

# BARGAIN BIN DREAMS

Flicking through a bunch of small-label 45s from the '70s and '80s in a record shop in Huddersfield, MARK HODKINSON found himself wondering what happened to the people who made them. Each had once been the pinnacle of somebody's hopes and dreams. What happened next? Did their number come up? Was this a brief fling with the fickle mistress before coming sharply to one's senses or was it the beginning of a long, painful affair? Stepping through this vinyl portal to the past and employing the full armoury of web search tools, he found failure and success, cynicism and hope, life and death.



**CRY** Sympathy b/w Policeman Blues (1978)

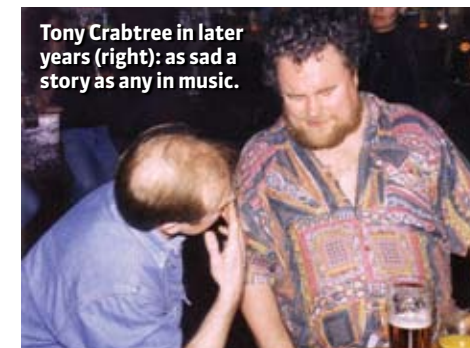


PUNK FAMOUSLY ADVANCED a scorched-earth policy. Almost overnight, swathes of musicians in bell-bottomed trousers strumming plaintively on acoustic guitars were considered passé. While history has largely viewed this as vital cultural regeneration, it dealt a harsh blow to those caught on the wrong side of the divide, such as Tony Crabtree. Left blind from a rare childhood illness, Crabtree, the son of a tyre-fitter, attended the Royal National College for

the Blind in Shrewsbury, where he discovered a gift for piano tuning. As a teenager in the early '70s he formed a trio called Nirvana (no relation to the two famous namesakes) and his note-perfect renditions of Jimi Hendrix guitar solos earned the band a following on the Manchester pub circuit.

Crabtree signed a 20-year management deal with a local car salesman – such absurd arrangements were not uncommon in the 1970s – and was encouraged to sack his band, which included half-brother Carl on bass. The new line-up was re-named Cry, the music was softened and a deal secured with Virgin Records for a huge £37,000 advance. The cash was frittered away on musical equipment, producers and various aborted recording sessions. It was all in vain because, on signing the Sex Pistols, Virgin held a coup and jettisoned the long-haired, earnest portion of its roster, including Crabtree.

His career and life thereafter slipped away. He drank heavily, putting on weight, and



became estranged from his on-off partner of 25 years, Jacqueline. A rare high point was a year playing keyboards with a reunited Tractor in 1980. "It was always frustrating," said Chris Hewitt, his former manager. "Tony was dogged by insecurity all his life. He'd sell all his stuff, come back to the business, and then leave again."

In other periods of good health he played in piano bars, including a few in Spain. He was also contracted for a time to tune hired-in pianos at the Hacienda Club in Manchester. In later life he became a heroin user and was often seen down-at-heel around his hometown of Rochdale, where he died in July 2005, aged 55.

● **Thank you for the music?** Faithful rendition of the Rare Bird slowie.

(Left) The scuffed vinyl that told heroic stories of small-stage adventure: one ex-band member took up big-game fishing in Thailand, another's a law professor, another a drummer at a leisure resort in Hopton-on-Sea.

**TENNIS SHOES** (Do The) Medium Wave b/w Rolf Is Stranger Than Richard/ So Large (1978)



NINE MEMBERS OF TENNIS shoes stare out from the back of their single, all beards and big glasses. They may look like escapees from a social workers' convention but core members John Bayley and Ken Dampier were in advertising. They formed at Christmas 1976 and during a three-year lifespan played more than 200 shows on London's pub circuit. As tracks such as *Hank Marvin's Plectrum* and *4th Form Bullies* suggest, they did not take themselves too seriously. "If you didn't like the music it was still worth coming along to watch blokes in tennis shorts on the same stage as girls in black haute-couture lingerie," said Bayley.

The single had a specific aim. "We decided it was time we had our own dance craze and thought it would be suitably bizarre if it was based around the iconic wrist action of our dear monarch on ceremonial occasions," said Bayley. "We wrote it, as always, in our office on a battered guitar when we should have been dreaming up adverts." It was B-listed on Radio 1 and ensnared interest from the American producer and writer of several hits for The Monkees, Tommy Boyce. He brought Davy Jones to a rehearsal in the band's hometown of Penge, south-east London. "I was totally thrown by this as I had been a Monkees fan when I was about ten," said Beverley Glick, one of the band's two female singers with Fiona Imlah.

A close encounter with a major label saw them play at the opening night of Richard Branson's Venue in Victoria, London in 1978. Both Branson and his protégé Mike Oldfield were in fancy dress, dancing at the front of the stage in nappies. "They were trying to grope my leg," said Glick. "Pete [keyboardist] was my boyfriend at the time and kicked them away with his Doc Martens, not realising who they were."

The band's final concert was at the University of Kent in February 1980. Glick later adopted the pseudonym Betty Page and wrote for *Sounds* before becoming editor of *Record Mirror* in the early 1980s. She spent a period at the *NME* and now works chiefly for the *Telegraph*. She still treasures a copy of the single that was given to Garry Bushell of *Sounds* to review. Across the cover he scrawled: "Penge's answer to Blondie". Guitarist Colin Minchin returned to the BBC, where he had been a film editor, to work ►



mainly on arts and music documentaries. Most recently he did the three-part *Imagine* series on guitars with Alan Yentob. Stewart Booth, singer, has his own company selling die-cast model vehicles.

Ken Dampier, whose quirky vision informed Tennis Shoes, died in 2005, just a few months after his 50th birthday. Peter Hornsby, a quantity surveyor, died in the same year of lung cancer.

[www.tennis-shoes.co.uk](http://www.tennis-shoes.co.uk)

● **Thank you for the music?** Stop-start post-punk. Defiantly silly.

**BRENDAN KIDULIS & THE STROLL**  
**Rusty Love b/w One First Kiss (1980)**



CASSETTE TAPES WERE viewed as runty little items by the music business, with no real value. Fasten your music to a piece of plastic, however, and it was suddenly worthy of stringent critique. Brendan Kidulis discovered this when he ventured forth from playing acoustic slots at a local bistro in Nottingham to pressing his own single. “The *Record Mirror* reviewer grouped it with three others and said that these four records were among the worst he’d ever heard, singling me out as someone who couldn’t hold a note,” he said. “I was a bit crestfallen at the restaurant that night.”

Kidulis had made the record at the suggestion of his boss, Adam Gray, who paid him £7 a night to do the washing-up or £9 if he sang and played guitar. The song was recorded at Pathway Studios in north London, where the likes of The Police, Squeeze and Madness had done early recordings. Mike Finesilver, the studio owner and ex-member of The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, co-produced.

“I hired a record plugger,” said Kidulis. “I think he got us a play on Terry Wogan’s radio show. It takes a lot of money to properly promote a record, which I didn’t have. At that time there were about 110 singles released every week, most of which sank without a trace.” The *Record Mirror* reviewer pointed out that Kidulis’s voice had a “wobble”. “Funny thing is, that wobble is quite hard to do. I have a fan who



requests this number, after having got a copy from eBay. If I don’t do the wobble, she complains. It’s best done spontaneously, though, like all wobbling.”

Kidulis, now based in Germany, is still a professional musician. He works regularly in Scandinavia, Spain and at a hotel near his home in Berlin. He released a CD of self-penned songs in 2008 called *Good Looking*. He lost touch with most of his backing band, The Stroll, but met up with drummer Mick Barrett a few years ago and learned that he is working as a chef in Norfolk and playing in a reggae band.

“When I hear the single now, I do find it surprisingly good,” said Kidulis. “I can’t tell you yet where the high point of my career will be. I usually sell about 1,000 copies of my CDs. However, I am preparing material for an album which, of course, I am convinced will be so marvellous that I can’t help but sell 2,000 copies, which would be a high point.”

[www.brendankidulis.com](http://www.brendankidulis.com)

● **Thank you for the music?** Actually more of a warble than a wobble. A crooning new-waver, no less.

**BEST FRIENDS Asbury Park/Raizkozmik**  
**b/w Go West (1979)**



THE COVER SHOT OF BEST Friends’ single shows ten blokes in denim shirts and dungarees, one of them waving a pint pot. They look as if they’ve just completed the 26-mile Three Peaks Challenge, clambering up Whernside, Ingleborough and Pen-y-Ghent after leaving York, their home city, at first light. Surprising, then, to learn that they fashioned themselves as Yorkshire’s answer to Parliament/Funkadelic and Sly & The Family Stone. If this seems unlikely, the career trajectory of the fresh-faced chap second right further tests credulity. Within months of posing with his earthy pals, Jon McLoughlin was to become Kid Krupa in cosmic punk band The Revillos. This wasn’t the only stellar career path of a band through which passed almost 40 musicians.

Best Friends formed at York University where they were each studying music. By virtue of being competent players, they were out-of-kilter with the prevailing punk and new wave scene, so were happy to use the single to secure gigs and sell locally. Their high point was appearing on Radio 2 when they performed at the Edinburgh Festival in 1980.

The track *Raizkozmik* features some startlingly funky lead runs played by the boy-



**Best Friends: undecided whether to go for the punning sign or the “passing straight” look.**

wonder McLoughlin. “We were a busy, well-established outfit when our much-loved and respected guitarist Peter Godwin left to be replaced by a 16-year-old called Jon,” said bassist Dave Daniels. “My initial reaction was, ‘Well, he’s going to have a lot to learn.’ It was me who did the learning. Plenty.” McLoughlin lasted just a few months in Best Friends before joining The Revillos. He stayed as a permanent member for three years before becoming a session musician and producer, working with the likes of Tim Finn, Roger Daltrey and Del Amitri. He rejoined The Revillos sporadically, last touring with them in 1994 when they visited Japan. He died in March 2005, aged 41, from complications caused by diabetes.

On saxophone for a while in Best Friends was TV-prankster-to-be Victor Lewis-Smith and television and film producer Rob Warr (*Let Him Have It* and *Casualty* are among many on his CV). The rest of the band has remained largely in music. Bruce Nockles (trumpet) has played with the London Philharmonia; Richard Pite (vocals/flute) promotes jazz concerts in London; Andy Spofforth (drums) markets CDs for HMV and Asda; Chris Norton (keyboards) writes piano tutors for children; Martyn Boyd (saxophone) is a music teacher; Ron Burnett (trombone) is an art teacher and jazz columnist for *The Press*, York; Dave Daniels owns a shop specialising in gothic clothing; and Ray Wehrstein makes flutes that he decorates using a blowtorch.

● **Thank you for the music?** A cheery theme tune to a never-made early-’80s sitcom

**KEVIN LAMB Who Is The Hero**  
**b/w Who Stole The Ice (1973)**



IN THE 1960s, MOST TOWNS and cities in the UK had their own homespun version of Bob Dylan. Kevin Lamb was “Oldham’s Bob Dylan”. A search on YouTube will reveal that

even in Lamb’s latter performances, the intonation and nasal drawl was still trademark Dylan. Forged in the folk clubs of north-west England, this was Lamb’s first single drawn from an album of the same title. He was funded for a while by CBS Records, who paid for him to play concerts in the US. In between these stints he returned to his flat on Oldham’s notorious Sholver council estate.

In the early 1970s he played regularly with Rare Bird and contributed *Who Is The Hero* to their album of 1973, *Somebody’s Watching*. Arista Records signed Lamb as a solo artist in 1977 and a year later he released *Sailing Down The Years* with an impressive cast of players, including BJ Cole on steel guitar, Andy Summers (The Police) and Junior Marvin on guitar and Ray Cooper on percussion, with Gary Lyons producing. A single, *On The Wrong Track*, reached number 62, and while the album was well received by critics, it did not sell. Both his solo albums have been reissued by Ozit Records.

Lamb relocated permanently to the US, playing the Los Angeles and Nashville music scenes. He wrote many new songs over the years but none were ever released. He was a regular user of drugs and a heavy drinker. He died after a bout of pneumonia in March 2008. He is buried in Louisville, Kentucky.

● **Thank you for the music?** Heartfelt vocal, lush instrumentation – a reedier Justin Hayward.

**BELLADONNA**  
**I Remember b/w Gilded Cage (1983)**



“I WROTE *I REMEMBER* FOR my then-husband, whom I loved very much and who was about to leave us,” said Meira Shore, singer and bass player with Belladonna. Unknown at the

time (and probably since) was that the song is about one of the most famous actors in the world – Donald Pleasance. Shore had met Pleasance at a party while he was starring in a play called *The Man In The Glass Booth* on Broadway and she was studying under the famous drama teacher Uta Hagen. Pleasance was at the height of his fame after playing Blofeld in the Bond film *You Only Live Twice*. The pair married in 1970 when Shore was 19 and Pleasance, 50. Two days after the wedding she gave birth to a daughter, Miranda.

Belladonna boasted three girls in their line-up, with Bob Taylor (guitar) the only bloke. “We were ‘discovered’ at a pub called the Red Lion in Brent-ford,” said Shore. “We used to gig there every Friday night. We were pretty raunchy at the time – short skirts, fish-



**Meira Shore.**

from Donald in 1982 and I forget a lot about the actual dates and a lot about that period of my life,” said Shore. Afterwards she built a recording studio in Shepherds Bush and another in Isleworth before moving into music

*“I’m now a hypnotherapist. I still play the guitar occasionally, I sing in a rock choir and music is and always will be my main love”*

management for 16 years, working mainly with American singer-songwriter Terry Callier.

She contracted skin cancer and researched health therapies, training as a hypnotherapist. She now has a successful practice in London. “I still play the guitar occasionally, I sing in a rock choir and music is and always will be my main love,” she said. Shore has lost touch with Belladonna member Sue Hewitt (drums) but says that Bob Taylor is living in Switzerland, where he still plays music, and Suzy Sherling (keyboards) has married a music producer.

● **Thank you for the music?** Shrill synth pop, a little anaemic.

**VISIBLE TARGETS**  
**Every Now And Then b/w Own Back (1984)**



THE SMITHS REASSERTED the notion of independence and the importance of great packaging. This led to a slew of self-funded records in the mid-1980s from bands with Morrissey as their muse. Nottingham’s Visible Targets were typical. “We really wanted to be the English Talking Heads,” said singer Sandra Frisby. “Once I heard The Smiths, though, I wanted to sound like them. My fantasy *X Factor* audition song would be *What Difference Does It*



**Doctor Sandra Frisby today.**

*Make or Gimme Shelter* as a fallback.”

Their highpoint was supporting The Lotus Eaters at Bangor, although they also performed at a May Ball at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where they drank and ate heartily. “We were early descendants of the genus ‘Chav’, so we chugged the champagne out of bottles and then had them filled with Foster’s for future consumption,” she said. Another incongruous billing saw them support pre-notoriety Gary Glitter when he visited the Nottingham Palais.

Apart from a few plays on Radio Trent, where a young Dale Winton was starting out, the single did not have much impact. “We expected international stardom, I suppose. We were quite a ‘pretty’ band and we thought we were the dog’s musically, so we were simply waiting for the rest of the world to fall in with that appraisal,” she said. Their main songwriter, Steve Mitchell, was offered a job as a photographer on the *Nottingham Evening Post* and the band split up soon afterwards.

“We were never as good as we thought we were. We were probably bordering on mediocre, although there wasn’t, to my mind, a hell of a lot of mainstream early-’80s music that was any good,” said Sandra, who is now Dr Sandra Frisby and, wait for this... associate professor and reader in company and commercial law at the University of Nottingham.

● **Thank you for the music?** Sleepy indie on the brink of nodding off.

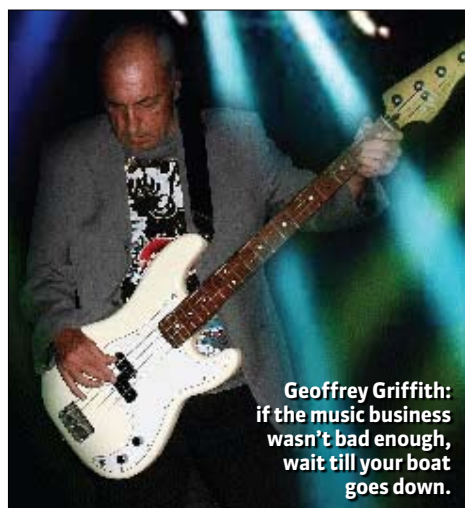
**MOVING FINGERS**  
**Double Vision b/w Single Vision (1982)**



PROVIDING A PERFECT souvenir of a time slipped by is probably a record’s ultimate function. The cover of Moving Fingers’ single shows Geoffrey Griffith and Dawn Leeder in their best togs looking as if they’ve slipped away from the main wedding party. It comes as no surprise to learn that as well as making music together they were a “couple” for five years. “I decided to move back to Leicester, my birth-place, from London where I was living at the time. I had many musician friends there and stayed in a shared house with some of them. This is where I met Dawn,” said Griffith.

Griffith had previously played with cult 1970s rock band Black Widow, but decided to focus on Moving Fingers when they signed to Sonet Records. A drummer, Neil Westgate, was added to the line-up. Three singles were released before Sonet went into liquidation on the eve of releasing their debut album, *Natural Selection*. Afterwards Griffith worked mainly ►





**Geoffrey Griffith:**  
if the music business  
wasn't bad enough,  
wait till your boat  
goes down.

for Anglia Television, as a sound supervisor on their live *Sunday Morning* programme as well as *Trisha* and various outside-broadcast sports events. He moved to Thailand eight years ago to start a big-game fishing business. "It went very well for the first year and then our boat was destroyed by a certain tsunami. Luckily, none of our staff were on the boat as we all had the day off," he said.

Griffith has his own studio in Phuket, Thailand and writes music for television and Black Widow, who are about to release a new album called *Sleeping With Demons*. Dawn Leeder is a research associate and multi-media developer at Cambridge University and Neil Westgate is the resident drummer at Potter's Leisure Resort, Hopton-on-Sea, Norfolk. A digitally remastered version of the *Moving Fingers* album is nearing completion and will be available online.

● **Thank you for the music?** Repetitive synth stabs and one-note vocal.

## SLOW FADE

**Runnin' Away (Never Looking Back)**  
**b/w Surfin' In Kilburn (1981)**



WORKMATES OFTEN FORM impromptu bands to bash out a few tunes at someone's 40th or, say, to mark the 200th sale of a batch of LV Linear (110 volt) Tungsten Halogen lamps.

The difference with The Stiff All-Stars was that they were each employed in and around the music business, chiefly – as the name suggests – Stiff Records. They formed initially to play at Stiff owner Dave Robinson's wedding at the Clarendon Ballroom, Hammersmith, with Madness in the support slot.

They were offered a deal with Chiswick Records and released two singles, *Maybe*

*Tonight and You Tell Me Lies*. They pressed up 1,500 of the latter but legend has it that they sold just 11 copies. Realising their name might be holding them back, they became Slow Fade and signed a two-single deal with TW records of Wiltshire. *Running Away* was followed by *Sound Of A Breaking Heart*.

"We were all absolutely in love with music, as many people were in the music industry back then. It seemed an obvious thing to be in a band," explained bassist Nigel Dick. Inevitably, their day jobs thwarted their musical plans as they each went on to forge exceptional careers. Now based in Los Angeles, Dick is one of the world's foremost video directors. He has worked with Britney Spears, Guns N' Roses, Cher, REM and Nickelback, among many others.

Pete Glenister (guitar) wrote for Kirsty MacColl, toured with Terence Trent d'Arby and made many records with Alison Moyet. He

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wrote and produced *Colour Blind*, a number-one single for Darius Danesh. Nicky Graham (keyboards) is a producer. He discovered Bros, writing and producing their hits. Andy Murray (vocals/guitar) works as part of David Gilmour's management team. Hugh Attwooll (drums) died in 2007 of cancer.

A Stiff All-Stars career retrospective album was released last summer entitled *10.5 On A 10 Point Scale*.

[www.stiffallstars.com/story](http://www.stiffallstars.com/story)

● **Thank you for the music?** Classy road song, cleverly understated.

## THE METHOD

**The Pink Panther**  
**b/w Taking Liberties (1979)**



DIG DEEP ENOUGH AND IT seems that most records have roots into the family tree of a successful artiste. The Method's monochrome cover of a cityscape at night is characteristic of hundreds released circa 1979. The difference is that it is a second cousin (twice removed) to Adam Ant. The Method's saxophonist, Matthew Kleinman, is the brother of Danny Kleinman, who formed Bazooka Joe in the mid-1970s,

who originally featured Adam Ant on bass, then known by his real name of Stuart Goddard. "They rehearsed at our house every Saturday morning, so the band became family friends," said Matthew. "At that time, Adam was quiet. He later transformed into a super-confident and brilliant frontman."

The Method's first single was put out by Do It Records and although it was single of the week in *Melody Maker* the band was dropped to make way for Bazooka Joe. They remained friends and supported Adam at an early Ants gig at the Marquee. "It was packed with punks and we left the stage in a rain of beer cans – very rock and roll," said Kleinman. John Blake, now of Blake Publishing, wrote in the *Daily Mirror* that The Method "would not sell enough records to buy a packet of aspirins". Bizarrely, Kleinman later married Blake's sister, Joyce.

The band split after a proposed eight-week tour of the US fell through at the last-minute. Kleinman formed Danny & The Nogoodnicks with Daniel and they released a single on Chrysalis. He held down an academic career in genetics for 20 years before enrolling at art college. He now works as a designer for PlayStation and paints in his spare time. Paul de Raymond Leclercq, The Method's guitarist, lives in France working on classic cars. Singer Rik Johnson married and also moved to France several years ago.

Kleinman remains upbeat about his involvement with music. "I recommend everyone to form a band with a couple of mates and play down the local pub or club. You don't have to be Elvis to have some fun and great memories."

● **Thank you for the music?** A growly, punky version of the *Pink Panther* theme. ■



**The Method aren't bitter. They further recommend that everyone should be in a band once. "You don't have to be Elvis to have some fun and great memories."**