems to squeeze all the good things in life under one small roof with grace and ease.

At the bar you will find the best selection of craft bottled beers in the neighbourhood with a range of guest cask ales to match, including Marble and Brightside. If you’re not an ale drinker there’s an extensive selection of wines and spirits, with friendly folk behind the bar to guide you towards the right choice.

Home cooked food is the emphasis of the relaxed intimate atmosphere with breakfast served until 4pm and sharing plates served until 9pm, with a Sunday roast for meat eaters and vegetarians alike. All the produce is fresh and comes straight from some of our favourite suppliers, including Out Of The Blue and Barbakan.

And as if this isn’t enough there’s live music!

Look out for pizza night on Tuesdays, quiz night on Wednesdays, DJs on Saturdays, and Sunday Spoonful on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. In fact any day of the week, day or night, take a trip. You’re bound to find what you were looking for.

MARY & ARCHIE.
200 BURTON ROAD, M20.
TWITTER.CO.UK/MARYANDARCHIE.

It’s sometimes too easy to forget that turning on the MediaCity TV set wasn’t the year dot for Salford and Manchester’s TV and film media. One production company that has been brewing an otherworldly cinematic broth in the pre-MediaCity days is Grimm Fest, Manchester’s International festival of horror and cult films, which celebrates its fifth birthday this October.

The festival finds itself parked in the Dancehouse’s auditorium for four days at the start of October, from Thursday 3rd till Sunday 6th. There’s something about the word auditorium that’s fitting for a horror festival, perhaps relating back to a youth of Goosebumps book fandom. It certainly won’t be the use of the word in Elton John’s ‘Tiny Dancer’, which can surely only evoke warmth, unless the tiny dancer in question happens to be sat on a tricycle and patrolling the corridors of a creaky old hotel. But I digress.

So far they’ve announced the beautifully twisted decadence of Hansel and Gretal Get Baked, Jugface, and Shell Shocked, a WWII flick pitching British and Germans allied against an undead bunker dweller, scored by Manchester-based duo Ghosting Season and starring Emmerdale’s Dominic Brunt. Brunt will be attending the event, as will Game of Thrones’ Alfie Allen and Paul Davis, director of The Body, also starring The Hour’s Hannah Tointon. World War Z’s prosthetic artists Shaune Harrison and Mark Coulier are attending to chat about their work as well as displaying examples during the weekend.

Last year’s edition of Grimm Fest took place at Stockport Plaza, which is where Screen Stockport again finds itself. The latter’s theme this time around will focus on documentary films and filmmaking across various awards categories.

Also at Dancehouse Theatre – slightly flaunting the guidelines set out by the heading above – is Finders Keepers Records’ monthly film night. The record label is well-liked for its knack of digging up hefty shovels full of glistening psychedelic music gems, and the film screenings are a natural extension of that. Next up is Andy Votel’s Kleksploitation on 18th October.

FILM FESTIVALS.
GRIMMFEST.COM.
SCREENSTOCKPORT.CO.UK.
FINDERSKEEPERSRECORDS.COM.
OUTSTANDING BEERS AT RAMSBOTTOM FESTIVAL.
OUTSTANDINGBEERS.CO.UK. RAMSBOTTOMFESTIVAL.COM. 13TH-15TH SEPTEMBER.

Not content with brewing and distributing some of the region’s finest ales and providing a special cask ale for the Greater Manchester Fringe Festival during July, the Bury based brewery, Outstanding Beers, will be taking their tipple on tour again – this time to nearby Ramsbottom Festival, where they’ll team up in a tent with Bury Market Street’s Automatic Cafe. The festival returns for a third year after its previous successful events at Ramsbottom Cricket Club to intertwine local and international live music with the pick of Bury’s food and drink. Richard Hawley, Sinead O’Connor and The Futureheads top the bill, with the likes of Jose Gonzalez’s Junip, The Unthanks and Public Service Broadcasting as other key names, with plenty more besides.

SKYLINER’S FIELD TRIPS.
THESKYLINER.ORG.

You may think you know this city, but there are always nooks and crannies to explore. You could boast that you’ve been down Every Street in Manchester, but you’re really only talking about one road. The Skyliner is a website that seeks to uncover each and every road, building and construct of any kind in order to educate, intrigue and inspire. Brought up nearer Liverpool, its author Hayley Flynn has lived in Manchester for several years and after initially treating the city as her home, she realised that the best way to live in a city is as a tourist. As a result, her Skyliner blog has elucidated many a hidden gem by delving into historical and social relevance, which has led to appearances across local and national press and radio, and a book, Central Manchester: Through Time, scheduled to be published next year. She also shares her knowledge firsthand by leading tours in the area – booked in are three exclusive Godlee Observatory tours (21st Sept, 22nd Oct and 20th Nov), plus Art in Architecture and Hulme Hippodrome.

CHARITY FOOTBALL.
SUNDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER.

We’ll be donning our kit, lacing our boots and pulling up our socks to enter the Trof Trophy, a charity football tournament at the start of September organised by Hey! Manchester and supported by Trof. Our team is a joint effort with the brains behind Bag Thing, and all competing teams are linked with an aspect of local music. Keep your eyes peeled via our social media links for our Just Giving page – support us and you could win spot prizes, with all proceeds going to charity. We’ll all be slouching into our seats afterwards at Deaf Institute for a sports-themed quiz, a raffle including prizes such as gig tickets, and some much-needed hydration.

ART EXHIBITIONS.
MANCHESTERPRINTFAIR.CO.UK. MUSICBEATSMINES.ORG. BUYARTFAIR.CO.UK.

Manchester Print Fair is deservedly a regular fixture on the fanzine calendar these days, with the next one at 2022NQ highlighted in the square marked Saturday 12th October. Expect all manner of creatives, from illustrators to photographers to poets to screen printers. Also in the Northern Quarter, Kosmonaut on Tariff Street is a makeshift street art auction house for August for a Music Beats Mines event. Some of the best local graff artists and muralists are showcasing their work, including Tankpetrol, Hammo and Now Then issue 3 artist Dan Birkbeck. Proceeds go to the Mines Advisory Group charity, which aims to rid war-torn nations of rogue munitions.

The Spinningfields-set Buy Art Fair does exactly what it says in the paint tin. With prices deliberately broad – from £50-£5,000 – and a diverse range of work on display, there’s something for pretty much everyone over its four days, 26th-29th September. It’s free entry, but you need to register in advance. Finally, from August 31st to Sept 1st there’s an art exhibition curated by members of art clubs around Manchester, and organised by NW Federation of Arts Societies, taking place at the newly refurbished St Peter’s Church in Ancoats, smartly decked out as the new home of the Hallé Orchestra.

CHAPEL ST FOLK FESTIVAL.
CHAPELSTFOLKFEST.TUMBLR.COM. 5TH-6TH OCTOBER.

Chapel Street Studios has announced its very first folk festival, featuring some of Salford and Manchester’s finest finger-pickers, rhythmic raconteurs and acoustic instrument wielders. The festival will take place in the Black Lion’s Theatre venue, which is named after the people’s poet laureate of Salford, John Cooper Clarke, and to keep you watered there’s always a tasty array of cask and bottled ales available.

MANCHESTER ACADEMY.
MANCHESTERACADEMY.NET. OXFORD ROAD, M13.

The Manchester Academy venues, all situated on the grounds of the University of Manchester are the bread and butter for many a musician, from fresh faced first giggers to established multi-platinum album selling world touring. Academy 1 still stands proud after its refurbishment, while 2 has seen a lick of paint earlier this year. 3 has hosted many an upcoming star over the years and Club Academy remains a great addition to the building. There’s a schedule packed with quality bookings for the Autumn months, with the likes of Deerhunter, Fat Freddy’s Drop and Ghostpoet, plus Warpaint and a rare show for influential US post-punks Television. The Orb’s 25th anniversary show will be unmissable and look out for the late-blooming soul singer Charles Bradley in October.
Velo Couture Homme
Ramsbottom Festival
13 | 14 | 15 | September 2013 | Ramsbottom Cricket Club

The Futureheads
Richard Hawley
Sinéad O’Connor

Junip • The Unthanks • The Beat
Public Service Broadcasting
Twisted Wheel • Parlour Flames

Moreland and Arbuckle • Lazy Habits • SupaJamma • The Tapestry
Chasing Owls • Luke Jackson • Walk • Danny Mahon • Acid Brass
Harp & a Monkey • Bridie Jackson & The Arbour • Federal Charm
Gordie MacKeeman and his Rhythm Boys • David Hirst • and more...

Three stages • Funkademia silent disco
Family friendly • Delicious food • Real ale

Day tickets from £23 • Full festival £65 • Children and family discounts

information & tickets www.ramsbottomfestival.com
1. THE OUTSTANDING BREWING CO
2. MARBLE BEERS
3. RAMSBOTTOM FESTIVAL
4. FIRST CHOP BREWING ARM
5. BLACK LION / CHAPEL ST. FOLK FEST
6. PIE & ALE
7. H'LYTH & CO
8. MANCHESTER PRINT FAIR
9. PRIVATEER BEERS
10. GORILLA
11. MANCHESTER MULE
12. GRIMMFEST
13. THE EIGHTH DAY SHOP & CAFE
14. SANDBAR
15. DEAF INSTITUTE
16. MANCHESTER ACADEMY 1, 2, 3 & CLUB
17. THE HILARY STEP
18. PROOF
19. BATTERY PARK JUICE BAR
20. MORLEY CHEEK’S
21. ÉPICERIE LUDO
22. KEN FOSTER’S CYCLE LOGIC
23. THE SPOON INN
24. POST OFFICE DELI (POD)
25. MOCKINGBIRDS
26. MARY AND ARCHIE
27. THE HOPE INN / FOOL HARDY
28. AGAPANTHUS INTERIORS

[●] = REAL ALE HOUSES & BREWERIES

WWW.WEAREMOGUL.COM