

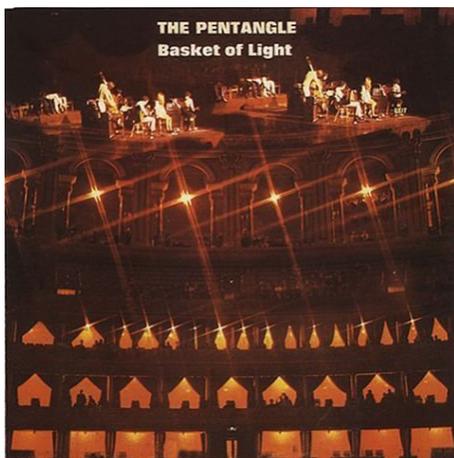
THE HAIRY KING OF THE VIOLET

ISSUE 16
FREE





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THE Shrieking Violet issue 16 should be read while listening to Bert Jansch, singer and guitarist in Pentangle (and notable folk musician in his own right), who died from cancer aged 67 at the start of October as I was putting content together.

This is the third issue of the Shrieking Violet to be dedicated to the memory of a musician who soundtracked my teenage years and passed away prematurely: Issue 8 was finished in April 2010, coinciding with the death of my musical hero Alex Chilton (Box Tops/Big Star) at the age of 59, and Trish Keenan of Broadcast passed away just as I was finishing issue 12 in January 2011 aged only 42.

One of the most compelling arguments for owning records (or books) in a physical format is that you never forget how you came into possession of those that sum up certain stages of your life.

As a big fan of folk and blues guitarists like John Fahey, I'd heard a lot about Bert Jansch but it wasn't until a trip to Ireland after my A-levels to meet the editor of a fanzine I had been contributing to that I bought the Best of Bert Jansch from a cosy, crowded record cum bookshop in Dublin. The record came to define the end of that summer, the changes in my life as I moved away from home to start university, and the passing of the days into autumn; there's a darkness and sadness to Bert's music behind its delicate, fingerpicked beauty and I have always thought that Bert's was a music for the drawing in of the days, falling of leaves from the trees and the brief intensity of autumn light.

What makes Bert's music for me is his warm, personal voice, which is one of the most distinctive and recognisable I've come across. As well as being one of my favourite guitarists, he's also one of my favourite singers: his voice is plain, unadorned and unaffected. Bert's is singing how it should be, unflashy and unshowy, complementary to rather than distracting from the guitar melodies which are at the centre of his songs.

As a shy, awkward teenager, when I started university my love of musicians like Bert Jansch helped me make friends. A fellow guitarist lived in my flat in halls and we traded CDs, introducing me to Bert Jansch's *Birthday Blues*.

This summer I stumbled across The Pentangle's absolutely magical 1969 LP *Basket of Light* for £1 at a car boot sale, a record I had long coveted on vinyl. Returning home, I rushed to put it on the stereo. My mum, who was lucky enough to be teenager during punk and post-punk, protested loudly and turned it off; she couldn't stand it. In a reversal of the usual parent-child relationship, my taste in whimsical, gentle, introspective folk music made me a rebel!

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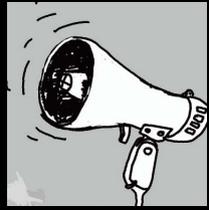
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SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVILS



by **Louise M. North**

CONNOR Cartwright is invisible. Not see-through invisible, he blends in; been that way since he was six. His mam had this boyfriend, see... nah. You don't. But it went like this...

'Bastid, get ya dirty cock away from me-'

'Cunt.' The boyfriend slaps her, hard; her head spins round like that kid off the exorcist. Connor says he felt pure rage pouring from the guy, racing across the carpet like fire, so hot it nearly torched Connor's toes (he was curled up in the corner); then the boyfriend turns round looking to spread that rage elsewhere.

That's when Connor turned invisible. He reckons he was invisible for a long time before that, that's why his mam would forget to feed him, or send him to school, or else she'd go missing for days. Connor says he didn't mind. That way, he didn't have to be around her, feeling every drop of misery.

Bit of a loner is our Connor, only, he can't stay away from people too long, says loneliness will kill him.

You won't find him in the naff bars of the Northern Quarter, cram-packed with orange-skinned women and buff-chested blokes. Nah. You'll find him in The Smithfield; an old-man's boozier, dirty brown wall-paper full of faded flowers dying on the walls, tired tables all shapes all sizes stained with years of spill beer. He sits in silence, listening to The Clash or Johnny Cash, music from the past; side-by-side with pensioners pinching pennies, social rejects, social defects, the reckless, the feckless, the lonely, too close to Strangeways for orange women and buff blokes. That's Connor.

Who am I? I'm Gloria. And I'm gonna tell you a story.

It goes like this...



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Back in the '80s, I'm on the game; selling me skinny arse on Fairfield Street, back of The Star and Garter. That tickled me, so I nicknamed meself Star and slapped on a garter; some punters liked it, you get them like that.

It's raining; drizzle, the kind that can't make up its mind to piss down or piss off. I'm jumping out me bones, doing the druggy hopscotch, gagging for a hit. Connor appears from nowhere with a bag of smack. He's no dealer, never made me pay in any way; he's my saviour.

'For you, Glo-worm,' he says.

And bleedin' God almighty, I was scratchin'.

I does me bag and we goes to the Smithy.

Lost-and-lonely's in; and the two Ronnies, bickering.

'John's died, no-one else has died,' Mrs Ronnie is saying.

Mr Ronnie says, 'Grimshaw?'

'How do I know?'

'You said he died.'

'Didn't. Not Grimshaw.'

They argue about which John died.

'Oh shut-up,' she tells him. 'Your voice is very annoying.'

Me and Connor giggle. We love the two Ronnies.

Dangerous Derek is playing pool with baldy-Al, we all know Derek will win, even Al knows. Lost-and-lonely is hovering round the table, hoping to cadge a rum and coke from the winner; her make-up is smudged, from the rain or crying or both. Connor told me her heart has broke so many times, it's like shattered glass. He knows people, like when I'm scratchin'. Strangers, too. Feels their emotions, sad, angry, pure badness. S'why he stays invisible. Doesn't let people touch him; can't stand the feelings.

Me. I hear or see or smell stuff different; kept me safe with punters; voices might sound like honey, but if I saw barbed wire, I knew they were gonna hurt me. S'why me and Connor get on. Pair of weirdos.

The rain sounds like spit on the leaded-windows. Me and Connor are watching Lost-and-lonely rubbing up against baldy-Al; he's having none of it.

'I'm off for a Cleopatra,' he says, puts down his cue.

Lost-and-lonely shouts after him, 'You and your arse, they got issues.' She plonks herself at the bar, clinging to her empty glass.

The door opens, and it's like someone stuck the world on pause. In comes this guy, not in slow-motion, more like he's won a race with the wind. He's dressed smart, in a suit, but looks like an old hippy, long hair, beard down to his waist; then the world comes back.

Straight off, Connor blends into the wallpaper and I get this smell, like pickled onions in a hot room. The guy looks round the pub, flicks his eyes at me and Connor. Connor says after, all the blood in his veins froze.

The guy's eyes lock onto Lost-and-lonely, licking the rim of her glass. He walks up to her, legs all stiff, like he's not used to walking, sits down.

We're sitting behind, hear what they say. Did I tell you I got this memory thing? Not always. But sometimes, words get stuck in my head, like leeches.

'Dear lady,' the guy says. 'I am Forras.'

'Sounds foreign,' she says. 'Where you from?'

He smiles this slimy smile; Connor shivers, I see dead babies.

'Hell.'

'Know it well.'



He says nothing.

'Yep,' she says, 'met a few devils in my time. Bastard-cunts the lot of 'em.'

The Forras guy puts his hand on her knee and her face changes, like she sees summat we can't, like putting on glasses to see in the dark.

Baldy-AI comes back. 'Ey, pal. Shift.'

Forras turns, real slow, smiling that slimy smile, holds out his hand. Baldy-AI shakes it, gets the same look as Lost-and-lonely, sits down.

They get into this conversation about hell. Baldy-AI's been in Strangeways, tells the Forras guy that was Hell. Forras slimy-smiles, licks his lips like a cat with a rat up its jumper, starts on about hangings. Reels off names, one after the other, Michael Johnson the first to hang, James Inglis the quickest, Thom Davies, Doctor Ruxton, Mary Ann Britland the first woman to hang right up to the last woman, Louisa May Merrifield. Baldy-AI laps it up. Forras tells him he knows them all, all their names, all their crimes, meanwhile, Lost-and-lonely sits there, face like dripping wax.

Then Forras goes on about Satan; how he's not a bad bloke. 'You, Sir,' he says to AI. His voice black, smells like rotting fish. 'You are a good man, are you not?' AI looks like he's been asked about odd socks, but he nods. 'Then Sir, you must also understand evil.' He pulls his stool closer to AI, eyes like arrows. 'Man reaches the sanctuary of light by suffering the agonies of darkness.' AI's nodding like a dog on hot day. Lost-and-lonely's let go of her empty glass. He carries on; going on and on about all this great stuff the devil's done, how God gave birth to liberty with a feather from Satan's wings, the devil's wall in England, a bridge in Paris, how he's a friend of the lost, a victim of God, same as humans.

Connor looks at me. 'I got a bad, bad feeling, Glo-worm.' His breath is frozen, like winter, lips blue. I got the same feeling, like maggots in me belly. Every time the Forras guy spoke, I saw black dogs howling.

We glance over at the two Ronnies. Mrs Ronnie is crying, wiping her eyes with a bit of loo-roll. Mr Ronnie looks like he forgot where he put his pension book.

Connor's shivering; holding his hands under his armpits. And he's scared. He smells like rust and rain.

'That true, what he said, about the devil building that cloud bridge in Paris?'

'Dunno, Glo-worm. Wunta thought the devil was into building bridges.'

'He's shittin' me up, Connor,' I says. 'Let's get off.'

We gets up.

Dangerous Derek is gripping his pool cue, growls when we walk past.

Forras is talking about Satan giving mortals dreams and hopes, that Satan forces people to be evil so that people can be good. Acting like Satan's alright, like it's not his fault, like we should feel sorry for him. Lost-and-lonely and baldy-AI are gawping at him, like friggin' disciples, nodding, grinning like they can't show enough teeth

We pass by and the world slows down again. Forras spins round on the stool, smiles with hungry eyes.

Nods his head. Says, 'Connor. Gloria.' Licks his lips, tastes our names.

Connor's like ice, I see sky burning.

The world speeds up, like he never moved.

Me and Connor gets our arses out the door, don't look back.

Next time we're in the Smithy, we ask about Lost-and-lonely, baldy-AI, about the Forras guy. Derek said they left together, no-one's seen 'em since.

I don't care who he is, or where he's from. I got no sympathy for devils.



5 ESPERANTO - WINDOW ON A WIDER WORLD

by **Bill Chapman**

Bill with a group of Chinese (and one Spanish) friends at Odense, Denmark



AS A young man many years ago I wondered what life was like on the other side of the 'Iron Curtain' which then divided Europe. I had heard of Esperanto, the planned international language, and I learned it in 1967, beginning very soon to write to pen-friends in Poland, the then Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and so on. I have never regretted learning Esperanto. It has allowed me an insight into the lives of ordinary people in so many countries. I won't easily forget my first hesitant conversation with a foreigner in Esperanto, in Tours in France in 1968. Despite all the time I had spent on learning French, conversation in Esperanto flowed more easily.

Esperanto may not be perfect but it works. Indeed, the language has some remarkable practical benefits. Personally, I've made friends around the world through Esperanto that I would never have been able to communicate with otherwise. And then there's the Pasporta Servo, which provides free lodging and local information to younger Esperanto-speaking travellers in over 90 countries. Over recent years I have had guided tours of Toulouse, Copenhagen, Berlin, Douala (look it up!), Havana and Milan in this planned language. I have discussed philosophy with a Slovene poet, humour on television with a Bulgarian TV

producer. I've discussed what life was like in East Berlin before the wall came down, how to cook perfect spaghetti, the advantages and disadvantages of monarchy, retirement age and pensions. It's always interesting to go inside the homes of Esperanto speakers in other countries as it is to host Esperanto-speaking visitors here in Britain.

Esperanto hasn't yet gained the recognition it deserves. However, all things considered, it has actually done amazingly well. In nearly 125 years, with no big money behind it, Esperanto has managed to grow from the drawing-board project of Dr Zamenhof to a complete and living natural language with around two million speakers in over 120 countries and a rich literature and cosmopolitan culture. Esperanto has achieved this with little or no official backing and even bouts of persecution. It hasn't taken the world by storm - yet - but it's slowly but surely moving in that direction, with the Internet giving it a significant boost in recent years. We'll no doubt hear and see a lot more about Esperanto next year when the planned language reaches its 125th birthday.

Bill (twice!) addressing an international conference in Copenhagen, Denmark





What are the advantages of Esperanto?

Firstly, it is much easier to learn than other languages. The grammar and the spelling are both very regular. Esperanto makes a wide use of suffixes and prefixes to reduce considerably the number of words that the learner has to memorise. It is nevertheless a real language, enabling its speakers to express anything. There are even Esperanto poets.

Who speaks Esperanto?

People in many different countries do. It is a voluntary speech community. A wide variety of people are interested in Esperanto: lawyers, farmers, factory workers, teachers, civil servants, people who have a flair for languages and speak several, and people who are not gifted at languages at all, but who find that thanks to Esperanto they can become bilingual, and of course all the people in between.

How can I learn?

There are a lot of materials available for learning Esperanto. A good place to start is www.lernu.net.

There is a free introductory course available now from the Esperanto Association of Britain. Suitable for those who would like a quick taster, this course gives an overview of the language in twelve bite-sized portions. Once you have received the first lesson, simply return your answers. Your tutor will reply with guidance and the next lesson. Telephone 0845 230 1887 or send an email to eab@esperanto-gb.org.

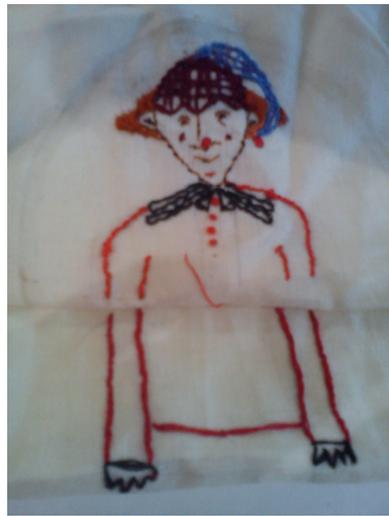
You certainly won't regret the time you spend on Esperanto, a very practical way to overcome language barriers.



7

Belle Vue

written and embroidered by
Rebecca Aimée Lanyon Willmott



ASTOUNDING catapults of soaring, sparkled aerialists, a trembling of the grounds where rosy faced children once rode elephants and the white faces of red nosed clowns have now dried and faded like the once magnificent menagerie gardens of Belle Vue.

The first announcement of the Belle Vue zoological gardens was a featured advertisement in a Guardian newspaper report in May, 1837 which informed the public of a new pleasure gardens "... including a large number of very beautiful birds, comprising parrots, perroquets, macaws, cockatoos, gold and silver pheasants, peacocks of different descriptions, swans, Canada geese, and various animals."

The Belle Vue extraordinaire began after entrepreneur John Jennison transformed his Jennison's Strawberry Garden public house, to which he had attached a pleasure garden of flowers, into a popular sight spectacle. This grew to contain not only floral delights but a fine collection of parrots, pheasants and macaws. A small admission charge was made to curious visitors on Sundays and bank holidays.

Jennison moved his burgeoning garden spectacle from Adswold, which would slowly expand to the grounds of Belle Vue. This small pleasure garden, which at one time was held in a shed, slowly transformed into a large scale zoological pleasure ground that delighted and drew in thousands of visitors a year. Over the years this then went on to house elephants, performing chimps, tigers and even lions. Also comprising the grounds of the gardens were fairground delights such as The Bobs and the thrilling Figure 8 Toboggan. Watercress sandwiches and teas for the elders were offered as a gentle alternative to enjoy as their children enjoyed the circus sights. It really was a place for the whole family, uniting the Jennison family work ethic.

Sadly the show could not go on. After numerous quips and petitions against the care of the animals and John Jennison furthering himself into inescapable debt, Jennison closed his gardens a few short years after opening. However, various other concerts, festivals and travelling circuses entertained Belle Vue to the late seventies and the prominent ringmaster George Lockhart brought the circus back to Belle Vue.

From my own research into Belle Vue, I had the great opportunity to explore some of Belle Vue's original artefacts at Chetham's Library, Manchester. These included a handwritten poem about Belle Vue written by founder John Jennison, and projector slides featuring pictures of elephants drinking out of ponds, trapeze artists soaring across the Big Top and the bustling grounds of the zoological gardens. My favourite collection was the faintly colourful and exciting circus programmes, most notably a commemorative edition celebrating the ring master George Lockhart's 80 years in the Ring.

The circus programme was from Belle Vue Manchester's 39th international celebration Circus souvenir programme of Dec 21st to 3rd Feb. George Lockhart had been celebrating his 60th birthday for the past 10 years as he so clearly put in his opening notes to the programme: "Who the heck has the time to blow out 87 candles?" And how could one carry a cake big enough to hold that many candles? If I ever saw anyone that could blow out 87 candles AND eat the cake big enough to hold that number



of candles, it would be George Lockhart. From the photocopied portrait of him in the Belle Vue circus programme, he could be neatly described as a weighty man with a constant wink to his left eye. The right side of his jaw chewed a 7 inch tobacco pipe. I presumed he was bald haired, but couldn't be quite sure as his top hat, which was tilted to the side, was firmly stuck to his egg shaped head. His ears stuck out profusely.

I was instructed to wear gloves to study these artefacts. "You can't touch the photos with your fingers as the oil from your fingertips lingers and smudges the pages," the long haired American librarian told me as she wagged her finger at me, but I found wearing gloves caused me to fumble clumsily through the pages, which occasionally bent their mustard edges.

Here are some of the circus performers I came across within the programmes:

"Good looking chap Otto Bertis, living on a knife's edge. Amaze as he balances hand polished crystal glasses perched precariously on the edge of a knife. Handsome is as handsome does. Awarded the International Artistes Cup in Prague for most astounding circus performer."

"Flick, the India Rubber Man. Bending over backwards is no problem for comedy contortionist Flick. Bending his way over to you from Hungary. Marvel at his INCREDIBLE AGILITY. You can't disagree with Flick's claim to be made out of rubber as queer as it sounds."

Now looking at Belle Vue what now stands in form of entertainment is a greyhound race course and a "Stunning" Showcase cinema, which Belle Vue attendee and one time elephant rider Julie Knowles believes "ruined the grounds of Belle Vue". It would now seem the circus has firmly left town. But I like to think that Manchester still holds tributes to what was an exhilarating and exciting time for the old and young residents of Belle Vue, and further afield. Stubborn Maharajah the elephant who walked from Edinburgh to Manchester in 10 days with his loyal keeper Lorenzo after destroying his claustrophobic carriage is now displayed on a plinth in Manchester museum. His tale is also told in a painting of Lorenzo and Maharajah at Manchester Art gallery, The Disputed Toll by Heywood Hardy. And what of the other performers of Belle Vue that graced the circus, such as the "Good looking chap Otto Bertis"? Maybe he is NOW astounding punters in a dirty bar in Salford with his magnificent knife throwing skills exchanged for top scores at darts. Perhaps Benny the dwarf clown is no longer signing autographs and cracking wise jokes but humouring children's parties.

Well we can only leave that to our own imagination and hope one day the circus will return to Belle Vue.



Glossary

Menagerie: A keeping of commonplace or exotic animals for spectacle.

Also see **The Belle Vue Story** by Robert Nicholls.



9

THE WRITTEN SKIN OF THE CITY



THE POLITICS, EMOTIONS AND COMPLICATIONS OF TYPOGRAPHY

by Nija Dalal

"Writing systems are political, and typography is just as rich a source of cultural insights as gastronomy." Otl Aicher

SOMETIME in the winter of 2010, I was waiting for a friend outside St. Ann's Church in the middle of Manchester's luxury shopping district. St. Ann's is one of Manchester's few city centre churches that still has some of its graveyard, and to pass the time, I read the gravestones. Thomas Deacon's is particularly interesting. It reads: "Here lie interred the remains...of Thomas Deacon, the greatest of Sinners and the most unworthy of primitive Bish-

ops, who died the 16th February 1753."

As I read the stone, thinking that this ought to be the most famous gravestone in the world, that this might be the only gravestone that pointedly insults the dead, at least from the 18th century, a man came and stood next to me. He might have been wondering what I had found to smile about on a gravestone. But he just asked me what I was looking at. I told him, and he smiled, too.

Then he told me he was a graphic designer, and that the text on the stone had been engraved in a typeface called Bodoni. Having gone to design school myself a few years ago, I was a little shocked and ashamed that I had not even considered the typeface. I recognise Bodoni when I see it on advertisements. But I had not thought about it being on graves. He went on to say that Bodoni was only designed about a century before, so St. Ann's was probably a fairly avant-garde church for its time, using such a new typeface. I think I vaguely agreed or nodded, still a little embarrassed for not noticing the typeface myself, and he said he had to run, but thanks for showing him the gravestone.

I didn't get his name, and his analysis of St. Ann's being particularly avant-garde was just speculation. But this interaction between two strangers on a city street started me thinking. About typefaces and the city. About the typography we see everywhere and what they might mean. What do the typefaces themselves say about the city that the words they are printed in do not?

In the modern city, words and letters are everywhere. A person cannot look around for more than a few seconds, if that, without seeing signs, information, advertisements and logos all involving text. Type is on tombstones¹, on shop windows, on buses and park gates, on university buildings and street signs. Every letter, every word in the urban textual landscape is either handwritten or written using a typeface.

In her seminal text *Thinking With Type*, Ellen Lupton famously wrote, "typography is what language looks like."² Typography, then, is a visual manifestation of language. Typography can also be considered to convey a tone of voice onto a piece of writing. Therefore, the choice of typeface can convey emotion and meaning in the same way voice can. The way that typefaces are used, read

¹Font Shop Blog: Unzipped. (2011). *Custom Font for Tombstone* by Janno Hahn [Online]. Available from: <http://www.fontshop.be/details.php?entry=457> [Accessed: 26 July 2011].

² Lupton, E. (2004). *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.



and engaged with is a social and cultural matter.

Though to many people the choice of a typeface may seem purely aesthetic, the politics of type have never been lost on design theorists, art historians or typographers. Just as artists have always been involved with politics, designers and typographers have similarly found themselves caught up in the whirlwinds of world change. Because typography affects not only how easily read a text is, but also allows us to quickly scan lines, typography also affects how we read. The political effects of this are enormous.

Urban space is composed of buildings, people, roads, fences, tunnels, bridges and hundreds of other things. Can typographic diversity in a city reflect the nature of its neighbourhoods, inhabitants and those it is intended to serve? The political qualities of typography that I consider are a) how typography contributes to the identity of Manchester and b) how typography reflects the politics and the sociality of a place. For this research, I worked with six local designers to get their views on how type and the city interact.³

Type and Identity: City Branding, Privatisation and Politics

Between 1927 and 1930, Eric Gill designed London's Underground Logo and later developed a typeface from it called Gill Sans, which is used today on all BBC collateral.⁴ The London Underground, in some ways, has created a typographic identity for the city, an instantly recognisable lettered synecdoche, representing not only itself, but the whole tube system, and more generally, the logo as a whole is often used on T-shirts to represent the whole of the city.

Increasingly, cities are seen as "place-brands" that must promote themselves to the outside world, in order to attract companies that will provide desirable jobs and to attract the people that will work and consume and keep a city's economy running.⁵ Cities are taking on "corporate" identities that have as much to do with promotional design as with job

creation. Designers around the world are arguing for their cities to take on some sort of coherent branding, design and typographic strategy to unify the city.⁶ All cities want to be considered "world cities," which are cities that "serve as banking and financial centers, administrative headquarters, [and] centers of ideological control."⁷ These world cities hold immense power, as they are core junctions of the world economy and can draw the best and the brightest of all fields. Manchester likewise seeks to position itself as a place of innovation, excellence, and creativity, in order to also draw the best and the brightest.⁸

Manchester has struggled to define itself as a city since the decline of the industrial sectors that really made Manchester into the most important place on earth during the early 19th century, says Peter Saville. In the 1970s and 80s, he used Modernist typographic principles to design pop record covers that brought the sound and look of Factory, and thereby Manchester, to the world. He was brought in as Creative Director of the city after the 2002 Commonwealth Games were held in Manchester, primarily to examine what Manchester's "place-brand" was. As he believes, "The Factory look [became] very important in the look of Manchester." By the end of the Factory era in Manchester, Saville argues that even First Direct Bank

6 Clark, J. (2006). *The Toronto Typographic Charter* [Online]. Available from: <http://joeclark.org/design/charter/> [Accessed: 26 July 2011]

7 Friedmann, J. & Wolff, G. (1982). World City Formation: An Agenda for Research and Action. In: Brenner, N. & Keil, R. (eds). *The Global Cities Reader*. London: Routledge.

8 Manchester City Council (MCC). (2002). *The Cultural Strategy* [Online]. Available from: http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/510/the_cultural_strategy [Accessed 26 August 2011].

Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER). (2009). *MIER Review* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.manchester-review.org.uk> [Accessed 26 August 2011].

3 All the designers have been anonymised.

4 Eliason, C. (no date). *Face the Nation: How National Identity Shaped Modern Typeface Design* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.sthomas.edu/facethenation/> [Accessed: 26 July 2011].

5 Young, C., Diep M. & Drabble, S. (2006). Living with Difference? The 'Cosmopolitan City' and Urban Reimagining in Manchester, UK. *Urban Studies*. 43(10): 1687-1714.

Hall, P.G. (1998). *Cities in Civilisation*. London: Pantheon Books.

Landry, C. (2008). *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Earthscan/James & James.



was using Factory-style typography (Interview with author).

In the blocky typefaces seen on Manchester's old wool stores, Saville sees the "true industrial genuine reality" of Manchester during the Industrial Age. And in the ornamented engravings on the Manchester Art Gallery, Saville sees the Victorian age's aspirations. Today, in the corporate signage of modern capitalism, Saville sees a removal of



the personal from public space and from capitalism. Interestingly, in its early days, industrial capitalism was seen as impersonal and dehumanising, with its reliance on masses of slum-dwelling workers. According to him, the changing face of capitalism is also written in the changing typefaces of the city.

"If you look at all of the stuff that is written around the core of the city, you'll see the truly industrial, genuine, reality of the place, and you'll see Victorian aspirational values epitomised...For the fathers who made this place, it was more personal than it is now...You'll see personality in the Victorian marks. Because it was personal. Because it was a man. Or a family. And the buildings and the architectural language and typography of the place was personal, a manifestation of personal values, personal fortunes that were made. When they built a building, it represented them and their values. Or when they collectively as a city put up an art gallery or town hall, it was personal.

"What we experience now is very little personal wealth. Corporations and multinationals are not personal. Barclays or AMEX or...they just bring a blanket corporate signage. A pre-determined multi-sectoral generic. Not personal. Not representing anybody's values except perceived demographic of the audience. Nothing personal."

The importance of corporations, private interests,

and political/economic circumstances in the public space should not be underestimated. In recent decades, cities have seen economic restructuring reflecting a neoliberal shift toward minimal state governance.⁹ Increasingly, public services are being provided by the private sector, and provided for a profit, not exclusively for the public good. For example, the former British Rail services are now run by a multitude of private companies such as Virgin and First. More and more services are seen as not being within the government's purview. The move toward increasing privatisation is part of the visual and textual landscape, not only in terms of colour change, but also in terms of typography. Manchester's bus services are now run by at least five different private companies, and every one of these companies uses a different typeface and logo.

Even if these public services were still run by the city council, and still had a coherent identity within themselves, city signage will always be chaotic, due to the inevitable clash between "top-down" and "bottom-up" signage. While all city council material could be printed in a certain face, private businesses would follow their own branding strategies. LM and HP were discussing whether they feel Manchester has a typographic identity, and they concluded that it did not, that it was too diverse. Immediately after coming to this conclusion, HP drew a connection between that very cacophony to a political source, saying, "I think society's made up now of...the economy's just like the free market, any one place is governed by individuals meeting desires. Pursuing their own goals. The culmination of that makes a city."

If the striving towards one's own goals, if many individuals meeting their own desires, is what makes a city, then the typography in that city should necessarily look like many different individuals working toward their different ends. Typographically, it should reflect that urban public space is a place, as Doreen Massey describes it, of conflict, individual and varied trajectories colliding into each other, of contested spaces.¹⁰ The typography, in fact, does not just reflect the conflict and contestation in the city; it is a part of that contestation.

Other participants saw typography representing "the mood" of the era. OJ stated that fonts are becoming more and more stripped back, with less ornamentation than in the early 2000s, and believes this stripping back of ornamentation on

9 Keith, M. (2005). *After the Cosmopolitan? Multicultural cities and the Future of Racism*. New York: Routledge.

10 Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: Sage.

letters relates to the recession. Government austerity can be seen in austere signage.



Type and Identity: City Incoherence Reflects Sociality

What I found interesting was that though all the designers agreed that Manchester's typography is incoherent, they all also felt that the corporate High Street areas were all very lacking in personality. They nearly all commented on the overuse of Helvetica, implying an underlying, possibly unintentional, coherence on the part of the many corporations that dominate certain parts of the city.

Though many participants saw an encroaching corporate influence over the typographic landscape, the same people also saw the city's social diversity positively reflected in Manchester's textual landscape. Just a few blocks away from Market Street, LM quickly noticed a different kind of typography altogether: "That's interesting, you come off the big corporate high street, and you've got this big hotch-potch, there's a lot more character to it. On the high street, you have one dominating level, whereas this Martial Arts Centre has three levels. Handpainted Van Deng sign, Nail and Beauty sign right above it."

LM said that in a city as diverse as Manchester's, coherent typography might be worrying, because it would not be reflecting the diversity of the population: "Yeah, the diversity of [type]faces represents the diversity of people in the city. Different ethnic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds. I think all that is what makes the city. It'd be a shame for one typeface to...dominate," he said.

Thus, the typographic variation represents the political and economic free-market ideology, while simultaneously representing social diversity. And HP agreed, remarking, "You've got all the cultural differences in the city, and that needs to be reflected. And I don't think you could do that with one [typeface]...One face won't do it, but the cacophony of typefaces does do it. Because people make cities, don't they? Without people, it's just a bunch of buildings and, you know, some poorly designed traffic systems."

Type and Identity: Reflecting a subculture?

The Northern Quarter of Manchester is a hub for independent shops, design agencies, arts non-profits, vintage stores and quirky restaurants. It is Manchester's base for the "cultural industries,"¹¹ which are seen by some to be a significant source of urban economic resurrection in post-industrial cities like Manchester (Hall 1998, Landry 2008). The cultural industries rely on creativity, design and information.

During walking interviews, participants could not help but remark on the special blue-and-white tiled street signs that demarcate the Northern Quarter. OJ remarked, "In the Northern Quarter, obviously, the signage defines the area, because it's supposed to be a cultural hotpot, an epicenter." OJ was a member of the Northern Quarter committee that met in 2000 and decided to use the street signs in the quarter to "set this area out from anywhere else". They were looking for "small things they could do to define an area". Urban areas that want to demarcate themselves as separate or different from the city may use typographic signs to define a cultural quarter, especially when it is organised on no ethnic or lifestyle principles apart from being the creative or cultural centre of the city.

Though designers form a small group within society that work with typography every day, they are not the only people affected by typography. We are all affected by typography, everyday. Typography is clearly an important part of the social and political landscape that covers urban areas, and increasingly covers suburban and rural areas, but crucially, typography is an important part of the emotional landscape as well. We all interact with it everyday, the written skin of the city and town.

This research was conducted as part of a larger thesis on typography and urban space. I have included here only a few highlights of my findings.

¹¹ Keith, M. (2005). *After the Cosmopolitan? Multicultural cities and the Future of Racism*. New York: Routledge.



How many quarters make a city? Clue: It's not four



by **Natalie Bradbury**

BIRMINGHAM has seven designated city quarters¹, Sheffield eleven². In Manchester, the well-known Northern Quarter (and slightly less well-known Green, Civic and Millennium Quarters) will soon be joined by a co-operative quarter (although the Co-op Group hopes the public will take to its official name, NOMA, speculated to be a reference to its geographical position just north of the city centre³) and another, a Medieval Quarter, is proposed. Add to that other well-defined areas of the city which are not officially designated quarters, but could be seen as such – Canal Street and surrounding Gay Village as a gay quarter, Chinatown as a Chinese quarter, a university quarter around Oxford Road – and there are a lot of slices that make up Manchester.

There is a bewildering array of terms for dividing up the city into convenient chunks: corridors (the area around the universities and university hospitals is packaged as the corridor, Manchester's "economic and knowledge powerhouse"⁴), gateways (Southern Gateway, a new residential and business district in an area which had suffered from "a lack of identity and economic purpose"⁵),

an urban village (Ancoats), the UK's first Urban Heritage Park⁶ (Castlefield) and even a curry mile. The language and concepts used to describe quarters is similar to that applied to these other corridors, gateways and urban villages, and they share many of the same attributes and aims – rejuvenating an area through mixed-use developments that will attract business and investment to the city and help raise its profile beyond the city boundaries.

Quarters often reflect the aspirations of a place, and are used as a way of conveniently packaging and marketing the different types of activities that make up the diverse life of a town or city. If a town or city has a well-defined creative quarter, for example, a hub of cultural industries, it will not just attract creative people but will also catch the eye of tourists and shoppers eager for an alternative retail or leisure experience. This provides customers for other facilities such as hotels and transport, and therefore acts as an incentive for business investment. Likewise, a heritage or tourist quarter puts a city's attractions conveniently into one place for visitors – and attracts the sort of retail or dining experiences that go with it.

The use of quarters to define areas of a city is nothing new. Think of Paris's quartiers – meaning living quarters. Cities have long had designated areas based on ethnicity – Jewish Quarters being a widespread example – and Birmingham, to name just one city, still has Irish and Chinese Quarters. Other quarters grew up around shared characteristics uniting the people who lived or worked in an area, such as speaking a common language (Latin around the universities in Paris' famous Latin Quarter, during the Middle Ages, a name which struck).

Other quarters were named after the industry that was prevalent in an area, for example Birmingham's renowned Jewellery Quarter, catchily marketed as 'Birmingham's Gem'⁷. Or they may simply be descriptive of what's there, like Altrincham's Market Quarter, or what goes on there, such as Leicester's Business Quarter. Others are defined in geographical terms, including Manchester's Northern Quarter, which also goes by the postcode N4, or based on obvious physical attributes, such as Stoke-on-Trent's Canal Quarter. Others reflect the type of people the area has come to attract, or wishes to attract, or tells members of a certain demographic they will find likeminded people there – for example Liverpool's Gay Quarter. They can also be a tool in conservation, if a number of note-

1 For a list of the seven city quarters outlined in Birmingham's Big City Plan see <http://bigcityplan.birmingham.gov.uk/tag/seven-quarters/>

2 For a list of Sheffield's eleven quarters see http://sccplugins.sheffield.gov.uk/urban_design/quarters_city_centre.htm

3 See <http://www.manchesterconfidential.co.uk/News/NOMAeh-where>

4 For more on Corridor Manchester visit <http://www.corridormanchester.com/>

5 See <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/>

business/s/1008378_business_district_goahead

6 See http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/972/castlefield_conservation_area/2

7 See <http://www.jewelleryquarter.net/>



worthy buildings are clustered in one area.

Manchester's Civic Quarter, outlined in 2009's *Civic Quarter – Manchester Central Regeneration Framework*, aims to use Manchester's heritage, including some of its key buildings – the town hall, central library, Manchester central and St Peter's Square – as well as its transport links and infrastructure, to attract business and institutions to Manchester in "a new meeting place in the city centre". Its goal is to extend both the city centre and business district and: "Bring together the values of civic pride and civic leadership, with international trade and commerce, world class innovation and research, at the heart of an entrepreneurial community."⁸ The area also links the various other districts that comprise the city centre: Spinningfields, the corridor etc.

The proliferation of quarters all over the country today, some based on a logical connection with an area and some more tenuous, often coincides with redevelopment and regeneration. Manchester's Millennium Quarter (there are also Millennium Quarters/Villages in London) refers to the redevelopment that took place around Manchester Cathedral after the area was destroyed by an IRA bomb in 1996. Its name reflects that rebuilding took place in the lead-up to the Millennium as well as the fact it incorporated one of a number of national projects funded by the National Lottery through the Millennium Commission⁹.

Typically, quarters incorporate new or improved public space (Cathedral Gardens, check), retail (Selfridges, Harvey Nichols, the Triangle, check), leisure (the Printworks, check) and residential opportunities. Often, refurbishments of traditional buildings sit alongside eye-catching new builds. The Millennium Quarter acknowledges Manchester's past, containing some of its most historic buildings (the cathedral, Chetham's Library), but it also contains new flagship development such as Ian Simpson's Urbis building, which was conceived as a museum for the city.

Soon, the area could have another quarter, currently dubbed the Medieval Quarter¹⁰ by local media, that will straddle two city centres, linking to the

Greengate development in Salford. Plans include a new cathedral square, as well as a redesign of Cathedral Gardens, incorporating new memorials to the anti-slavery movement, the suffragette movement and firefighters. A statue of Oliver Cromwell, currently in exile in the suburbs, could also be moved there.



Just down the road is NOMA – colloquially dubbed the Co-op Quarter to reflect the fact that the Manchester-based Co-operative Group is redeveloping a huge, 20 acre site¹¹ near its new headquarters. The £1 billion plan, funded by the Co-operative Group with some investment from the Council, will see the makeup of the area fundamentally changed to attract new up-market shops, offices and cafes, potentially generating thousands of jobs. New public spaces will be created and the inner ring road will be moved. The Co-operative Group will be hoping that the quarter can be seen as a physical manifestation of its values, which include commitment to community and environment.

Quarters can create a sense of place. Put a name on it and people can feel an affinity with a place and

¹¹ See <http://www.noma53.com/> for more information on what's proposed.

⁸ Download the *Civic Quarter – Manchester Central Regeneration Framework* from [http://www.corridormanchester.com/_filestore/corridormanchester/civicquarter-manchester-central-regeneration-framework-1-pdf/original/CivicQuarter_Manchester_Central_Regeneration_Framework\[1\].pdf](http://www.corridormanchester.com/_filestore/corridormanchester/civicquarter-manchester-central-regeneration-framework-1-pdf/original/CivicQuarter_Manchester_Central_Regeneration_Framework[1].pdf)

⁹ For more on Millennium Projects, including Urbis, see <http://www.millennium.gov.uk/cgi-site/awards.cgi?action=detail&id=87&t=2>

¹⁰ See http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1435585_cromwells-new-stand-plan-for-statue-to-move-to-manchesters-new-medieval-quarter



identify with the characteristics associated with it. As people are increasingly encouraged to live in city centres as opposed to the suburbs, residing within a distinct quarter makes it a lot easier to see yourself as part of a neighbourhood. When asked where you're from you might no longer have an area such as 'Chorlton' or 'Withington' on the tip of your tongue, but being able to say you live in 'the Northern Quarter' or 'the Green Quarter' helps whoever you are talking to identify a more specific locale than the more general term 'city centre', which encompasses a wider geo-

town centre strategy¹³ works with "the inherent and distinct uses of existing areas" – including the cathedral quarter, which has "one of the most established identities in the town centre" – to "encourage a unique sense of place". Heritage quarters are being established in towns and cities including Gravesend and around the harbour in Sunderland. University quarters include Stoke-on-Trent's catchily-named UniQ, a partnership between local education providers that aims to raise aspiration and increase skills in the town.

One of the most prominent types of quarters is the creative, or cultural quarter, which can be found in towns and cities around the country including: Southampton, Brighton, Folkestone, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leicester, Oldham, Liverpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Doncaster, Boston, Colchester, Leamington Spa, Wolverhampton, Bedford, Bury and Warrington¹⁴. The Local Government (LG) Improvement and Development Group put together a guide to cultural quarters, which it defines as "an existing cluster of creative and cultural industries, or the desire to create a cluster of creative and cultural industries"¹⁵. Quarters give creative people the opportunity to "work, live and socialise in one environment", and the LG foresees the associated networks and facilities growing up around them. In Folkestone, Kent, the Creative Quarter was initiated by a charitable Trust buying, refurbishing and letting empty properties to creative businesses and artists, supplemented by events such as a book festival and art triennial¹⁶.

Whilst there is debate over how desirable it is to set out to create a creative area, as opposed to letting it evolve naturally over time (and there are also concerns about the knock-on effects of 'gentrifying' an area, including pricing out its previous

13 See <http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.2472> for more information on the town centre strategy.

14 I came across this map of the UK's cultural quarters via a blog post on taCity (<http://tacity.co.uk/2011/03/01/the-uks-cultural-quarters/>): <http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=206639182478297374758.00049c3bf7eb53f1c8a72&z=7>

15 See <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=11224715>

16 See <http://www.creativequarterfolkestone.com/>



graphical area.

The advantages of this for developers are clear: from 2004 onwards, the Green Quarter was created just outside of Manchester City Centre, referring to the largest ever housing development in the city. Developers Crosby Homes promised a "self-contained urban oasis, combining 10 cutting-edge apartment blocks, business accommodation, hotel, leisure and retail facilities set against the precious commodity of lush landscaped open green space". Sold on its close proximity to Victoria Station, the MEN Arena, the Printworks and leisure and retail opportunities, the developers highlight "the convenience factor of a lifestyle on their doorstep". They tempt: "Are you addicted to city living, yet yearn for more than a splash of greenery? Do you enjoy the buzz of the urban social whirl and the spark of metropolitan business, but would relish having a haven to escape to?"¹² The green part? It was envisaged that more than half of the area would be public open space with lawns, tree-lined walkways, water features and landscaping.

A common example of the adoption of quarters as a regeneration strategy can be seen in cathedral quarters, which are found in towns and cities around the country, including Sheffield. Blackburn's

12 Visit the Green Quarter's web page at http://crosbylendlease.co.uk/?u=48_Welcome%2Bto%2Bgreenquarter



occupants), Manchester's Northern Quarter, which was one of the first cultural quarters in the country along with Sheffield's Creative Industries Quarter, is seen as a successful example of what a cultural quarter should be and do. As the LG site observes, "the most successful examples of cultural quarters usually had some longstanding cultural activity or venues". The Northern Quarter became established as an alternative to mainstream shops such as the Arndale Centre, its lower rents attracting a mix of cafes, bars, vintage clothes shops, independent book shops, record shops and galleries. It also has a distinctive nightlife, with a reputation for alternative gigs and club nights. Its proximity to the city centre shops, as well as transport interchanges such as Shudehill and Piccadilly, means the Northern Quarter is described in the *Northern Quarter Development Framework Report* of 2003 as: "A key piece in the city centre jigsaw, an area different in character and function to any other part of the city centre and of great strategic importance to Manchester as a city of distinctive quarters."¹⁷

Increased investment and focus on the Northern Quarter as an area came about after Manchester City Council commissioned a Northern Quarter Regeneration Strategy in the mid-nineties. This set out a vision for a mixed-use area, including in-
17 Northern Quarter Development Framework Report, 2003



creased residential space, as the Northern Quarter's role shifted from housing traditional industries such as textile manufacture to incubating new creative industries. The Northern Quarter Association was formed, a voluntary body comprising residents, representatives of trade and users of the area, and various environmental changes were made such as commissioning public art to make clear the area's identity as a cultural hot-spot. Around a decade later, the *Northern Quarter Development Framework Report* observed: "The individuality of the N4 remains – it is not currently a 'corporate' location, a place for large firms or for retail or leisure chains. It is the place for the independent sector, where residents of Manchester and visitors can buy high quality, unusual products and soak up the atmosphere of a truly 'working quarter'."¹⁸

Councils are honing in on quarters and creating visions and plans for areas at postcode level, but quarters are part of a bigger strategy to put cities like Manchester on the world-map. Ensuring certain quarters cover specific functions ensures that Manchester is seen to possess everything you would expect to find in a world city. The *Northern Quarter Development Framework Report* explicitly states: "This non mainstream offer is important for any 'global' city."¹⁹

Cities change and evolve up over time. The name 'Northern Quarter' entered popular use because it referred to an area which already had a distinct identity and role in the city. Few people outside those who live in the Green Quarter refer to it as such, and it remains to be seen whether the other quarters, or even the name NOMA, will enter popular conversation as place-markers.



¹⁸ Northern Quarter Development Framework Report, 2003

¹⁹ Northern Quarter Development Framework Report, 2003



Estate Agent

Good Day my name's Ray, I'll be showing you round
Reach out, press the flesh and I'll take my pound.
Let's start on the ground.

I don't want a "property", just a home
Cozy, warm, left alone
My name's Mrs Hope if you wanted to know
Does he know this place is a bungalow ?

So we'll start in the Kitchen. This is a sink.
This is a Stove. Are you buying do you think?
Well-priced to sell. We won't have to beg.
It's just been reduced to an arm and a leg.

Was that the Kitchen? All I saw
Was a shirt, a tie, an ego. A door.
Dragged through the dining room, pushed through the lounge.
He can't find the stairs. He's looking around.

A bedroom's a bedroom. What can I say?
Go upstairs if you wish but I ain't got all day.
More places to meet more people to buy
C'mon we take Visa. Give it a try.

Was there a garden? Nobody knows.
It's freehold. It's Mains gas I guess. I suppose.
Why would I ask him? He hasn't a clue.
If they didn't sell houses what would they do?

She has to pay up. I can't let it slide.
Car's on HP. Job's on the line.
In debt up to eyeballs. End of the show.
Mrs, lend me a tenner before you go.

Cyrus Amini



THESE beans are delicious as part of a breakfast or on toast or anywhere. They are very quick, cheap and tasty! Or, as the oven is on it's good to put some jacket potatoes in to cook at the same time.

Serves 4 to 8 (good for a crowd!)

Ingredients:

3 drained cans of beans (haricot, cannellini, borlotti – whatever takes your fancy)
1 can of chopped tomatoes
1 onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, crushed
1 heaped tablespoon of brown sugar
2 flat tablespoons of hot smoked paprika
1 rounded teaspoon of diced dried chipoltes

Pre heat oven to gas 3 (160 degrees C)

In a large stock pot soften the chopped onion in a little vegetable oil for 5 minutes.

Added the crushed garlic and cook for another 5 minutes.

Add the sugar, paprika and chipoltes.

Add the tomatoes.

Add the beans.

Bring to the boil.

Put in the oven and cook, uncovered, for a couple of hours stirring every half an hour or so.



This is almost completely tweakable: add some more sugar if you tooth is a little sweet, leave out the garlic if you want or vary the type and quantity of chilli to suit your taste. A couple of drops of liquid smoke are a tasty addition if you have any. It's only the ratio of beans to tomatoes that I have settled on.

Portions can be frozen and defrosted and reheated at a later date.





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Good things happening soon

Tuesday November 1, *Float Riverer*, the Ducie Bridge. Manchester's premier boy-girl rock duo with support from Charlene Darling and Sex Hands.

Tuesday November 1 and following Tuesdays, *Tuesday Talks*, Whitworth Art Gallery, 11am. Free talks by a range of people drawn from the art world, curated by Professor Pavel Buchler. Make sure to pop into the Dark Matters exhibition while you're there to see Brass Art's installation among other works, which include comprise part of Asia Triennial Manchester.

Saturday November 5, *Air Pressure*, Whitworth Art Gallery. Multi-media installation contrasting international air travel with traditional farming life in Japan, part of Asian Triennial Manchester. (runs until February 12)

Bonfire night, various locations. The Shrieking Violet recommends getting the tram to Heaton Park, standing by the big bonfire and watching the fireworks go off all around, and warming up with a cup of black peas from a stall in the big funfair.

Sunday November 6, *Loiters Resistance Movement* psychoeographic walk around Manchester. (see www.nowhere-fest.blogspot.com for meeting place and time.) (monthly)

Victoria Baths open day. Manchester's water palace throws its doors open with guided tours and activities, including a performance by Abney Orchestra. (last of the year)

Wednesdays 9, 16 and 30 November, *Invisible Histories*, Working Class Movement Library, Salford, 2pm. The Working Class Movement Library is a must visit for anyone interested in social, radical and labour history, and is offering a series of free talks encompassing topics from the Prestwich asylum to radical

gardening. Other events include an exhibition on the News International dispute 25 years on (November 18-24) and Strawberry Thieves Choir (November 25).

Wednesday November 9 and following Wednesdays, *4th Floor Film Night*, Hotspur House, 7pm. Manchester Municipal Design Corporation presents a varied programme of free film nights in their creative space the fourth floor of a former printing building. (See <http://thefourthfloor.tumblr.com> for listings) (weekly)

Thursday November 10, *We Are the Night*, Islington Mill, Salford. Night of noisy and experimental music featuring Slowcoaches, Stellar Caprice, Herb Diamante, Womb, Three Dimensional Tanx and Gnod, followed by a disco.

Stephen Malkmus, the Ritz. Former Pavement frontman with support from Californian sunshine pop Girls and Leeds' finest, Spectrals. A must-see for lovers of smart, classic indie-rock-pop.

Friday November 11, *The Quiet Loner, The Tao of Steve*, Briton's Protection. Night of folk and alt-country with live singers and DJ set from Morag Rose.

The Pixies Disco, Star & Garter. Pixies-based night of late '80s and '90s indie rock. (monthly)

Saturday November 12, *The Hollywood of the North coach trip*, Cornerhouse. Local film historian and personality CP Lee leads a guided coach tour of Manchester's film locations and the former homes of the stars, followed by a screening of George Formby's first film, *Boots! Boots!*. The City on Screen season also includes a screening of the Shrieking Violet's favourite film, *Taste of Honey* (November 30), a must-see. Other November Cornerhouse highlights include Tony Hancock's *The Rebel* (Novem-

ber 24) and *The Deep Blue Sea*, Terence Davies' new film, based on a Terence Rattigan play (from November 25).

Underachievers Please Try Harder, Roadhouse. Classic indie disco with live bands Young British Artists and Young*Husband. (twice monthly)

Wednesday November 16, *Victoria Baths Swimming Club*, Levenshulme Baths, 7pm. Friends of Victoria Baths swim in another Edwardian pool, which celebrated its 80th birthday in June. Pay by donation. (monthly)

Thursday November 17, *Bos Angeles*, Trof Fallowfield. Underachievers Please Try Harder team up with Now Wave to present Boscombe's Bos Angeles with support from Fear of Men and a Pigeon Post DJ set.

Friday November 18, *Comfortable on a Tightrope 7th birthday party*, Kraak Gallery. Alt-rock extravaganza featuring the Babies, C.O.A.T, Sex Hands, Doffinz, Waiters, Former Bullies and Float Riverer.

Besnard Lakes, Deaf Institute. Canadian swirl-pop.

Sunday November 20, *The Fall. Royal Exchange*. See Mark E Smith in one of Manchester's most historic venues, and hope he's in a good mood!

Saturday November 24, *Deas and Denton, Birchall/Cheetham Duo*, the Ducie Bridge. Night of experimental and improvised music.

Friday November 25, *Underachievers Please Try Harder*, Roadhouse. Classic indie disco with guest DJ sets from Pat Nevin and Dan Feeney of Pull Yourself Together. (twice monthly)

Wednesday November 30, *Thurston Moore*, the Ritz. Noisy Sonic Youth man.