

The **Burning Up Times**

Exclusive online Stranglers PDF

Issue one: September 2005

In the Shadows

Kicking ass with
Jean Jacques Burnel
Latté with
Hugh Cornwell

Featured album:
Black And White

Battersea exposed

Black And White on tour

Rock Goes To College uproar



BLACK AND WHITE

the Stranglers

AND WHITE

THE

Stran

Stranglers

ALBUM

THE STRANGLERS
Black And White (United Artists)

HAPPY anniversary. It's a year to the week since "Rattus Norvegicus", the Stranglers.

Women were strange when you were a Strangler. An avid rightist — and rightly so — confronted by the vicious sexism of their debut album. Of course, that didn't hinder their ascent to the dizzy heights of the pop charts (we can make out for better or worse that review did earn The Stranglers their unshakable Chasvinists of Punk tag.

For worse, I reckon, because although every critic who ever mentioned The Stranglers for the rest of the year seemed to feel obliged either to condemn or to apologise for the band's misogyny, they were treated as an isolated case. The Stranglers were treated as #muscle still got away with murder. Only Julie Burchill had the temerity to question "The Sex Pistols stance in 'No More Heroes'". Nick Kent of *Rolling Stone* stated in the same issue: "The Stranglers were by then well known. Personalities in fact to the point where they were less self-found and more prominent." Angie Brant of *Time* wrote: "The Stranglers are a wave' group. The Stranglers appreciate sheer stark, violent elements such as bass, guitar and synthesizer. They say, 'Do You Wanna' a harsh mélange of jagged riffs supporting the most explicitly crass song on the album.

The record's so-called 'black' side reaches its peak of brutal ugliness as that number segues into the "Death And Blood" which is a... with Martin Rowley producing. The track features several compositions by the band on their 'secret' album, such as "Death And Blood", "Nice And Sleazy" and "New Song" on A...

Stranglers the prowler

THE STRANGLERS will be playing a major British tour to follow the release of their third album by United Artists on May 12. Dates for the tour are still being finalised, but it will be a mixture of club and concert hall venues and will include a major date for London scheduled by the band to take place on...

The tour, which comes after a series of 'secret' dates earlier this year, is the second stage of what amounts to a world tour by the band. They are currently on the road in America and also have concerts lined up in Canada, Scandinavia, Iceland, Holland, Belgium, France, West Germany, Spain, Italy and Yugoslavia.

The Stranglers' third album, "Black And White", was recorded...

JOIN THE STRANGLERS, SEE THE WORLD

This is us in sunny Iceland. That's Yukio there between Jet and me. Wish you were here — Hugh.

PIG: FENNIE SMITH

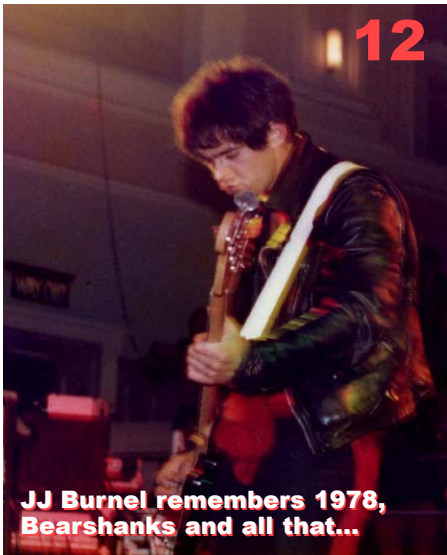
Perhaps it could sometimes be stronger... (though they do pull off a few changes which are quite dazzlingly simple because they are fairly safe), but you'll only find stronger rhythms in a pneumatic drill.

Unfortunately, The Stranglers still blow much of the power they build in their music away by attaching it to... "Here..."

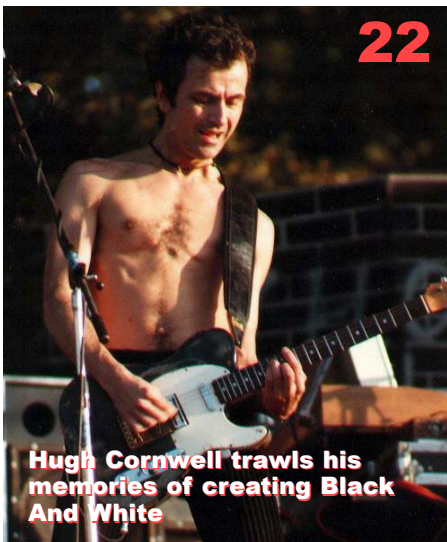
Burnel inexplicably pairs the ultra-masculine, quasi-poetic verses with a joke chorus. As always, though, one's appreciation of the lyrics is not aided by their presence on the inner sleeve, starting out with "Here..."

"Sweden (All Quiet On The Eastern Front)", possibly written ten after a Swedish tour, is a stab against that country's stability. "Here..."

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The Burning Up Times
Issue one
September 2005

In The Shadows

Editorial
Welcome to issue one of *The Burning Up Times*, a brand new Stranglers PDF created on a shoestring by Stranglers fans. Each issue will be available when it's ready, and will focus on a particular year and a particular album.

And here in issue one you can indulge yourself in all things **Black And White**. It's 1978 again! Throw on a tank top and get a basin haircut! Dig out your vinyl copy of the LP and turn it up loud!

There are exclusive interviews with band members, along with articles by established writers as well as fans on a myriad of related topics and themes.

There is also, hidden somewhere in this issue, a hyperlink to a rare unofficial live recording from Madrid (19 May 1978). Happy hunting!

Thank you to everyone who supported this issue and helped us out. Special thanks to JJ Burnel, Hugh Cornwell, Jim Drury, David Fagence, Jamie Godwin, Alastair Graham, Stephen Howard, Tony Kinson, Jackie MacKay, Donald MacKay, Jim Radley, Stephen Reid, John Robb and The Stratfords.

Burning Up Times is published when it's ready. It is available free of charge from the website and you are free to distribute it to whoever you want. Issue one, *In The Shadows*, September 2005. © Planet Earth **Editor:** Gary Kent **Production Editor:** Dominic Pilgrim **Webmaster:** Ian Keiller **Contributors:** Chris Alderton, Billy Bragg, Gary Cook, Jim Drury, Jamie Godwin, Stephen Howard, Richard Kolkman, Donald MacKay, John Robb, Carl Sanderson, Barry Spooner, Mark Tall, Eric Vonk, Al Wallis, Damian Franklin, Mike **Contact:** editors@strangled.co.uk **Website:** www.strangled.co.uk

You have been informed

20 things you should know about Black And White...

- 1 **Black And White** was the first Stranglers LP written to order.
- 2 Each side was to be divided into Hugh's music and JJ's lyrics and vocals – with JJ's music and Hugh's lyrics and vocals on the other.
- 3 The band originally wanted white vinyl on the White side of the LP.
- 4 Bearshanks Lodge in Northamptonshire was the place the band wrote the album. It was owned by musician and photographer Ruan O'Lochlainn, whose remit was take the front cover picture.

- 5 Teenager Billy Bragg was one of the first to hear the songs at Bearshanks.
- 6 It is their only album to not feature the Stranglers name on the cover.
- 7 It is probably the first album to feature Morse Code in a song, which was invented by Samuel Morse. The first dot-dash-dot message in 1844, read: "What hath God wrought?" In a similar vein, the message in *Enough Time* read: "This is planet Earth, we are fucked!" – courtesy of Mr. ... - - - - - Greenfield.

- 8 Frank Sinatra's lawyers objected to the title of *Nice 'n' Sleazy*. They thought it was too similar to *Nice 'n' Easy*. Though the hair colourant of that name didn't receive such attention from the crooner's legal eagles. Keep your toupee on, Frank!
- 9 *Nice 'n' Sleazy* is about touring the US and the Dutch Hell's Angels.

- 10 *Shut Up!* is the shortest Stranglers' B-side at 6 seconds over the minute mark.

- 11 JJ wrote the music for *Toiler On The Sea* in Northamptonshire and Hugh wrote the lyrics in Morocco. The title comes from a novel by French writer Victor Hugo. 80s electronic band A Flock Of Seagulls took their name from the lyrics in the middle 8 section.

- 12 According to JJ, *Threatened* was inspired by a conversation on architecture. It built up from there. Built up from there...! Boom, boom...

- 13 *Sweden (All Quiet On The Eastern Front)* could have been a single. A video was filmed.

- 14 In *Sverige*, 'Jag Ar Insnoad Pa Estfronten' means 'I am snowed in on the Eastern Front.'

- 15 A video was made for *Nice 'n' Sleazy*, but never shown. The band rejected it. "It was terrible!" JJ told *The Burning Up Times* in 2005.

- 16 Hugh directed a video for *Walk On By*, based on Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 cult classic, *Blow Up*. It was shot in Maryon Park, Charlton, southeast London where the film features heavily.



- 17 The *Walk On By* video featured the two guest musicians on the B-side, Old Codger: well-known jazz man George Melly – and an infamous harmonica virtuoso and wild man of R'n'B by the name of Lew Lewis. Lew, real name Keith Lewis, lived in West Road in Westcliffe-On-Sea. In December 1986, he robbed a post office of £5,386 with an imitation pistol. The post office was in the same road where he lived. He got seven years.

- 18 *Tank* and *Walk On By* were originally intended as a double A-side release.

- 19 The album was released on May 12th. It was also Burt Bacharach's birthday, the co-writer of *Walk On By*.

- 20 It went straight in at No.2 in the albums charts. The album that stopped them hitting the top spot? *Saturday Night Fever*. 'Well, you can tell by the way I use my walk...'



Calling occupants of Bearshanks Lodge! Gary Kent tracks down residents past and present of the isolated farmhouse that gave birth to the Stranglers' Black And White album

The road to Ruan



Bearshanks Lodge in 1982

FOR TWO snow-swept months during the white winter of 1977-78, The Stranglers stayed at Bearshanks Lodge near Oundle, Northamptonshire to write a collection of songs that became **Black And White**, their most abrasive and bravest album to date.

Bearshanks was an old rambling farmhouse that bordered Rockingham Forest, owned by a bohemian couple Dai Davies knew from London's pub rock scene. Photographer Jackie and Irish multi-instrumentalist and bon viveur Ruan O'Lochlainn met in the mid 1960s, married, and moved out of the hustle and

bustle of West London in 1975. "We always had this dream of having a house in the country with a studio," said Jackie, who is now in her mid-60s. "We found Bearshanks – which was basically a pile of stones – and we loved the location. We put in a bid in a Dutch Auction – where we said we'd bid £50 more than anyone else's bid – it was all very controversial – but we got it. It cost us £4,500."

Over the phone, Jackie immediately comes across as a lovely woman, sweet and extremely helpful. But in the early days of their residency, it was evident not all the locals appreciated this strange new

hippy couple in wellies and Laura Ashley garb.

"They didn't like us much, and this farmer dumped a huge pile of manure opposite our home, just to let us know our place. So Ruan wrote a song about it, with lyrics based around us going to the country for some peace of mind and finding a pile of shit instead.

"He then contacted Esther Rantzen's That's Life TV programme and sung to them down the phone. By the time he'd finished, they said: "Right – we're sending up a team! So when they came with the film crew, Ruan jumped on top of the manure with his mandolin and performed the song with Riff Raff while I went about spraying a can of air freshener!"

Surrounded by flat arable fields and little else, the old farmhouse lies at the end of a long lane in the middle of nowhere. Once the renovation work began, a 50ft studio was set up for bands to practise and record four-track demos. Their first ad in Melody Maker went out in the summer of 1977.

"Billy Bragg was the first person to call. I actually named his band Riff Raff, and I became their roadie, driving them to gigs in my old BRS lorry. I'd make a stew to take along and after the gig, we'd all end up in the back of this old lorry having a great time.

The second phone call came from Pierre Moerlin from the progressive band, Gong. They used to get up really early and rehearse. I once saw their drummer setting

The Stranglers arrived with Hell's Angels and Finchley Boys. One thing I'll never forget is Jet being the mummy of the band. He sent Hugh and JJ miles off to the shops to get some food and gave them a £10 note – and they came back with a tenner's-worth of Wagon Wheels!
Billy Bragg

up his kit – out in the cornfield! Then after that, we got a booking from The Stranglers."

News quickly spread among the youth from the myriad of villages and towns in the area. Although it was doubtful whether any of them had ever seen The Stranglers before. Billy Bragg: "When me and Riff Raff went into town in our ripped jeans, everyone thought we were The Stranglers! All the girls wanted kisses and autographs, and their boyfriends would be waiting round the corner to kick our heads in!"

Soon teenage Billy moved in and became a bit of a handy man. "I looked after the goats, although, I remember one day they all escaped, went into the house and chewed through a reel of quarter inch tape!"

Dinner with The Stranglers

Jackie also recalled the day The Stranglers arrived, but she soon sensed something had been troubling the band about the arrangements at Bearshanks. They decided they wanted the place solely for themselves. "They were really sweet, and extremely apologetic, and they didn't quite know how to ask us. Anyway, it was okay with us – we moved out to a rented cottage in a nearby village. But that evening, I cooked dinner for all of us at Bearshanks, and we all sat round our enormous kitchen table, including my two little nippers, Oscar and Finn, plus The Stranglers.

"Traditionally, my two never ate much dinner, so we always ended up finishing

off their plates. On this night, everyone ate like horses, and there wasn't that much left over for seconds. I offered JJ Finn's leftovers, and Ruan was completely gobsmacked by what I'd done – offering The Stranglers Finn's leftovers! I remember the shame and embarrassment of it all – and there were The Stranglers all falling about laughing! They all thought it was hilarious. But we left that night so they could write their album, and we stayed in the cottage. We came to visit them, and got to know them.

"I remember that the first thing you'd hear when you came up the road was JJ's bass. You could hear it as clear as anything – and then as you got nearer, the drums. It was quite amazing when you arrived at the place. But of course, they weren't disturbing anybody – everybody could do exactly what they wanted."

Flying shoes and shagging

JJ had seen an old caravan in the grounds and claimed it as his bedroom. He had been handed a telephone number of a young female fan when they set off for Bearshanks, and one day he called and sent a car to collect the girl from the station. In the caravan that night on an evening the O'Lochlainn's came down, poor seven-year-old Finn got a fright.

Recalls Jackie: "Finn burst into the caravan and he found JJ and the girl, shall we say, having some fun! JJ threw a shoe at him telling him to 'bugger off' and he came running into the house, crying: 'JJ's hurting the girl!' We had to explain to him that JJ is not hurting her and it was all perfectly okay. 'But JJ threw a shoe at me!' He said, sobbing."

Billy recalled the bands urgency in getting the job done with Hugh the most determined, and JJ the most approachable. "We did a gig in a nearby pub and JJ



The scene of many an infamous nosh up

came down to watch. The second or third song in, we did Go Buddy Go and JJ got up onstage and sung it with us. It was superb." Riff Raff guitarist Wiggy remembered seeing Hugh's old Telecaster sitting there in the studio, along side JJ's bass and Hi-Watt amps, with bits of paper with scrawled out lyrics strewn all over the floor.

One Saturday night, Wiggy came into the lounge to find the band watching the film 'The Boston Strangler' on television. "I just thought it was quite funny." He said. "We later got the support slot on the **Black And White** tour when The Stranglers played Peterborough Werrina Stadium. I've never had to scrape so much gob of my guitar! But it was great fun, obviously a sign of appreciation!"

An indelible impact was also made on Jackie, who had nothing but praise for The Stranglers 27 years later: "They were all such incredibly decent people." She said.

"They were just fantastic. I had a great game of chess with Hugh, and for me it will always be a highlight. He was highly intelligent, very much an intellectual, always concerned about world affairs, always with an informed opinion. If you looked at Hugh, though, you wouldn't think of him as someone in a band, would you?"

The Stranglers playing chess featured in *NME Teazers* section the day *5 Minutes* was released. "That goat in the photo is Felicity," Jackie remarked, "but we also named a sweet little white billy goat after JJ. I'd love to see JJ again. He was one of my favourites. Had it not been for JJ, Oscar wouldn't be the bass player he is today."

One day, Jackie found a scrap book Jet had left lying on the kitchen table and started flicking through it. It contained cuttings of all the press reviews of the band. When he returned, Jackie told him: "Jet – there's not one good review here,

how come?" And he just laughed it off. But I loved Jet. Jet Black was a gentle, beautiful guy, always looking out for people, always thinking about the little things. He was fatherly. He seemed to underpin the camaraderie of the band.

"I don't remember much about Dave, though."

Armed with the new **Black And White** repertoire written and rehearsed, the band embarked on a small UK tour before recording commenced at TW Studios in Fulham with producer Martin Rushent. Meanwhile, both Billy and Wiggy were back at base to greet the teenage girls who'd come up after school in search of The Stranglers. But late one night, Jackie too found herself with some unexpected visitors. All alone one night – the children staying with friends and Ruan in London – a deafening roar came from down the lane, marking the arrival of a 15-strong gang of Hell's Angels motoring up to Bearshanks.



"They said they'd come to see The Stranglers." Jackie recalled. "So I said: 'They've gone' and one of them, called Moose, came out with a few expletives, and said they were really tired after the long journey. So I invited them in, all of them, and sat them around the table and fed them toast and crumpets and cooked them anything I could find in the freezer.

"Afterwards they each got their stash out – grass, hash, all different kinds and everything – and laid it all out right down the middle of the table. All I can say is that it was one hell of an evening! They were incredibly nice guys, The Essex Chapter. I was a woman alone in the middle of nowhere, but I never felt safer. Once they'd rested, they drove off into the night. Moose and I kept in touch and became mates and we'd often go out for a drink and he'd drive me around on his motorbike."

Sadly the one person I couldn't talk to about Bearshanks was Ruan, the photographer of **Black And White's** iconic monochrome cover. Ruan passed away some years back from pulmonary cancer.



The Essex chapter finally tracks down Mr Burnel

"They discovered cancer on his lung. They said cancer was the cause on the death certificate, but he didn't die from that. He had a successful operation to remove it – only, they left a little piece of bone sticking into something, so he was in desperate pain, and they just thought he was putting it on. They kept giving him aspirin – he had so much aspirin that it shot his stomach lining and he died of starvation about six weeks after the operation. It was just so unnecessary."

Colourful and characterful

Ruan led a colourful life. Having played in former Small Face Ronnie Lane's Slim Chance and pub rockers Bees Make Honey in the mid-70s, Ruan had a reputation for wild nights. Even from the confines of the audience, such was his talent he'd jump up onstage and play a killer riff on the keyboards or the saxophone, blowing both the band and the crowd away in the process.

"Ruan was such a fantastic character – but he drank a lot. He was a total James

Joyce Irishman, and I was too naïve at the time to handle that. I was a righteous old cow. Anyway, we split up... the constant pressure of money... I moved out. But when times were rough for him, I'd always turn up at Bearshanks with a big pile of groceries. But he ended up letting things go. He once ran out of oil for the heating, it all went to pot and he went back to Ireland for a couple of years. So we sold Bearshanks."

For the cosmopolitan hippy couple in the wellies, the rural studio dream was over by 1979/80. Bearshanks was briefly owned by a music promoter before being sold to the present owners, a charming couple from the teaching profession in 1982. Life at Bearshanks should have quietened down, but late one night, the new owners were awakened by a terrifying police visit, with dogs.

A fugitive was on the loose, and following a tip-off from a local, the police arrived to search the place from top to bottom. Finding nothing, they left and the ordeal was over. But a short while afterwards, the couple discovered a false floorboard cut out in one of the upstairs rooms. They prised it open to reveal a bag full of dried aromatic leaves – fortunately, the police had overlooked that.

Today, Bearshanks Lodge itself hasn't really changed much from the early photos seen here in 1982. Neither has the divide between locals and newcomers, although no one dumps piles of dung outside peoples' doorsteps anymore. "We've only recently been accepted in the village," Polly Stratford remarked. "Even after all these years!"

Bearshanks Lodge has a profound history. For Riff Raff fans, it was the birth place of I Wanna Be A Kosmonaut and Romford Girls. For Stranglers fans, the experimental **Black And White** album. I



Ruan with his sax

wonder how that would have ended up had Bearshanks been prettier, more verdant, and filled with spring buttercups and meadows? For it was also here that Jet devoured the pages of The Flying Saucer Review, chancing upon the relatively unreported enigma of the Men In Black.

Unremarkable in many ways, Bearshanks is remarkable all the same for providing warmth and shelter to the O'Lochlainn family, and the realisation of their bohemian dream, however mercurial. But listening to the eloquent and frank Jackie, you sense an enormous amount of unresolved business. Perhaps it was attributed to more than Ruan's untimely death. "It was awfully sad... But if I could have my life over again, I wouldn't have left Ruan... It is my biggest regret still to this day." □

A huge thank you to Jackie MacKay, Billy Bragg, Wiggy and to The Stratfords for allowing us to visit and for providing us with the Bearshanks Lodge photographs.

What an album! What a year! 1978

Black And White

Kate Bush.. Debbie Harry...Wonder Woman... plus Olivia Newton John dressed in skin-tight black Lycra? Stephen Howard wonders if 1978 could get any better

If someone said: name three things from 1977, you could bet your best tank top they'd say Punk, the Silver Jubilee and Elvis Presley dying. And while most music-led retrospectives focus on the controversy surrounding the Sex Pistols, to proper music aficionados, the year undoubtedly belonged to the Stranglers: two top five albums in the charts at the same time and three Top 10 singles (*Peaches and Something Better Change* passed each other in the top 30). Backed up with over 130 sell out gigs across the UK made the Stranglers one of the biggest bands by the time the year of Punk, the Jubilee and the death of the King came to an end.

In 1978, The Stranglers looked to build upon their success – writing album number three cocooned at a remote snow-

filled location in the middle of nowhere. News leaked out that JJ quit the band, and Hugh had already predicted to journalists that the band probably wouldn't last the year. In fact it seemed the whole punk scene was in danger of imploding as by the end of January Johnny Rotten had quit the Sex Pistols during an acrimonious US tour ("Ever get the feeling you've been cheated?") and the Damned announced they were calling it a day (for the first of many times) and a farewell tour was mooted. To add to the woes of punks everywhere, the charts suggested the supposed revolution had made little impact on the music scene: Wings' *Mull of Kintyre* topped the singles chart throughout the month with compilation album *Disco Fever* heading the LP charts.

Punk apathy and decline continued, and in February, leading punk teen-fanzine *Sniffin' Glue* called it a day. Then it was Abba's turn for world domination in both the singles and album charts. Thankfully, The Stranglers stuck together, and emerged from nowhere to perform a low-key mini-tour of pubs using pseudonyms like "The Old Codgers" and "The Shakespeareos" to dissuade any attention. The tour coincided with the release of *5 Minutes* which entered the charts at No. 23 and backed up by a video which showed the band at their menacing best peaked at No.11. At the end of the month they returned to the studio with Martin Rushent, who had

produced both *Rattus* and *Heroes*, to start work on **Black And White**. This was something that Anna Ford was only too happy to relate as she became ITV's first female newsreader. (Or probably not!)

In March the Stranglers finished recording and tried to succeed where the Sex Pistols had not by embarking on a tour of the States. However, they encountered the same hostility the Pistols had earlier in the year and made few friends. The band as ever stood up to provocation and a series of controversial statements saw JJ issued with three separate death threats, with the band receiving an ultimatum from their US record company to shape up.

Meanwhile, Blondie had a debut hit with *Denis*, as did Kate Bush with the No.1, *Wuthering Heights*. The world's biggest super tanker disaster occurred when the *Amoco Cadiz* split in two pumping 220,000 tonnes of oil into the Brittany sea. Former Italian PM Aldo Moro was kidnapped in an ambush in Rome by the left-wing Red Brigade. His body was found riddled with bullets 55 days later, in the boot of a red Renault 5 parked strategically between the headquarters of the Communist Party and the ruling Christian Democrat Party. The Tories recruited Saatchi & Saatchi to revamp their image in a move to topple Labour's "Sunny" Jim Callaghan. Margaret Thatcher was just around the corner...

Disco took a hold on the nation in



April as the phenomenon that was *Saturday Night Fever* packed cinemas and topped the singles and album charts. Grooves got fatter as the 12" record was also born. *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* made it to the UK cinemas. Meanwhile on BBC1, *Grange Hill* made its first appearance to the delight of kids everywhere and the dismay of parents and teachers. However the big event of the month for Stranglers fans was the release of the single *Nice 'n' Sleazy* on April 21st. The taste of what might be expected on **Black And White** – the white reggae tinged song met with mixed reviews from the press and the record buying public reaching number 18 in the charts.



In May, in Perthshire, weather watchers recorded the biggest temperature range in Britain: -7°C in the morning, and 22°C in the afternoon. The Swiss grave of Charlie Chaplin was dug up and his coffin stolen. This was later discovered in a field a mile away in Lausanne. Two motor mechanics, inspired by a similar attempt in Italy were arrested and charged with stealing the coffin and extortion.

The Stranglers took a plane-load of journalists to Iceland for a few days for the official launch of **Black And White**. The trip was drink-fuelled and left one music hack stranded for being too inebriated for the journey back.

Black And White, with advanced orders of 134,000 and backed by an extensive promotional campaign, was released on May 12th and shot straight to No. 2 in the charts, being held off top spot by the *Night Fever* soundtrack in the official charts. Only the NME album chart recognised it at the top spot. A short tour

ensued, which saw both Jet and JJ arrested for a hotel incident in Glasgow, climaxing in a sell out gig at Stafford's New Bingley Hall.

In June, Naomi James broke the solo round-the-world sailing record. Cricketer Ian "Beefy" Botham became the first man to score a century and take eight wickets in one innings of a test match (ear). Host nation Argentina won the World Cup, beating Holland 3-1. Ally's Tartan Army – the Scottish Football Team – were knocked out in the first round, even though they beat runners-up Holland 3-2!

Gimmick-hits came in the shape of *Ca Plain Pour Moi* by Plastic Bertrand and *The Smurf Song*. The band toured Europe during the summer, surviving a riot in Portugal after a gig was cancelled at the last minute through no fault of their own, and then returning to the States as previous death threats issued against JJ thankfully never materialised. On returning to London, JJ worked on his solo



LP, *Euroman Cometh*. *Grease* took over the planet with John Travolta and Olivia Newton John topping the charts throughout the summer with *You're The One That I Want*, something many a male was thinking each Saturday night as Lynda Carter hit the TV screens in *Wonder Woman*. Meanwhile in July Louise Brown from Oldham became the most famous kid on the planet being the first "test tube baby" to be born.

The Stranglers regrouped in August ready for the release of the single *Walk on By*. With 75,000 copies having been given away with **Black And White**, the single was a surprising choice. Backed by Tank and the George Melly-sung *Old Codger*, it reached No. 21. September saw Top 20 hits from Sham 69, the Boomtown Rats, Siouxsie & The Banshees, Jilted John, The Commodores, 10cc, David Essex and Darts. The Stranglers hit in the headlines again when, as part of a UK tour, they played an open air gig at Battersea Park, performing an extended *Nice 'n' Sleazy*

backed by a line of strippers. By now the Boomtown Rats had finally knocked Travolta and Newton John off the top of the charts with *Rat Trap*, however by the end of the month the world was met with the news that Pope John Paul had died just 33 days after being elected. He was replaced by Pope John Paul II in October whilst at the same time Sid Vicious was charged with the murder of his girlfriend Nancy Spungen in New York. The Stranglers made the news before the month was out as they stormed off the stage at Guildford University for the BBC's *Rock Goes to College* series following a row over ticket distribution.

Outrage occurred in political circles in November when Liberal Party MP Jeremy Thorpe was accused, and acquitted the following year, of plotting to kill his former gay lover Norman Scott. The charts were ignited by Blondie's *Hanging On The Telephone* and *Public Image* by Public Image Ltd.

The Stranglers made more enemies, this time stateside, when they sent a telegram to A&M records in America reading: "Get Fucked – Love The Stranglers" in a protest over lack of record promotion. To compound matters in December, producer Martin Rushent had been working on new tracks with the band and mixing the forthcoming *Live (X-Cert)* album when he said he could no longer work with the band after hearing the track they had started working on, entitled *Meninblack*. The latter inspired an album two years later, all from a UFO publication Jet read the previous winter at Bearshanks Lodge on the Men In Black.

Meanwhile, Boney M's *Mary's Boy Child* topped the Christmas charts, ensuring peace on Earth and goodwill to all men prevailed. Aaaw, Gawd Bless! Good old 1978! □



Portrush 8/9/78

Pic: Alastair Graham

The Stranglers

Burning Up Times

September Tour

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- 13 ABERDEEN Ruffles
- 16 BATTERSEA PARK
- 17 CARDIFF Top Rank
- 18 PETERBOROUGH Werrina Stadium
- 19 LINCOLN Drill Hall
- 20 SHEFFIELD Top Rank
- 21 GREAT YARMOUTH Tiffany's
- 24 PORTSMOUTH Locarno
- 25 EXETER Routes
- 26 BOURNEMOUTH Village Bowl
- 27 BATH Pavillion
- 28 MANCHESTER Apollo
- 29 BRIDLINGTON SPA Pavillion
- 30 GLASGOW Apollo

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THE STRANGLERS

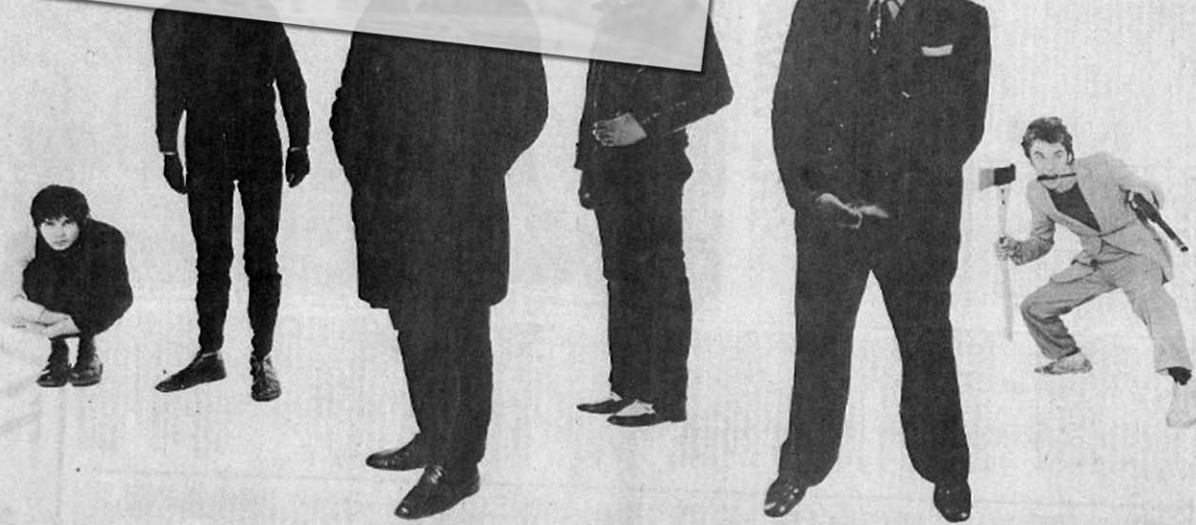


TOUR DATES
20th May Brighton Centre
20th May Glasgow Apollo
30th May Bridgely Hall Stafford

BLACK AND WHITE ALBUM

Album UAK 30222 / Cassette TCK 30222

5 MINUTES - THE STRANGLERS - NEW SINGLE



Nice 'n' Sleazy / Shut Up

STRANGLERS TOUR DATES
20th May Brighton Centre
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LEW LEWIS/HARP... THE STRANGLERS-BACKING TRACK/TANK... THE
STRANGLERS... PRODUCED BY MARTIN PONTIUS RUSHENT... PRODUCED
BY MARTIN PONTIUS RUSHENT, ALAN WINSTANLEY AND THE STRANGLERS



The third keyboard player to be auditioned pitched up and plugged in. It was 1975. Pony-tailed and high-heeled, Brighton-born wizard David Paul Greenfield set up his organ and instantly impressed his would-be band mates, The Stranglers. Suddenly, the famous keyboard sound was born. **Jamie Godwin** gets to grips with Dave's early keyboards, tickling our oscillators in the process

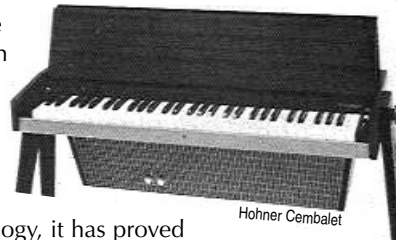
DAVE set up his **Vox Continental**, much in the same way Ray Manzarak did when he tuned in, turned on and dropped out for The Doors some years before. Ever heard *Light My Fire*, or *Break On Through*? Yeah – that's the sound Dave started out with. Unfortunately, it appears that there are no existing recordings of the fledgling Stranglers with this particular keyboard. Why? Dave soon upgraded to the heavier and more famous **Hammond L100**.

Everyone knows that one! Hanging Around? The A minor stabs on the intro? The piercing, penetrating lines in *I Feel Like a Wog*? Original tone-wheel Hammond organs are very heavy instruments, and later on, Dave discovered lightweight and more reliable synthesisers with a Hammond rack-mount sound module to replicate the old sounds. Chiropractors have since believed to have gone out of business – that's how heavy this keyboard was! Ask the roadies.



Vox Continental

Gaffer-taped and perched somewhat precariously on top of the L100 was the sorely missed **Hohner Cembaleet**. This is the famous instrument that produced the well-known melody riffs in *Heroes*, *Tank* and *Toiler* and many other early keyboard signatures. Sadly, Dave mothballed the Cembaleet when spare parts became too hard to find. In the current world of



Hohner Cembaleet

technology, it has proved a challenge to totally replicate this instruments distinct sound. One can wonder if a wizard like Dave can't raise extinct instruments Frankenstein-like, then who can?

The trusty **Mini Moog** which was used on instrumental freak-outs like *Nubiles* and *Nice 'n' Sleazy* sat

on top of his rig up right up until **The Raven** era when the set-up changes to accommodate the masses of



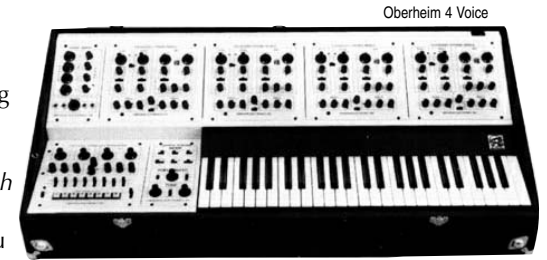
Mini Moog

new analogue synths. Some great psychedelic sounds were got by feeding the Hammond through it. Remember those glorious swirling phasings on tracks like *Wog*, *Dead Ringer* and *Death & Night & Blood*. Check out the break in *Curfew* played live the next time you watch *The Old Testament* video, and you'll know what I mean.

Once **The Raven** came out in September '79, synths like the **Oberheim OB-XA** were added, along with the truly colossal **Oberheim 4 Voice** and the **Korg Vocoder**. This last synth is well-known for Dave's vocal parts for *Baroque Bordello*, *North Winds* and *Always the Sun* – not to mention JJ's *Freddie Laker*. And

who could forget the tiny black and yellow **Wasp** synth with its unique flat keyboard?

During some gigs, another Oberheim sat next to the Mini Moog. Was it an **OB1** which he used for the sample and hold effect on *Just Like Nothing On Earth*? Possibly. It was around this time that the **Hohner Cembaleet**



Oberheim 4 Voice

disappeared into dust to be replaced by the touch-sensitive **Yamaha CP30**. Anyone who has the video of the Battersea Park gig can see Dave he uses it for the chorus arpeggios on *Hanging Around*. A big instrument!

According to Dave, the fast arpeggios on *Toiler* where particularly difficult to play on the CP30 as it was touch-sensitive. Can you spot the Oberheim 4 Voice on this video too?

Well, that sums up the rig Dave employed right up until 1979, although which Oberheim is played where might be open to discussion. One might suspect even Dave might be excused from recalling such anorakian details!



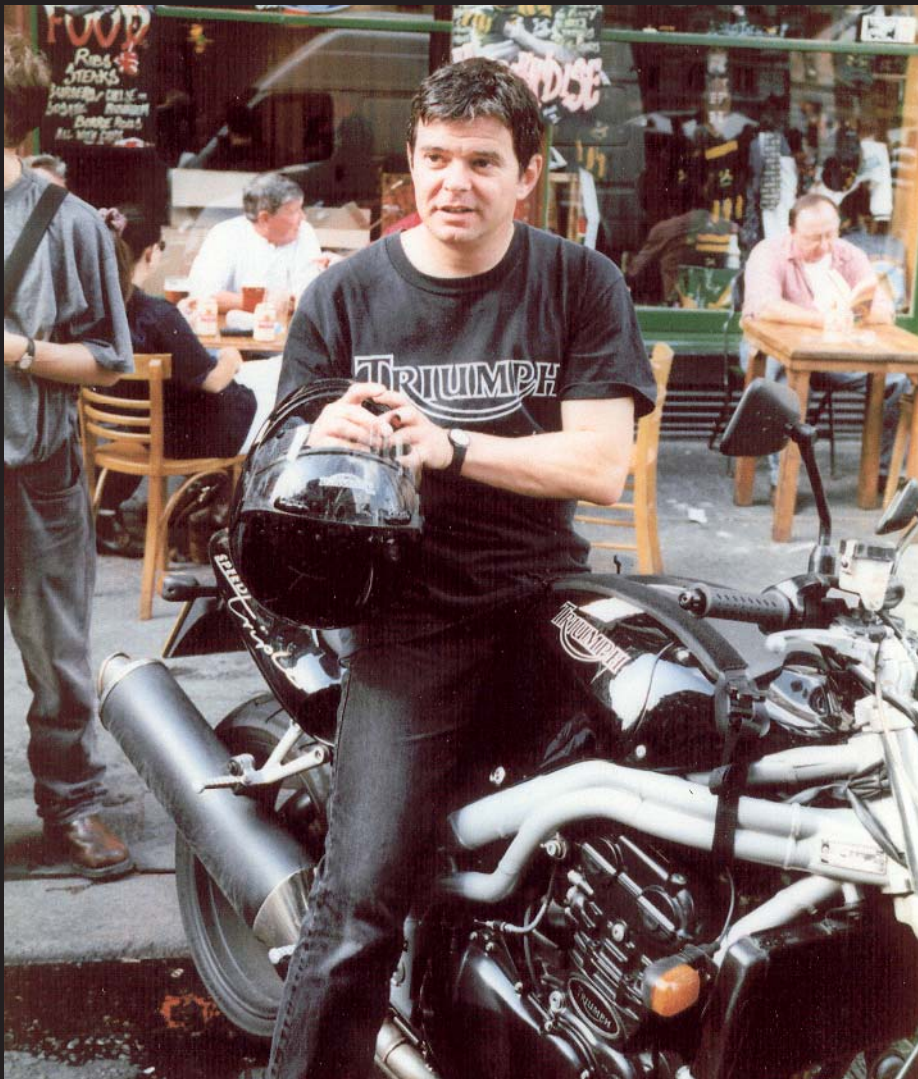
Yamaha CP30

Dissecting Dave's organs

JJ Burnel talks to **Gary Kent** about new songs, *Black And White*, why Sweden is off the smorgasbord and the trouble with Jet

Euroman cometh and all that

Interview: 30 June 2005



JJ in Covent Garden in 1999, a bit younger then...

Pic: Ian Keiller

CALL me a perceptive, insightful old fool if you must – but I thought I could detect a subtle hint of sarcasm in Jean Jacques Burnel’s clipped “Thanks, Gary.”

The big superbike belonging to our bass-playing black-belted icon had stalled right before me as it mounted the kerb, leaving the rider momentarily marooned, with half a tonne of motionless metal between his legs.

I’m at the Barbican, Thursday 30 June, 2005. Having just arrived outside JJ’s Central London dojo – following a piss and a swift pint of Dutch courage in the pub on the corner – I slide open my phone and check the time. It’s just gone 5 o’clock and there’s a text message here. It’s from JJ.

Is he about to cancel the interview, I wondered? I open the inbox as I take shelter from the summer rain beneath the modern cloisters adjacent. A quick glance in the direction of Chiswell Street, and one of the capital’s seemingly ubiquitous courier bikes purrs unobtrusively along the cobbles. Or so I think.

The rider slows up, his eyes briefly meet mine, probably prowling for a place to park before mounting the kerb, and pduff... The engine stalls halfway onto the pavement. Off comes the helmet, and a fit-looking and furtive JJ appears. Still astride his bike, he single-handedly steers the now-silent Triumph towards its bike bay.

“Thanks, Gary. For the help.”

I add to the feint rhetoric with something along the lines of not getting involved with anything less than four wheels on it. “New bike, is it?” I playfully venture while JJ alights his macho machine with a cocked leg and a cockier grin.

“Yeah – good old Triumph!”

He straightens up his clothing, and we walk up the steps to the airy foyer of the fitness club that houses his dojo.

“I texted you about 10 minutes ago,” he says, “to see if you were here yet.”

“Yes, I just got that – I was in the, err, car park. Probably...”

We sat down together at a teak table by the bar, away from the clanking pool table and the tennis on the telly. Little did I know just what a sonic impact these would play on the interview’s mini-cassette when I got home. Meanwhile, the dank smell of distant deodorant and muscle-bound men filled the cosmopolitan health and fitness centre.

I couldn’t help being reminded of the 16-year-old lad living in Leytonstone: an acne-faced adolescent who sat watching JJ’s experimental Euroband play to an empty auditorium at Gants Hill Odeon in April 1979. It was an amazing spectacle, with so few choosing to witness it – not one kid from my school went. Not only did I have the whole of the stalls to myself and an unobstructed view, but I felt privileged to be allowed inside what felt like a private gig, especially watching JJ

lovingly drag his sluggish Bonneville beast onstage to roar and splutter through the instrumental *Triumph Of The Good City*.

"Yes, cos Bonneville means good city – and it was also one of the titles in Plato's Republic."

Jean Jacques Burnel was in a good mood after all: I think he likes dishing out a little cheeky banter to start with. He's like me, except he got in there first. We poured our pots of tea into service station-style tea cups and sipped our glasses of iced water. Conversation was easy and buoyant as I studiously set up my Dictaphone and paperwork with all the prompters neatly in front of me. JJ quizzed the Euro-garçon who served us:

"I know that accent, where is it from?"

He asked. "Aah, I had a girlfriend from there. She was a famous dancer. You know her...?"

With a view to getting the interview under way, our Stranglers small talk went as effortlessly into something far more intellectually uplifting and stimulating, something deep and thought-provoking...

The Battersea Park strippers!

"Well, I was seeing a girl called Tracey," recalled JJ. "She had a flat she shared with her sister Jane, who was 16 – along with Linda, who'd been a girlfriend of Carey Fortune – one of our very first fans when we were playing the Nashville Rooms on a regular basis, and later became the drummer for Chelsea. We called him Mutant... he was also our roadie. He was a bit of a body builder, although he was only about five ft nothing – but he was also quite a violent little bloke – he had a lot of issues... Anyway, Linda was living in the flat and she offered to strip for us on *Nice 'n' Sleazy* at the Brighton Conference Centre first. So she did that. It was very

un-PC even in 1978, but we'd been accused of sexism ever since the first line on the first album. For the Battersea gig that summer, Linda asked if she could bring some friends along who would be more than willing to show them who's in control. Jane of course, volunteered herself, and she was one of the highlights of that video. She was stunning.

You still in touch with any of the girls?

No. I lost touch with Tracey and Jane, although I did speak to them a few years ago, but Tracey had issues with me: she didn't like the way we split up. But Jane became a world expert in dolphins.

What else do you remember about Battersea?

I'd burned my hand on the exhaust on my Triumph Bonneville, cleaning it or something. So I wore a white bandage round my wrist to stop it rubbing on the strings cos it was very painful. I remember some Finchley Boys there, and going back to Tracey and Jane's flat in Ealing after the gig. There was one guy from Sheffield who I met after one of the gigs who was there – he died shortly after that in police custody.

He was a fan?

Yeah, we used to meet fans sometimes in hotel bars – we never cut ourselves off from fans – it was a great way to meet girls too!

After two albums in six months, how come you set to work so quickly on the third?

Well we hadn't really written for a while. We'd done *Rattus* and *No More Heroes*, and apart from a few songs, maybe, we





Belfast Ulster Hall 7/9/78

Pic: Alastair Graham

hadn't written any new stuff. So, we had quite a lot of ideas already, because we'd been collecting ideas, so there were lots of songs ready to be written.

You already had 5 Minutes, didn't you?

We had that on the *No More Heroes* tour at the end of 77 that's right. But we didn't put it on an album which was kind of silly really.

Bit like Strawberry Fields/Penny Lane not on Sgt Pepper's..?

Well, we did all the wrong commercial moves, if you want. In retrospect, I think it was quite a nice thing to do.

Nowadays if you had a hit single, you'd want it on an album. But at the time, we had a certain way of thinking.

Did you feel under any pressure to write the next hit?

Yeah – the management desperately wanted us to write. They'd been building an empire: they had moved from a little office in Wandsworth to a big building in Oxford Street and we were living in squats and floors.

So were your royalties yet to come through at that stage?

No, they would have started coming in. They gave us a bit of money but we hadn't done much about it. I think Hugh was still living at his friend's flat in Egerton Gardens, off the Brompton Road. I sometimes slept on the floor there along with some college mates of Hugh's. I think everyone at the end of 78 was looking for

houses. We had money. But before then, after Chiddingfold, I wasn't living anywhere. I was living where I could. I spent a lot of time round Tracey's, although I was a bit naughty... I was like a kid in a sweet shop: I had a lot of girlfriends, and I had a lot of things available to me. I was a young, good-looking boy with a motorcycle, and I slept wherever I felt like it.

When the chance of living at Bearshanks for a couple of months came up, I jumped at it. I remember everyone went away for Christmas, and Dave was married by then, and they all had families. I didn't have any family or anything. So I spent the whole of Christmas at Bearshanks with various girlfriends coming up to keep me company.

But in all that time, I'd been mucking about with guitars, playing and writing a few riffs and songs. I remember coming up with *Toiler* – as much as Hugh likes to think he did it – it's definitely a JJ kinda song!

You hummed the melody line to Hugh, didn't you?

I was actually playing it with Dennis of the Finchley Boys. He drummed to it.

Was he a drummer?

Naah, but he could sorta keep time. The rehearsal room was right next door to the house, and one night I started assembling the parts to what became *Toiler On The Sea*. The lyrics were written by Hugh following a disastrous Christmas holiday with a very pretty Japanese girl to Morocco.

Suddenly the chime of JJ's mobile went as a tinny *Toreador 1* rang out from his

Nokia. It's that annoying ring tone you hear in restaurants, pubs and the tube. Even the Crazy Frog would have been less annoying, and more appropriate, to a degree.

"It's not my phone, Sil got me this. I lost my one. Hello?"

For JJ's karate students, tonight was the big one: it was the heats and a chance for them to impress the boss. While karate-talk ensued between the caller and the 6th Dan, I couldn't help wondering what it would be like getting in a tangle with the master, and me – a complete and utter martial arts no-hoper, but nevertheless a force to be reckoned with in an arm-wrestling tournament.

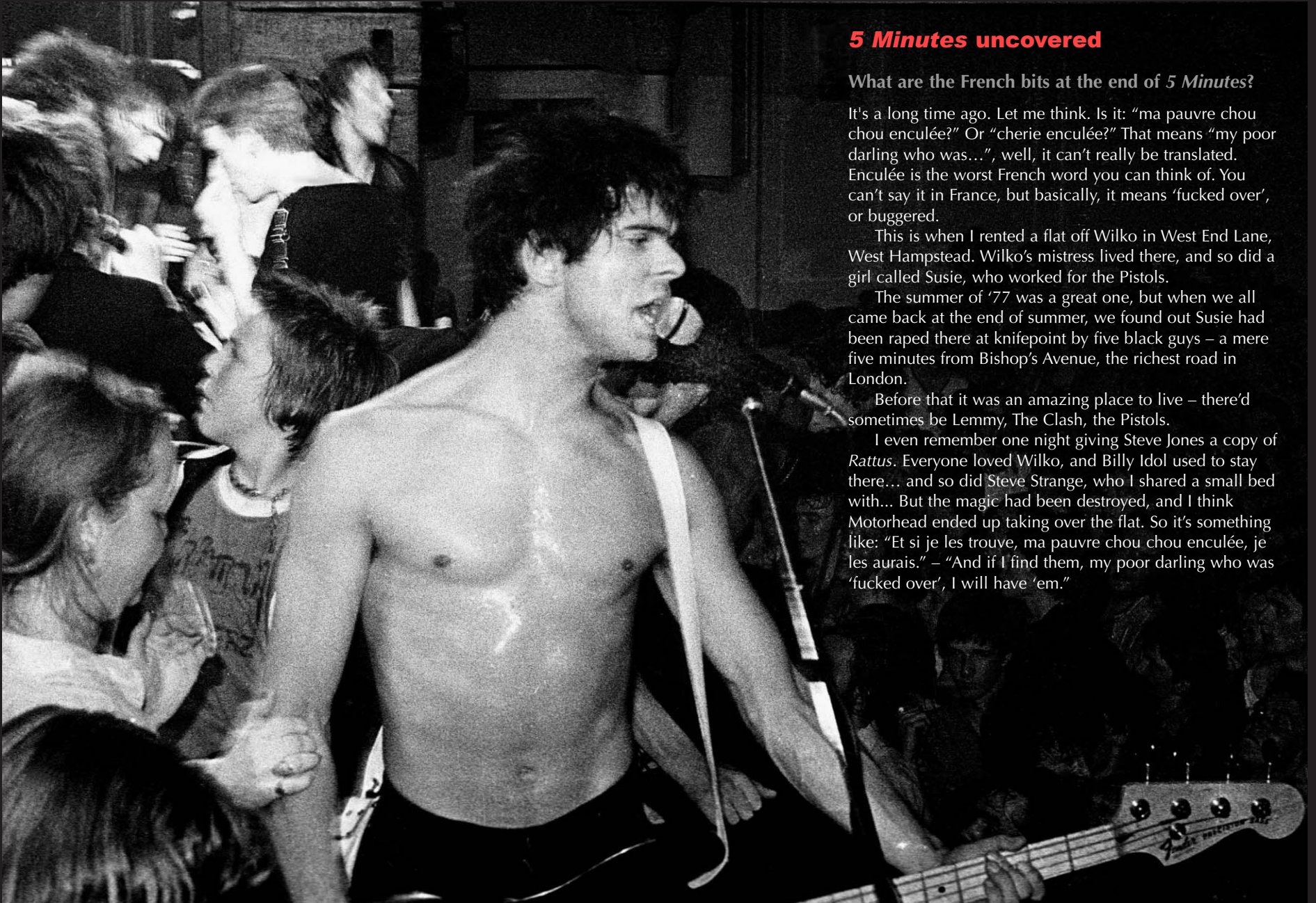
Could a surprise flick of a fist break the man? Stun him long enough to floor him with a forearm smash? Would he return with quality kyokoshinkai – or just a swift kick to my nether regions as if he was aggressing an aggravating music scribe from the late 70s, swatting him dead like an annoying fly in the ointment? Last year Goldblade's John Robb confided to me JJ hurled him across the room – and that was just practice!

Did you do need to do demos for Black And White?

No, we didn't do demos in those days. We do now. In two weeks we'll start demoing three to four new tunes which are completely under our belt. There are about seven songs we're kicking about with.

You're working full-on for the next album, aren't you?

Yeah, yeah. Y'know in music, when you're on a creative roll, it would be crazy to ignore it. We want it to get it right.



5 Minutes uncovered

What are the French bits at the end of *5 Minutes*?

It's a long time ago. Let me think. Is it: "ma pauvre chou chou enculée?" Or "cherie enculée?" That means "my poor darling who was...", well, it can't really be translated. Enculée is the worst French word you can think of. You can't say it in France, but basically, it means 'fucked over', or bugged.

This is when I rented a flat off Wilko in West End Lane, West Hampstead. Wilko's mistress lived there, and so did a girl called Susie, who worked for the Pistols.

The summer of '77 was a great one, but when we all came back at the end of summer, we found out Susie had been raped there at knifepoint by five black guys – a mere five minutes from Bishop's Avenue, the richest road in London.

Before that it was an amazing place to live – there'd sometimes be Lemmy, The Clash, the Pistols.

I even remember one night giving Steve Jones a copy of *Rattus*. Everyone loved Wilko, and Billy Idol used to stay there... and so did Steve Strange, who I shared a small bed with... But the magic had been destroyed, and I think Motorhead ended up taking over the flat. So it's something like: "Et si je les trouve, ma pauvre chou chou enculée, je les aurais." – "And if I find them, my poor darling who was 'fucked over', I will have 'em."

Belfast Ulster Hall 7/9/78

Pic: Alastair Graham

For Norfolk Coast, you went away to Hunstanton to write songs. Recently, you went to Looe in Cornwall didn't you?

Yeah, me and Baz. I get on very well with Baz, he's been a complete shot in the arm for the band. I mean, he even plays a Telecaster like Hugh did. But when I went to Norfolk, Baz wasn't in the band.

Do all stay over at Charlton Farm, Sil's studio complex?

Well, Jet commutes as he only lives about 40 minutes away. Baz is in Frome, Dave still lives up in Cambridgeshire, but he occasionally stays in, and I stay wherever I feel like staying. I'll sleep in the barn, or in Baz's house...

It sounds a bit like the Bearshanks era?

Yeah, it does. Just with a bit more money in my pocket, flashier motorcycles. I'm still a kind of nomad really. I have a sleeping bag always in the back of my car.

What other memories of Bearshanks do you have? Was it a derelict shit-hole?

No. But it was a bit *farmy*. The rooms were cosy, and I liked the idea of having somewhere to live for a while. And because we had so many ideas anyway, it wasn't an effort. On the first day we just wanted to make as much noise as possible, get some booze and have a party. I remember we wrote Shut Up there in 10 minutes. I also remember getting Laura Logic up there to rehearse with us on *Hey! (Rise Of The Robots)*.

In 'No Mercy' it says you arrived with Hell's Angels and Finchley Boys. Is that true?

No... No Hell's Angels. Finchleys yes, because Dennis used to drive us in our band car, which was a Ford Granada Ghia... "Hi..."

M. Burnel's gaze was distracted by a female member of staff from the centre; a tall elegant Swedish-looking beauty with her long blonde locks scraped back, dressed in a tight white blouse and an even tighter black skirt. I'd already spoken to her when JJ went to the loo, and I momentarily fell in love just minutes before. Now it was JJ's turn to flirt, cunningly using the subject of food to lure her with his enticing charms.

"Hi. Hello. How are you? Are you on duty tonight? Cuz I think one of my girls was inquiring about some sandwiches being laid on. It's for the karate club. Is that okay at such short notice..?"

It was okay, apparently. I think most things could become 'at short notice' right now as her delicious curves disappeared round into the aluminium kitchen area.

...No, definitely not Hell's Angels. Dennis, possibly Steve [Hillier], Daddy and a few others. They often went around in a convoy anyway.

Who were you closest to around the time?

Hugh. Hugh and I were as thick as thieves.

Didn't you write the beginnings of Euroman Cometh here?

Crabs was the first song. Oh, I remember when I started recording that, at TW Studios – I had nowhere else to sleep. I'd

just been given the key and when Martin Rushent and everyone left, I'd sleep there in the studio. I got stoned with some Finchley Boys, and set about doing Crabs.

The lyric – bring me a piece of my mummy, she was quite close to me. What was that all about?

Er, well, it's er...

Threatened.

Threatened, yeah. Erm, one night I went out with these people in London who I think were to do with Rough Trade, funnily enough, and we were talking about the architecture in London, and I was saying: it's not bad, I rather like it. Some of it I do, some of it I don't – and I said: opinions aren't really important, they should just exist unless they threaten you.

It went on to things that are threatening, narcissism – a mish-mash of philosophical ideas, and one of them was because I enjoyed shocking people with the subject of cannibalism, cos it was kind of an interesting fetish, eating people... I can't remember the whole logical sequence 27 years on...

The likes of Hey! And Enough Time were filler tracks for the album, according to Stranglers literati?

I wouldn't describe them as filler tracks, cos it was quite weird, experimental stuff – sometimes you succeed, but you don't know where or how it's going to go. They're not great classic numbers but I wouldn't call them filler tracks. We had other filler tracks... But I don't think anyone in the band would say "Oh, we just need three minutes to fill up."

But that's what Martin Rushent stated in No Mercy – there's about three or four minutes of time left, we need another song. You had a bass line already and Enough Time developed from there.

He did? Oh well, that's possible.

Morse coding in Enough Time – This is planet Earth – we are fucked, whose idea was that?

You know, I don't know.

Dave?

I assume he played it, but we had to find out off someone... don't forget there were ideas coming fast and furious, some crazier than others.

Dividing the songs between you and Hugh, the White side and the Black – how did that come about?

Everything was getting polarised for us. Being cast aside by our own peer group, so to speak, and a developing siege mentality. We said: Fuck 'em, we don't care – we'll be all alone. All these so called mates of ours, fuck 'em – you're either with us or against us. We didn't fucking care – it was even more so The Stranglers versus the rest of them. With the siege mentality, we didn't care, and we were sufficiently strong enough to get away with it, so it was an expression of our times.

We saw everything in black and white. Everything was polarised, we were polarised and we started to be aware we could be quite global physically and also intellectually questioning. So we thought one side could be melodic, and the other side brutal, hard and soft – because The

Stranglers always had a brutal side as well as a melodic side.

Do you think the Black And White album worked?

At the time it worked – it went straight in at Number 2. I think it was quite revolutionary at the time. Since, it's become a reference point for a lot of people, and only now they'll admit to it as an influence. You couldn't mention The Stranglers. Now it's almost hip to.

In No Mercy it says you quit the band after a stormy argument at Bearshanks, with your management having to patch it up. Why was that?

I don't know. I don't remember that.

Do you remember Billy Bragg staying at Bearshanks?

Billy, yes. He was alright then, it's just later on he was up his own arse with his politics, I thought.

And Ruan O'Lochlainn?

Ruan was quite an eccentric, lovely guy. He's dead, isn't he? Probably from booze... He loved his drink. He was into booze, drugs, everything. He's been in some bands from the pub rock scene and Dai Davies and Derek Savage knew him running a few pubs – the Red Cow, The Nashville Rooms, playing the Hope & Anchor on a regular basis.

He took the cover shot of Black And White at Bearshanks too, did he?

Yes, but I can't remember where that was taken, maybe in a studio somewhere. But

there were shots taken of us playing chess out in the snow in the garden. Was it Fin Costello who took some of those black and white shots? Jet's the one who would have copies of everything. He's the archivist, he's the band historian.

Only two pictures came from that session – the other appeared on the back of the Sverige single. Black And White was unusual in that the two front men weren't to the fore. How did that come about?

I've no idea, we may have thought about it ourselves. I wonder if Ruan's widow has any of those? Actually, Ruan's son contacted me a few years ago saying he started up as a bass player in a band because of me.

Martin Rushent didn't like some of your material, did he?

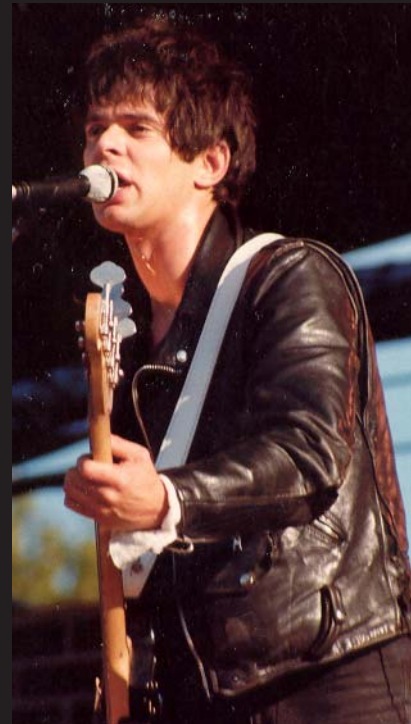
Wasn't that *The Raven* stuff when we started parting company?

In No Mercy it says as early as In The Shadows in late 77 he dismissed the less melodic Stranglers songs – he said he thought it wasn't really a song.

Well, he was onto a good money maker, though. I remember when we went to the **Black And White** launch in Iceland, Martin at one point he said to me and Hugh: "Are you happy with your management?" He'd put little ideas into our heads... intriguing.

Carey Fortune, who you mentioned earlier, was reported as far back as 1977 to have put himself up in place of Jet on drums.

Even back then we had a couple of drummers to fill in for Jet.



No – in No Mercy it said he wanted to replace Jet.

Oh really? That is possible. Funnily enough, he contacted me a couple of years ago. I replied to a couple of his emails, but he was after too much, but he wanted to get back into our lives – mine and Hugh's life. I wasn't interested, he'd had alcohol problems for years and too much baggage, and we'd moved on. When someone contacts you after 20 years, you either want to reconnect or not. But there was always a bit of tension regarding Jet anyway.

He's got his own mind. It's been a good thing for the band, but his health has always been a problem. In the early days, before we signed up, we had to have a substitute drummer for one gig in

southeast London. He just couldn't do it.

About two weeks ago down at the Farm, we did a list of all the drummers we've ever had in the band. We got about seven or eight drummers listed. Keith Tobe, a Japanese guy who did the whole American Tour, Tim Bruce, a mate of Paul's... Rat Scabies – he was just awful. He did just one gig with us. He couldn't keep time to save his life! We flew him over from Germany, and he got to the gig with 10 minutes to go, and it was a big havoc to set up for the gig. It was in the middle of one song where he just couldn't get the timing.

So I stopped the show. I went up to the crowd and said: "I've got to explain to you, Rat Scabies has helped us out at short notice, he's been travelling all day to get here because Jet, our drummer's ill, so can we have a big hand for Rat for helping us out..." and that was the end of the tour. The next day, Paul lost his voice. They'd all caught everything, end of the tour. Cancelled it.

Was there a promo video made for Nice 'n' Sleazy?

There was one. It was terrible. Absolutely terrible. It was shot in a studio like a sleazy night club with girls and feather boas and red lighting, dressed all sleazy and we refused to let it be shown.

There was one for Walk On By, wasn't there?

Is that not on any of our videos? Oh well, that's with a Dionne Warwick lookalike, with George Melly and Lew Lewis in it, and Hugh directed it. It's quite good, it's a play on Blow-Up. Where you see someone in the bushes and you're not

sure if you've seen the murder, and filmed in the same park. I'm sure it's on one of our video collections. It's a red video isn't it, not the Greatest Hits.

You always seemed to attract trouble on tour in Sweden, didn't you?

Oh, the Raggere? They ruined our tour. They all had 50s American Graffiti haircuts and big American cars. The first time, they came to beat us up. They'd heard about Punk bands. Suddenly a whole posse of about 40-50 cars rolled into this clearing – it was a huge chalet in a wooded clearing just outside town – with the cops guarding the gate. They just drove straight through the gate, I don't know what happened to the cops.

We were in the dressing rooms on the first floor, but our crew were on ground level. These guys, four to five in each car, came en mass and beat up our crew and smashed our gear up. We managed to escape into the surrounding woods, and we managed to put some petrol into bottles and threw them at their cars with them inside. We got back, picked our things up, drove to Helsingborg and caught the ferry back to Copenhagen... ha ha!

Every time we played there, it's been a disaster. At one time, Jet destroyed a whole restaurant. Most of us were sitting round this huge semi-circular table in this restaurant on the first floor of this hotel. We'd all ordered our food, and then Jet turns up and sits there waiting for his food. He thinks: I'm not getting any attention here. And there are all these families sprinkled around us.

So he walked out to the foyer and came back with one of those Pac Man Games things, unplugged, and dropped it in the middle of the restaurant and said: "Now they'll notice me." Well, they didn't – but

all the families who were eating just fucking scarpered, all the waiters were shitting themselves. And we thought: Jet, this is not very cool thing to do, we don't need this. Then Jet picked up a chair and smashed it right round the bar – a bit like here – smashing all the glasses and bottle, and then threw the chair through the window!

We thought: We're not going to eat, are we? So we all went up to our rooms. About five minutes later, all of our rooms were opened up – machine guns, armed police, and escorted 120 km to Stockholm Airport. We then had to sleep in the airport that night.

I think the Raggere died off... We weren't very popular in Sweden, what with three times having troops involved! Although we toured there in the 80s because Feline was a bit of a hit out there, and we managed to play a gig in Stockholm in tact.

What are your memories of the Black And White launch in Iceland?

Well all these journalists, although they seemed to not like us and criticised us badly, they were all up for a jolly. I mean, we chartered a plane – we had our own plane – and all the journalists got absolutely fucking pissed, and we intended to seek revenge on a few of them... Tim Lott...

I met Tim Lott a couple of years back in Epping Library, he's a really nice guy – but as soon as I said the word Stranglers to him, he started backing off into the bookshelves saying: "You're not an associate of the band, are you?"

I think he's a good writer, I liked his articles in the Standard. I didn't have a problem with him, but he was like

everyone else and jumped on this anti-Stranglers bandwagon or pro-Clash pro-Pistols bandwagon. We were selling more records than those guys, but he would write some nasty stuff. I remember Tony Parsons came on tour with us at Cambridge, at the end of 77, and he didn't like the whole Finchley Boys scene, and he'd managed to recruit a few musicians to the Socialist Workers Party, and we were just toeing the fucking line.

So, we weren't gonna suck up to these cunts, so it was like war, really. It's like Jon Savage – he wrote something scathing, and one of us had a go at him, and he got up to attack me and I punched his lights out – and at the Red Cow – which was in front of everyone – Jake Riviera, Andrew Lauder, our A&R guy who was lovely, Elvis Costello, Nick Lowe – all these people saw what I did.

In that period, we made a lot of enemies, bless 'em, with these people who got in a lot of quite influential positions within the music industry and literature. Tony Parsons, Julie Burchill...

Do you regret that?

No, not at all. I regret the long term effect it had on it. But on the other hand, we're still going, and a lot of them aren't. So maybe that animosity gave us the strength to fight our corner.

Towards the end of 1978, the band famously walked off stage at Surrey University on Rock Goes To College TV programme – any regrets there?

I suppose I have to regret the impact, the perception people had of us. But we didn't make any threats or anything. Our plugger resigned that particular night, the BBC TV banned us for many years.

And Michael Appleton became the producer on the Old Grey Whistle Test. Would you have played it had you been invited?

Yes, of course. We would have done anything. But as it happened, we had to do it without any help whatsoever.

Once 1978 and **Black And White** was portrayed as JJ perceived it, I found myself returning to Euroman Cometh. I listened in awe as JJ spoke of these old early electronic drum boxes being put through loads of filters and reverbs in the 24 track to end up sounding as superb as they did. Bossa Nova 1... Bossa Nova 2.. Rock Beat 1... He also mused about the planned follow-up to Freddie Laker – The Girl From The Snow Country – had the record company not tried to release the demo instead, without his consent.

A young girl, an architect apparently, joined us and she excitedly spoke of the apprehension she felt about tonight's heats, having gained her black belt three weeks ago in Japan. Then that awful *Toreador 1* rang from JJ's pocket once more... The karate class was due to start shortly, and it was time to rap up the interview. JJ went off with his student to get changed and do battle.

My battle started when I got home. To my horror, my mini-cassette had also recorded the Centre's entire ambient racket to help smother JJ's soft tones: the clanking of balls from the pool table, Wimbledon on the TV, the coffee cups and saucers in the bar, the Centre's fire alarm – they're all in there. It just took three days to decipher it all. But I left sated, and pleased that JJ was such a great interviewee. One piece of advice though: get that ring tone changed. □



Black and white innit?

TV punk pundit, *Goldblade* front man and author **John Robb** recalls what he describes as the first post-punk album

THE Stranglers stormed punk. The surly outsiders gate-crashed the party and instantly made a connection with Britain's musically disaffected teens.

They were the biggest selling group of the period and their songs were anthems. The 'experts' tried to deny their presence but the band were breaking all the rules and were getting the utmost respect from the new generation – releasing two great albums stuffed full of brilliant rock 'n' roll.

The halcyon days of 1977 saw The Stranglers work non stop to establish their bass driven, yet melodic, prowling machismo. A brilliant combination of direct punk rock, snarling, neo-psychedelic keyboards and genius guitar lines. Somehow they managed to barge a space into the over-subscribed rock 'n' roll pantheon – a formula that no-one had meddled with before.

Late 77: they were back in the studio again, a work rate that seems incredible these days when bands put out albums once every two or three years. They were in Bearshanks Lodge working up, for the first time in their career, a whole new set of songs. Instead of resting on their laurels they took everything that was best about their sound and exaggerated it for a series of numbers that would see the band at its most stark and experimental.

The **Black And White** album released in 1978 is, arguably, the first post-punk album. And nowadays when post punk is re-examined and re-evaluated and bands

like Gang Of Four get elevated to godlike status, it's time to look back and see who got in there first.

This was 1978 remember – punk was staggering and there was little else; Joy Division were still in a formative stage, bands like the Stranglers were leading the way – Peter Hook is still cool enough to tell you who his bass god was.

The Stranglers had arrived at that dark hued period that came after punk: the sombreness that hung around after the glorious failure of the punk revolution. A time when nuclear war seemed to be less a bad nightmare and more a horrible reality. When Britain still looked shabby and the charts were full of shite – it wasn't for no reason at all that The Stranglers were dressing in black.

These were dark times, there was a pessimism and a cynicism in the air and the Stranglers caught this flavour in their new set of songs.

There is a journey into a heart of darkness here, a whiff of the nihilistic cordite of 1978...

Everything about **Black And White** is perfection – from the songs, to the sound, to the artwork, to the simple brutal concept. Even the idea of doing a press launch in Iceland, because that country's amazing landscapes somehow looked like how the album sounded, to how cool the band looked at that point.



Black And White was a superb slice of post-punk psychedelia, all twisted landscapes and weird song structures, it was the Stranglers at their most obtuse and yet you could still file it under pop. And a lot of people did as the album hammered into the charts at number 2.

This was a band at the peak of its powers, their best album, their greatest moment (and that's a tough call in a career stuffed full of genius moments) and with the sheer bloody nerve to stretch their sound to a vicious extreme.

Just listen to that bass sound again, it's total perfection, never has a bass ever sounded that good on a record. Heavy rounded ballistic and perfect it realised every note a black Doc Marten imprinted on the song, and yet every lick is so damn melodic. The bass kicking into *Nice 'n' Sleazy* – a neat rat walk of a thing – the chugging intro to *Toiler On the Sea* could only be played by a black belt karate pair of hands. The stark riffs of *Enough Time* are beautifully jagged, the sound of bass carnage, a fantastic horror. And while you

can understand why Hugh would be pissed off with the sheer volume of the bass in this track, it works. It sounds like the gnashing of angry teeth and Hugh's jagged guitar part counterpoints it perfectly, (listen again Hugh – the lop-sided mix of *Enough Time* sounds like perfection now).

Any album that opens with *Tank* is going to be on a winner – firmly in the Stranglers tradition of shit-kicking opener. *Tank* was the single that never was – and yet another example of The Stranglers' knack for writing songs that sounded like their subject matter – the hanging ending that sounds like the bomb is timed beautifully and is a stunning example of the band's sheer musical prowess and dark imagination.

There had already been warnings of where The Stranglers were going with the February 78 release of *5 Minutes* – the darkest and heaviest slab of Strangola so far.

5 Minutes is not only one of the greatest Stranglers singles, it's one of the greatest singles ever released.

The amount of menace and brutal raw power crunched into one track is awe-inspiring. That bass intro alone still sounds as adrenaline busting now as it did all those years ago, and the sledgehammer chorus still packs a punch that ran rings round most of the other punk pretenders around at the time.

Oh and let's not forget Hugh's most psychotic ventures on acid guitar breaks that twangs out of the middle of the song. Let's not forget the B-side, the fab *Rok It To the Moon*, with its crazed bass riff-driven menagerie of madness, the two accompanying video promo clips were the band at their peak as well, the malevolence in JJ's eyes and Hugh's drop dead cool surliness made them look the two coolest beatnik freaks on the scene.

For me, the **Black And White** period starts here, a new darker Stranglers, great for fucked up young psychos from the suburbs cranked up on magic mushrooms to get off to and debate in long meandering walks around boring seaside towns. This record was big for me and my small coterie of dark-clothed friends.

I first heard **Black And White** on the John Peel show: he played the whole album in one go, I tried to tape it one my primitive system and got a crunchy muffled version of it which became manna, the countdown to release day was total excitement. What was the artwork going to like? Was there anything we had missed?

It's hard to imagine now but The Stranglers were dead centre in British pop culture at the time. They were the leaders

On release the album was played over and over. Where were the band going? This was weird new territory and we were hooked immediately, the artwork, like the first two albums was fantastic, the band in, er, black and white. Perhaps their greatest ever promo shot, looking cool as fuck, even Dave – gawd bless him.

We used to play the album back to front: black side first, the song cycle on the Black side went further and further into new places, *Curfew* was a manic and ugly look at an apocalyptic future with music to match, *Threatened* just stank with a weird paranoia and an obtuse lyric and delivery from JJ, *In the Shadows* was a hint at JJ's solo album that was getting recorded at the same time – the barracuda bass and Jet's awesome off-beat drumming took the band somewhere else.

And then it really took off. *Do You Wanna?* was another in that grand old tradition of Dave vocals and he sounded suitably vampiric, as the band jolted and lurched around a crazy riff behind him, and fuck, the bass sound on this is phenomenal, crunching, jagged, bizarre! The way it segues into *Death And Night And Blood* is powerfully effective and JJ's paean to Yukio Mishima and warrior-hood is as about as weird as Strangler music gets. The song oozes the strangest of atmospheres, its clipped verses collapsing into the most evil sounding chorus.

Enough Time had everyone spending weeks trying to decipher the Morse code at the end, it's another great Stranglers album finisher – more weird timings, collapsing drums, and black black black bass sounds.

The Stranglers played Lancaster on the Black and white tour I hired a double decker bus and everyone paid about two quid each and we went up there (about 90 of us). It was one of the great nights in Blackpool punk rock history, the gig was wild and the next day everyone formed a band. The Stranglers were perhaps the catalyst band that came out of punk, their music suggesting so many different avenues to explore.

We went back that night and slapped the album back on again, trying to follow the bass in *Robots*. Getting off on Laura Logic's free-form sax and singing along to its immense chorus, letting the mushrooms wander around the keyboard break in *Sweden* and then falling in love for the millionth time with best song on the album – *Toiler On The Sea* – with its wacky twanging guitar break, its descriptive music and Hugh's first real crooned vocal.

It had ended the gig that night, each member of the band leaving the stage one by one. It's always ended the album for us, played back to front: black side then white side. Perfect.

While bands like Wire and Joy Division rightly get credit for taking punk into new areas it really pisses me off that the Stranglers, who were a far bigger band in real terms, and a far more influential band, get left out.

Black And White is easily as bold and brave as anything produced by any of the hipper bands, and it turned far more kids onto something weirder and freakier in music.

The Stranglers were so far ahead of the pack it was outrageous. The **Black And White** period also encompassed the *5 Minutes* single, *Nice 'n' Sleazy* charting with the sensational punk rock ballad of *Shut Up* on the flipside – that bass run at the beginning! Wow! And JJ's suitably belligerent vocal.

There was also the band's classic mugging of *Walk On By* – the scratchy telecaster intro and JJ's growling bass stealthily coming in and that long middle bit half inched from *Light My Fire* and made all modern and tough for us the punk rock kids!

It's hard to imagine now but The Stranglers were dead centre in British pop culture at the time. They were the leaders. All the post-punk experimentalists came a year or two after, even the black-fixated Goth scene was a few years away. The Stranglers had already been there and done it, and done it the best. They will never get the credit they deserve but, then, we know the truth and that's what matters.

This was a genius band at the peak of their powers.

Like Hugh said in an interview at the time: "It's black and white, innit?" □

I WAS 16 years old when I first heard **Black And White**. A whole 11 years after this fabulous record had been released. In mitigation, I was just six years old in 1978, so I think I can probably be forgiven for my tardiness.

The Stranglers exploded into my consciousness when I was a socially awkward sixth former living in the East London-Essex border suburb of Barking. In common with many teenagers, I was searching for an 'adult' identity and turned to music to help provide it. The late 1980s was a pretty barren time musically, with the likes of Rick Astley, Bros, and Johnny Hates Jazz polluting the airwaves.

Madchester was still in its infancy and decent music seemed at a premium, so when I bought a copy of the **No More Heroes** album in late 1988, the sound of the band completely blew my mind. Bizarrely, I was in a history lesson at school when a teacher played us a video of BBC's Rock 'n' Roll Years, and when I saw The Stranglers on the screen I knew I had to hear more.

Within weeks of making that purchase I had used up my pocket money and savings to buy up the entire Stranglers back catalogue and any item of black clothing available in the shops of Barking. I also had a new idol to look up to; a suave, cool bass player with an exotic name. No-one else at my school was remotely interested in the Meninblack, so I finally had myself some kind of distinctive identity, and a realisation that music meant something more than a wedge haircut and wacky dance routine.

No More Heroes remains, somewhat incongruously, my favourite album of all time, due to its huge impact on me as a teenager, but it was my purchase one Saturday afternoon a few weeks later of *Rattus Norvegicus* and **Black And White**

Jim Drury, co-author with Hugh Cornwell on Song By Song gives us his thoughts on Black And White, and Hugh's amazing memory

Total recall...

on vinyl that launched the start of what was to be a long love affair with The Stranglers.

The first thing to mention about **Black And White**, of course, is the cover; the bold and striking photograph of four menacing men dressed in black on a sheer white background, with no band name or insignia in sight. What a statement. To this day, it's my favourite record sleeve, nudging Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* into a cocked hat.

After listening to side one of **Black And White** on my creaking Sony stereo I was struck by what a powerful and curious record I had just bought, with its references to Hell's Angels, time, robots, and maiming soldiers. *Tank, Sleazy, and Toiler On The Sea* still retain some of their freshness over a quarter of a century on and when I got off my bed to turn the record over I didn't think the next collection of songs could possibly sound any better. However, as I worked my way through the Black Side I was left absolutely dumbstruck by what I was hearing.

As the sheer power and violent promise of Black Side became clear I knew that I would love this band like no other. The first two songs, *Curfew* and *Threatened* contain some of the scariest riffs ever heard. More than a decade later I sat in Hugh Cornwell's living room, interviewing him for the *Song By Song* book, and he explained to me that those strange 'interval' chord sequences in the verses were associated with satanic music.

Hugh casually picked up a guitar from beside his sofa and strummed the spine-chilling chords to *Threatened* – to explain what he meant. I felt the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. Here was Hugh Bloody Cornwell playing one of my favourite songs to me in his living room. Talk about surreal. It's my fondest memory from working on the book.

Death and Night and Blood is another magnificently crafted piece of music, particularly the cross-fade section that follows the bizarre *Do You Wanna?* A small mention should go to Martin Rushent and Alan Winstanley for allowing The Stranglers to move beyond the 'punk' formula that had served them so well on their first two records. As the band took great delight in telling the press at this time, they wanted to test the patience of the listener with bigger and bolder experimentation.

Rushent often gets a slating, from members of the band and the fans, because of his ignominious exit from the Stranglers camp, but his was undoubtedly a steadying hand in the studio. That he threw a wobbly over the recording of the *Meninblack* shouldn't lead to him being written out of the overall picture.

What struck me when speaking to Hugh about **Black And White**, and indeed all the albums from his time in The Stranglers, was what an impressive recall he had on events. Hugh's mind would return to the time in question throughout each of our two hour sessions in his

home, and whenever he didn't have an exact answer to a question, he would at least give an answer that was thought-provoking. No small feat considering the amount of time he and the rest of the band spent off their faces on various substances in the early years. I have written two similar books since, on Squeeze and Ian Dury & The Blockheads, and none of the musicians involved had as clear a memory.

I don't know how much time Hugh spent thinking about each album in preparation for my visits, but he never had a clue what I was going to ask him. I'm sure this helped him be more open with his revelations on life in the band. I'd like to think that our book has gone some small way to explaining the mysteries of the group I regard as the greatest in the world.

Whatever anyone's views on Hugh since he left The Stranglers – and I'll lay my cards on the table as a fan of his solo work – few could deny that the man possesses a truly original mind. I think it's terrific that he is now reconciled with his history as a Strangler and that so many of those songs he wrote in the band are now getting an airing at his live shows.

That the original line-up divided into separate entities is, to my mind, ancient history. Both camps have carved out a niche for themselves and we should all be grateful to have the opportunity to see both The Stranglers Mark III and Hugh performing those old classics.

As for **Black And White**, I don't listen to the album very often these days but whenever it makes a re-appearance on my turntable I remember instantly that I am listening to a work of pure genius. To my mind, the band's first five albums still sound magnificent today, and I can safely say that no-one will ever replace the Meninblack in my affections. □

With another solo single out and an autobiography in paperback, Hugh Cornwell looks back at 1978 and tells **Gary Kent** about making that difficult third album, *Dave's left hand and what George Melly kept in his tin*

Interview: 28 July 2005

Black And White becomes... **Hugh Cornwell**

HUGH was eager to talk about **Black And White** – The Stranglers' first foray into experimental music 27 years ago – and I was keen to ask him questions he hadn't been asked previously, particularly since the publication of Hugh's first book, *Song By Song*. All we had to do now was find a venue to talk.

Hugh was cool and relaxed in jeans and cap, and in close proximity to his West London pied-a-terre: he clearly knew all the coffee shops. The first one, a Starbucks, saw the pair of us traipse through in a line to check its interviewing suitability, but the microphone would have struggled to pick up anything other than the ear-busting percolator and decibel-blasting piped music. I had this theory, as I told Hugh on leaving Starbucks, that the louder the percolator, the crapper the coffee shop.

"It's okay, there's one across the road I know, over there. The guy in there's okay – he once turned down the music before for me."

Meanwhile, an old woman in Wellington boots and Mac meandered nonchalantly ahead of us in the Notting Hill Gate throng. Her extendable dog lead was barely visible, as was the poor diminutive pedigree pooch several metres away from her. The gentle, slightly gangly gait of Hugh Cornwell suddenly came to a halt as his right foot stumbled over the miniature black and white dog.

"D'ya see that?" He said, "I nearly

kicked that dog up the arse!"

With a pied-a-turd narrowly avoided, we crossed over and went inside 'Café', where I took a table at the back, by the bogs. Hugh discretely sorted out the guy behind the counter, and I duly lost a contact lens. In a flash, my ocular device had hopped from Formica to floor, where I spotted it, picked it up, and shot into the loos with it. Upon my return, the muzak still seemed too loud – too loud for recording an interview. So I suggested Hugh asked his guy again, and I couldn't help being reminded of cringing occasions where Hugh screamed at the onstage soundman mid-song when the levels were wrong. And the ubiquitous inter-song aside: "*More guitar please, Mr. Sound Man. Can I hear some acoustic, please? More level... Hello? More guitar – please.*"

Hugh beckoned his guy and gesticulated with a smile and a wave across the shop, and Hugh resumed his chatting and listening as he stirred in the sachet of white sugar into his

cappuccino. As he removed the spoon from the cocoa-sprinkled froth, Hugh suddenly noticed something appear in his cup.

"Look at that," he remarked with childlike charm, "it's a perfectly formed heart-shape!"

"Aaww – it must be love!"

"Listen – is your car gonna be okay on that meter? I'd hate to see you get a ticket."

My mind fleetingly pondered as to whether the likes of Tim Lott or Tony Parsons ever received such attentiveness and I laid my trusty tape recorder mike on the table, as the muzak finally became more ambient and conducive to the chilled afternoon.

"Ah, some classical music. Perfect." Hugh then grabbed my mike and held it in front of his mouth for the entire interview to get the best recording, the consummate professional that he is. He

even kicked off with a few hello – hello – hellos for level.

Having watched Hugh play his solo set many times already this year: a last minute Tsunami benefit at the Market Bar, Islington – The Café de Paris in Leicester Square – The Carling Academy – a drab affair at Croydon's Fairfield Hall – and then the best Hugh gig I've ever witnessed – The Horn in St. Albans, a warm-up to the Canadian leg. Brighton's Komedia gig was also impressive as Hugh combined an acoustic night with readings from *A Multitude Of Sins*. I was naturally keen to kick off by bringing up his solo work.

So *Picked Up By The Wind* is your new single, Hugh?

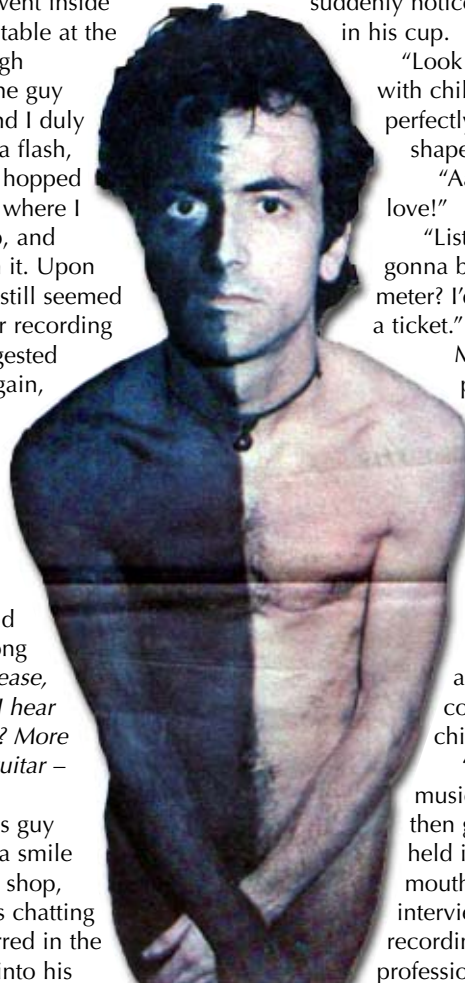
Oh, yes... That's nothing to do with **Black And White!**

No, but it would make a good preamble into the piece on *Black And White*.

Ha. Yeah – we've put some saxes on to it, that's what we've done to it.

Are you still pleased with *Beyond Elysian Fields*?

Oh, fantastically pleased with it. It's proved to be a landmark album for me because it's the first time I've had





extended releases with it abroad: it's coming out in Spain in September, Germany in October, Australia towards the end of the year, and we're talking about an American release, as well as Canada – so it's all looking good.

Will that coincide with a tour?

The rest of this year, we'll be doing the book reading acoustic shows to promote the *Multitude Of Sins* book, and then probably tying in touring in Germany, Spain and hopefully, as I said, further a field later on in the year, and that's it. More touring, really.

You're about to play at the Rockingbeerfest in Godmanchester – is this the first time you've shared a stage with Hazel O'Connor?

Oh, am I? Ha ha! I didn't know that.

And Paul Roberts is on the same bill in La Vida Santana...

Oh really? Is he on the same bill? Do you know what the order of bands is?

No. Aren't you headlining?

I dunno – they just tell me where to go and I just turn up. I think there's some progressive band on after me. I can't remember who, though.

So who's on bass for you – Steve Lawrence or Caz Campbell?

Caz is still filling in for Steve (*adopts a US accent*) who's been abroad on business. He's been working with David Halliday in France so Caz has been covering for him very, very well. So it's down to Steve's availability, Caz's availability, I mean, it's a very loose situation, which I like. I had a chat with Steve last night, he's in great form, I spoke to Caz yesterday – she's very happy. So everyone's just happy to go when and wherever they're needed. It's quite easy.

How did you come by Caz?

Caz is a friend of Windsor's. They played in a band together about three or four years ago – but she was actually recommended to me by Steve, funnily enough! He said: Oh, I know someone who can dep for me in the summer, so we tried her out and she was great.

So how did you meet Steve, then?

I met Steve through Robert Williams. Steve's been in and out of my line-up like a yo-yo. He was the first bass player after CCW, and when I made Wired, Steve came in on bass under recommendation from Robert Williams who I brought in from Los Angeles to play drums, and we were looking for a bass player, and he said: "Yeah – I know a bass player. He's from LA, but he lives in London." So I

tried him out and Steve was great, and he's been in and out forever.

Outside, Notting Hill Gate was a steady stream of silver Met. Police cars speeding past, with engines revving and sirens blazing with wailing Doppler effect. The hunt was on for the London Bombers, and a torrent of security alerts added to the mayhem. Having sat in traffic outside the BBC Television Centre earlier, I was amazed to witness such heavy duty police presence. London was on high alert, and any naïve trust London may have had, had been well and truly tarnished by the terrorists. In fact, Hugh brought up the subject of whether it was safe on the tube. Just before we crossed over, he pointed out a paper stand on the corner with the headline: ARMED POLICE FLOOD LONDON.

Inside 'Café', a mother sat down a few tables away and helplessly watched her baby scream its face through several shades of red. She seemed oblivious to the noise pollution her kid was causing. I didn't know what worse, the noise from outside or the noise from within. Thankfully Hugh had chosen to hold the mike up to his mouth, capturing virtually every word and intonation in the racket.

So the very first day The Stranglers pitched up at Bearshanks Lodge in December 1977 – what was it like?

Bearshanks Lodge... I think we were – well I was – a bit trepidatious about it, a bit unsure of what to expect, because it was the first time we... we were so used to – *I keep saying we, but I mean I* – I was so used to being in a cosseted, familiar environment, and it was very strange to be

suddenly put somewhere I wasn't familiar with to create. It's something you have to get used to. You must remember, for the past two or three years, we'd been living together – first in Guildford, the three of us and then after Hans left and Dave came in at Chiddingfold – and we'd been in a familiar environment. So to suddenly go somewhere we'd never been to ever before – it was completely new territory for us. It was strange. It could have been snowing. I seem to remember the whole period in my head seems to be covered in snow. It was winter... it was very bleak, like Russia or somewhere. It was like we'd been sent to Siberia!

Were there any songs already written?

I didn't think John and I had had even started writing things down before we got there. My memory's hazy, and I might be totally wrong, but I seem to remember we hadn't even started thinking about what songs we were going to write before we got there.

5 Minutes was already written, wasn't it?

Yes, but that wasn't on the record. So that doesn't count towards **Black And White**, does it? Or was *5 Minutes* recorded in the **Black And White** sessions, but not included on the album?

I think so, but I don't know for sure. 5 Minutes was released on 28 February and the Black And White sessions at TW was in February/March, but this is about 1978.

Well, we must have written it before Bearshanks anyway.

Nice 'n' Sleazy was inspired by the Hell's

Angels – did they stay at Bearshanks?

Well the Hell's Angels experience was at the top of my mind. In my mind, I have a file of papers of what's happened to me, and they were obviously right at the top of the pile. I have a feeling it was right there at the top of the pile, or it had just happened to us, or pretty soon before, so I think Sleazy was one of the first songs we'd finished as a composition, when we were writing there. John and I considered Sleazy to be the son of Peaches, with that nice syncopation, that reggae-type feel taken to another stage.

How did you become involved with the Angels?

Well, we had this remarkable introduction to them in Amsterdam, invading our backstage area and becoming our security, but they adopted us, rather than the other way round. We were very much a passive force in this whole relationship... Baby – shut up! Er, I mean, it was a very new friendship, our connection with the Angels, but later down the line, it went into all sorts of things. Like, doing a benefit for their club house in Bournemouth, which ran into disaster.

They were rebuilding their club house and put on a gig, and we were being escorted to the stage by their security, and just on the side of the stage, two of the security were rolling around on the floor, trying to kill each other with knives! I thought: this is kind of ridiculous.

This was even before we'd played the gig! It didn't endear me to their organisation very much. They were just crazy. But it went onto other things after that, but the lyrics to *Nice 'n' Sleazy* were almost a naïve concept of the Hell's Angels.



You took a short break from Bearshanks, didn't you?

I took a break to Morocco, a disastrous trip which I wrote about my experiences and came back with the lyrics to *Toiler – or Toilet With No Seat*, which was what Jet and I used to call it. I think I'd – we'd already worked on the music before Christmas and I went off with this music in my head, it was easier to write because I had this song in my head already.

Did you do demos for Black And White at Bearshanks?

No... we might have recorded but if we did, it wasn't used at any stage. It would have been just for our own... we didn't do that sort of thing, we didn't record rehearsals. I mean Windsor records everything. He records himself brushing his teeth!

Did you feel pressurised to come up with the goods after Rattus and Heroes?

I have a feeling we were under immense pressure to get things done. The first two

albums were virtually from one session with a few songs added, so this was the first time we had gone about the business of writing a whole set of new material for a very long time. There was an immense pressure. When it's the first time you've done something, it's the most pressure. But the more you do it, it becomes easier.

When we did *The Raven*, we'd already done this bit before. "This is like when we did **Black And White** but we're going abroad!" It's not much different.

Swapping snow-filled Northamptonshire for sun-drenched Tuscany!

Yes! But if **Black And White** had been a disaster we'd have been even more nervous going abroad. But because it had worked for **Black And White**, we knew we could try it again. The house we were renting in Italy overlooked a pond with loads of frogs in. At night, all these frogs croaked all night, and it was amazing. At night we used to sit outside with a glass of wine and a joint and listen to the frogs. It was an amazing cacophony of noise coming from this pond, all these frogs mating away in the warm evenings.

When did the title Black And White first come about?

Well, I think there were three things that came up all at the same time. I can't say which one came first, but one was the fact that we were very frustrated at being labelled by so many journalists and none of these labels were we happy with. Out of that came the idea of not wearing any colours, so by wearing black, we wouldn't be giving any indications by our clothes. They'd said we were wearing torn clothes, but the reason we were wearing torn clothes was because they were the only

clothes we had, where some of them were saying torn clothes were being manufactured. So, we said we were going to get away from all these journalistic ideas of labelling us, by wearing black.

Wearing black clothes was trendy wasn't it?

Well, no. Not at that time. I don't think it was. People were wanting to be punks with the whole ethos and the punk fashion took a great hold. The first thing that focused on black was the Ska thing with black suits and white shirts and black ties. Bands like The Selecter and so on, they got on it, but not for the reasons we got on it. That was later.

The second one was at Bearshanks, we became aware of the fact that Jet was reading these UFO magazines, and he explained to me the whole idea about these UFOs, and I said to John and Dave: "You gotta listen to this, it's amazing out of what Jet's reading – it would make an amazing album." Everyone got into it, the idea of the Men In Black. The third thing was making an album with a black side and a white side. So those three things all synchronistically occurred at the same time.

John came up with the idea of wearing all black clothes, and my idea was to have the album called *The Meninblack*, and the album with a black side and a white side as a cumulative thing. As the songs became finished, it became clear that, well – that's a black one and that's a white one. It all happened simultaneously, so for me, it reflects a pattern of thought brought up from these three ideas.

It was a very creative environment when you've got all four people living and working together in a creative place, so you get these things happening. But I

know when we went into Bearshanks, we didn't go in and say: right, we're going to write an album called **Black And White**, so I think it was part of this process.

So, after discovering the UFO topic of the Men In Black, why didn't you call the album Men In Black?

We didn't know enough about the phenomenon at that time. We'd only just been introduced to it. Jet was the only one who knew all about it. I wanted to get genned up on it, and John and Dave wanted to get genned up on it. We wanted to get more immersed in it before we did it. The things we were doing didn't seem right for that – that seemed to be for something further down the line. It was too much to consider then.

What was the magazine Jet was reading?

He's probably still got it. He collects everything. It was a journal which he subscribed to, and he got it once every two months, and it was a UFO magazine, and it was a worldwide thing. People got it from all over the world. I think it was published in America, and I picked up a couple of these things and I was absolutely amazed. You couldn't believe some of the stuff that was written in there. It was all very much a mystery. You couldn't write better fiction from fact.

The idea of splitting the Hugh sung songs and the JJ sung songs into different sides – was that born from the alternating the Hugh/JJ track listings on Rattus and Heroes?

No, I didn't even realise that. The only thing I was aware of was that on the first two albums, a lot of people couldn't tell if

it was me singing or John singing, which I found interesting, and says a lot for Martin Rushent's production! I think he must have encouraged John to sing more properly rather than his operatic thing, or the soft thing, y'know. So no one could tell the difference between our voices and then Dave would sing a song! One on every album. We wanted to do that whole one side of John's musical ideas and my lyrics, and one with my musical ideas and his lyrics, but it was always easier for me to come up with lyrics, and he was always quicker to come up with the musical starts. So it became more 60-40, or 65-35 or something. And I ended up singing a lot more of the songs, I think on the album. Something like 80-20, but the beautiful idea of the black side and the white side didn't actually work in the end, so it was rather good in the end that the limited edition was grey. We wanted originally to have white vinyl on one side and black on the other, and they said: You can't do that.

Who told you that?

The record company. They said: You can't do that. Why not? Well, blah blah blah blah blah... We thought: Well, it's dead easy, it's just that it's gonna cost a bit more money. Do one side in white vinyl and one in black and stick them together, but they couldn't see that. It would have been great, and the cover ended up being almost black on one side and white on the other with the picture. But they said: You can have grey. So we ended up with grey. We could never get what we wanted – *you can't get the staff!*

Like the alternating your vocals and JJ's vocals on the track listing for the first two albums – the singles did that too, didn't they?



My God!

Was that by design?

No, there was none of that going on. What was the B side of *Get A Grip On Yourself* then?

London Lady.

And then what?

Peaches' B side was Go Buddy Go. Something Better Change...

Straighten Out, yeah?

No More Heroes... ah. In The Shadows.

Ah. Fell down there!

5 Minutes and...

Rok It To The Moon, yep.

Nice 'n' Sleazy and Shut Up... Walk On By and Old Codger. So it held up for a lot of the time. The Black And White photograph, whose idea was it to pose

like that with your head down and JJ on his haunches?

It was Ruan, the photographer. It was his idea. I think it was suggested by the fact that we'd started to wear the black clothes, and we were surrounded by all this snow. He took a load of shots outside...

The one playing chess in the snow?

Yes. I remembered I'd just seen the film *The Seventh Seal* by Ingmar Bergman where the guy plays chess with the devil, and if the devil wins, he takes the guys soul. So he plays the devil on this beach in this black and white film, and I thought that would look great in black and white. He wanted to photograph it in black and white, so I said: Let's have a chess set – so we had the black and white thing again.

So we got this chess set out, and we had loads of shots of me and John playing chess – me and John used to play chess anyway, before we realised Dave was a junior chess champion! Thank god we didn't play him! So John and I played a lot of chess while he was taking these shots. It was a very long photo session in a field, and then we went inside and he got the white sheet and that's the one we ended with.

I don't know if you've ever noticed on that front cover shot, but if you look at Dave standing there with his bag on, and if you look at his left hand, it's absolutely immense. It doesn't look real. It looks very odd. It doesn't look like a keyboard players hand – it looks like a butchers hand or something. I don't know, it's always *weirded* me out.

Whenever I look at that photo, I immediately look at Dave's left hand and think: that is a very weird, strange looking

hand. Call me sad, call me funny, but... It's very odd, isn't?

I tell you what's even funnier?

What's that?

The Mod shoes Dave's wearing.

Ha ha ha...

Tell me about Ruan O'Lochlainn.

Ruan was a lovely, lovely man. He was very, very kind and very, very interesting – a dope-smoking hippy – one of the best. He was very welcoming to us. He was an old friend of Dai Davies. He put up with our strange characters and our behaviour and everything – we were a bit grumpy when we first got there, being out of our surroundings.

But once we'd had a few beers with him and relaxed with him, he was fine and very, very welcoming. Made us really feel at home, so that was good.

Why were you so grumpy?

Just at the beginning. We were all so close to each other, y'know, with the managers, and Alan Edwards, it was our family, and suddenly it was: Who is this person? Why are we at their house? We were very distrustful of anyone that wasn't in the family. But once we got to know him, he was lovely, y'know.

Do you remember Billy Bragg staying up there?

I don't really remember him at the time, but I've met him loads of times since then. I remember once I was having a beer with

him, and he said: You don't remember this, but I was that little spotty 14 year old that hung around Bearshanks. He was best mates with Ruan's son, I think. He used to hang out with him, so they were just in the background all the time. So he said: Yeah – that was me. Very funny.

Around this time, there seemed to be some unrest in The Stranglers camp. In Chris Twomey's book, 'The Men They Love To Hate' it says JJ left the band after a stormy argument at Bearshanks, and it was later reported in the London Evening Standard that you confidently predicted the band would not last beyond 1978.

What me? Really? My god! Wow. Well wasn't John doing a solo record at this time? While we were recording **Black And White**, he'd stick around after the session finished and would then record his own stuff after it. I seem to remember that happening, which didn't fill me with optimism for the band. You finish a session with the band, and one of the band members carries on to record his own album, that's probably why I came out with that statement in the Evening Standard. It was a bit depressing, wouldn't you say? But I don't remember a big argument or anything with him. Maybe I was dissatisfied with other things, y'know... tetchy... y'know, that could be interpreted as having an argument.

Were there any tracks that didn't get included on Black And White?

I don't think so. I remember coming up with *Have You Got Enough Time* [sic] right at the dying moments of the sessions because we didn't have enough songs. I mean, we were short of songs. Do you know? Do you have any recollections? We

were short of songs, so we ended up having to do *Have You Got Enough Time* in the studio because we didn't have enough. We'd recorded everything we'd written at Bearshanks, and then Martin Rushent aid: "*Guys, that all adds up to 37 minutes, and it's not enough for an album.*" So we said, Christ, what we gonna do? So we ended up doing *Have You Got Enough Time*, which was quite funny it was called *Have You Got Enough Time* because we didn't have enough time for the album! So with that in mind, I doubt if there was anything thrown away because we wouldn't have dared thrown anything away... *In The Shadows* was done separately, wasn't it left over from the Heroes sessions?

It was the B side of No More Heroes, wasn't it? So that was September 1977.

Yes, yes – so it was a lot earlier, wasn't it?

What else do you remember about recording at TW at this time?

Well, George Melly and Lew Lewis coming down to do *What An Old Codger*...

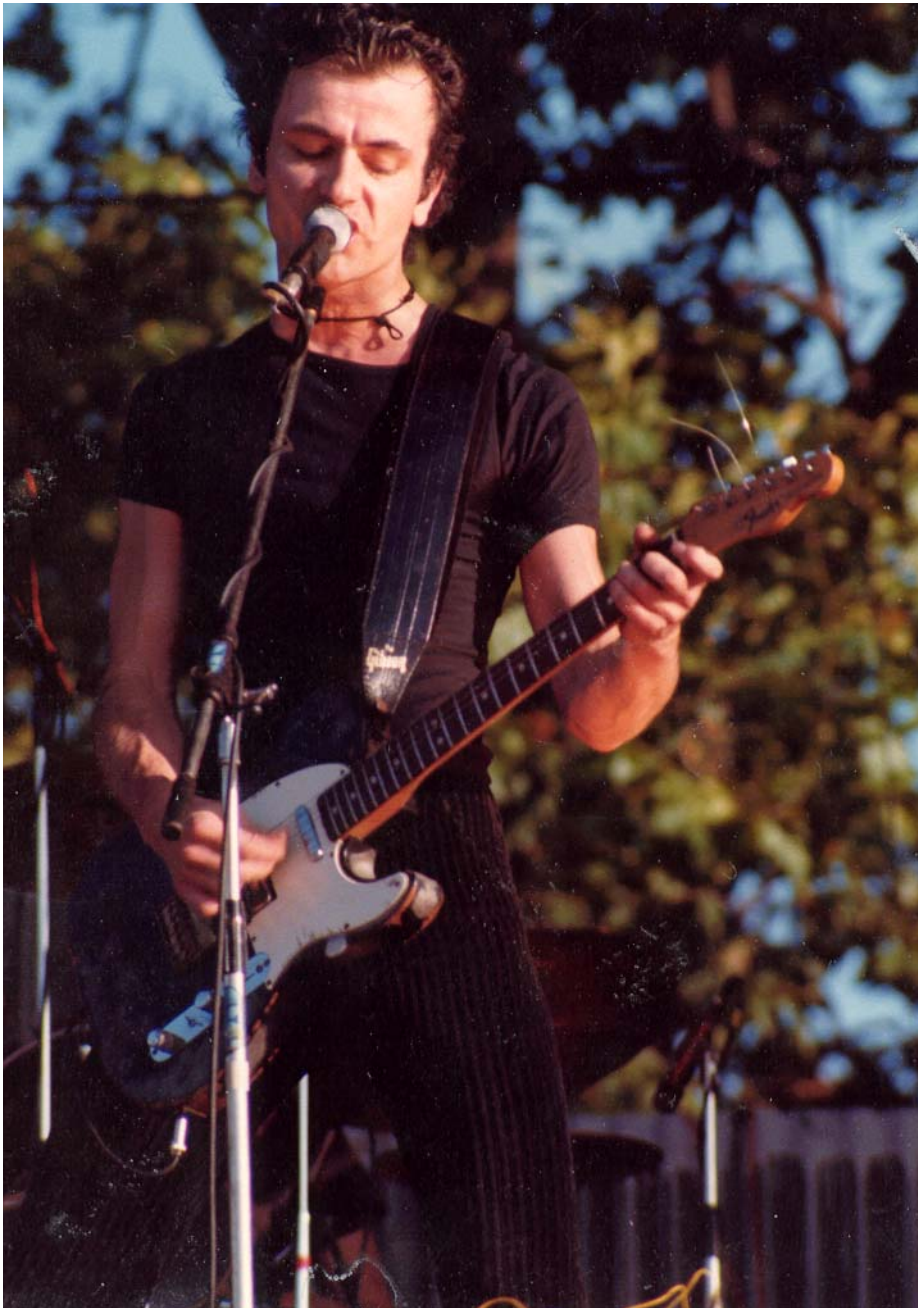
Lew was a bit of a wild man, wasn't he?

They both are. George Melly turned up with a tin, and he gave it to me because I'd said: Do you mind if we roll a joint. Then he said: (*Hugh adopts a very good George Melly mimic*) "*If you're gonna roll a joint, you might as well use some of that. It's rather good.*" He brought out this tin, and inside was this huge fucking lump of very, very strong hashish! So I thought, good ol' George! So he was a bit of a wild man too, well he was in those days. Lew Lewis got very drunk and kept throwing up and he was last seen that day, being



Notting Hill, 28/7/05

Pic: Gary Kent



put on a train to Southend at 2 o'clock in the morning and left by one of the road crew with his body hanging out over the open window. He did get there, and he is still alive, apparently. Another wild evening was when Laura Logic turned up to do the sax on *Hey! (Rise Of The Robots)*.

Jim Drury recalled for *The Burning Up Times* that you played *Threatened* to him on guitar in your living room when you were writing *Song By Song*. You told him the chords were satanic.

Yes, that's right. It's the intervals. If you start with the bottom E, then B flat, and then E again and then B flat. So it's the interval between E and B flat, and you can repeat that on any position on the fret board. And it's a very strange chord position on the neck of the guitar, and my good friend Chris tells me that the interval is used on a lot of these Black Sabbath type satanic mass songs all use that. And I used it in *Mothra* as well.

You wrote the last verse in *Threatened*, saying in *Song By Song* it was about paranoia. Whereas when I asked JJ two weeks back, he said the song is about on architecture. Who's right?

What was the last verse?

Man killed by industry... Man killed by...

...Falling tree... Sanity. Is that in *Threatened*? No, that's *Rise Of the Robots*, isn't it? Man killed by falling tree, man killed by sanity... then John tacked on the bring me a piece of my mummy. Man killed by falling tree – I seem to remember taking that from a newspaper front page headline, so I threw it in. It seemed to fit in at the time.

Why was a video made for *Sweden* – was it destined to be a single?

Well it was in Sweden. People come up to me at my solo gigs with the Swedish version for me to sign, so it must have been released there. I wouldn't say it stormed the charts, though! But *Hanging Around* was going to be a single off the first album but it never was. Lots of things were going to be singles. *Man Of The Earth* off 10 was too. But the video of *Sweden* was only made because we had time left over in the studio. We did the video for *Nice 'n' Sleazy* – which we weren't very happy about – and we had time left over that day. So we improvised *Sweden*.

Why wasn't the video for *Nice 'n' Sleazy* ever shown?

Well, it wasn't very good. It had a lot of men in bowler hats sitting in rows in bent back chairs in front of a stage with a girl stripping and we were playing next to her. And the guys were all sitting there in their bowler hats and umbrellas, and it's really dull and I don't think it ever got used in the end. Someone's got it.

You did the video for *Walk On By*, didn't you?

Chris Gabrin directed that. He was the photographer on that first session for the sleeve of *Get A Grip On Yourself* (as seen on the *Strangled* home page). It's a very strong shot. The *Walk On By* video was my pastiche to Antonioni's *Blow-Up* and we filmed it in the same park.

Maryon Park.

Yes.

What are your memories of the Battersea Park gig?

I remember Johnny Rubbish performing in a dustbin, I think. The Edge played – a band with Jon Moss in, Spizz Oil... I remember Peter Gabriel coming up to me afterwards and thanking me profusely for giving him the chance to play, and I thought: Well, it wasn't down to me, ha! I remember the tank blasting off, a lot of filming, and that's the video they used for Sleazy wasn't it?

Martin Rushent seems to generate stick from the band, doesn't he?

What from producing **Black And White**? He gets stick from the band in general, doesn't he? He'd been brought in from the commercial side of things. And so songs like *In The Shadows* and *Meninblack*, he just saw them as mindless self-indulgence and experimentation which had no business being on a commercial record. That was why he'd been put onto us, to impose some sort of doctrination on us. That was why we got rid of him in the sessions from *The Raven*. Alan Winstanley was doing all the knob-twiddling while Martin was taking a lot of calls from all his investments, saying: "Buy this – have you sold Rio Tinto Zinc yet?" And all this sort of stuff going on, and we thought, well – you should be in here working on our album, or telling us some jokes or something. You shouldn't be on your phone, but it was happening an awful lot.

So you wouldn't work with him again?

Probably not, but he's just worked on Hazel O'Connor's new album, hasn't he? He hasn't done a bad job, actually. It's pretty good. The production's great.

Whether I would work with him again, I dunno. But I bear him no malice.

How do you rate Black And White in relation to Stranglers albums?

Well, I know it's one of the fans' favourites. *The Raven* is probably top, with **Black And White** a close second. But *The Meninblack* – ah, that for me is the best album. It's fantastic. I heard it the other day and it sounded fantastic.

If we were to publish a second edition of The Burning Up Times, do you think we should focus on...

You're thinking of doing *The Meninblack*, aren't you? Yes – it's a great album.

I first heard *The Meninblack* six months prior to its official release. It was August 1980. Jet walked into the SIS office with a cassette of *The Meninblack* to play to his son, Anthony and myself.

What did you think of it?

To be honest, neither Anthony or myself liked it much then. In fact, at the end, we were almost speechless when Jet asked us what we thought of it. All I could muster was: "Not a lot." Jet chuckled and said: "Don't worry – it will grow on you!" It did, of course. But what I noticed in the 80/81 gigs was that *The Meninblack* songs were a totally different story all together played live.

What better or worse?

Miles better live – these songs suddenly came alive.

Really? God! But what you've got to

remember is that... we're getting onto the second edition here.. when it was recorded, it wasn't an ensemble recording – it was in bits. So it didn't have that live energy, but when it was put all together live, it would have had all that.

The link between 1978's *Black And White* album and 1981's *The Meninblack* album was that Jet discovered the UFO topic of that name while writing *Black And White*. Another interesting link was that at the end of 1978, you recorded *Two Sunspots*, which was later included on *The Meninblack* album, after it was slowed down and turned into *Meninblack*, off 1979's *The Raven*!

It was the same version, the same tape. It was a palimpsest. Yes, in the Middle Ages when they used to create a brass plate in commemoration of someone who died, they used to make a wood cut, but in brass to sit on their tombs in churches. Like brass rubbing, you get a piece of paper and lay it on top and you get a crayon and rub it and get an imprint of the cutting. Rather than taking the thing and putting it in ink and on paper, you're putting the paper on top of it and doing it yourself, basically.

The word palimpsest comes from that world, as explained in *Song By Song*, what you find there is that the piece of brass with the figure of someone on it, if you turn it over, you'll find something else on the other side. But it's called a palimpsest, it's like veiled, it's there but you don't see it unless you're looking for it and I use this word to describe *Meninblack*. We took the 2" analogue tape of *Sunspots* with all the stuff recorded on it, and we slowed it down to half speed, by mistake. Alan Winstanley put the tape on and pressed play, and we heard this thing and said:

"What the fuck's that?"

And Alan said: "Sorry – wrong speed."

And I said "No hang on, let's have a listen to that."

So was it the same 2" tape for all three tracks?

No. The tape as put away. We did Sunspots and Martin was going: "It's not quite the single, not sure about this..." so it was shelved. And when we did *The Raven*, the tape then came out again... But that's what a palimpsest is. It's in the dictionary, and in fact some big American author wrote a book called *The Palimpsest*, didn't he?

Anyway, maybe if you do a second edition, all this part can go in there, really, shouldn't it? I think you'll find *The Meninblack* will be much more interesting to delve into than **Black And White**, I think, because there was a lot more happening...

Hugh settled the bill as I put away my mike. We stepped outside as the sun crouched to the west, and Hugh wanted to check with me that my car was okay: the ticket ran out five minutes beforehand. I reassured him it would be fine, and we went our separate ways. Me to the west, Hugh to the east. He really came across as a sweet guy who appeared at peace with the world.

At times, he even reminded me of a college lecturer in his pub break, friendly and amiable, but still keen to convey what he knew. Out of the blue, while sitting in traffic just by The Elgin, the word 'palimpsest' came to mind, bringing a smile to my face. I knew that word would be with me forever... and *The Burning Up Times* palimpsest could be well be one edition away! Thank you, Hugh! □



I was there!

GOLDY was always late. Or was it me who was always early? Either way, I'm here – and he's not. "It was the westbound platform at Bethnal Green, wasn't it..?" I stood nervously to attention, sentry-like under the wooden clock, preparing for the journey south of the Thames. I checked the money Mum had given me, first the change, then the notes, which I folded carefully back into my pocket. I checked my watch, the clock and then the desolate Central Line platform. In six hours time, The Stranglers will play Battersea Park.

Like a lot of other spotty little fifteen year old kids from the East End, I had caught the bug; and although I didn't know it at the time, what with hormones and things such as puberty, acne and just adolescence in general to fuck my mind up, Punk and The Stranglers had got me by the short and curlies – trapped, ensnared, totally enraptured. But this was more an ascent from buying vinyl round Roach's Records in Church Lane. Today

was all about my first gig – my first Stranglers gig. And fucking Goldy had the tickets. Where is he?

Some furtive looking skinheads descended the escalators, kicking a Coke can while the one with the magic marker scrawled on the platform posters. I felt sick, and froze like a chameleon in case it kicked off. Minutes ticked away as my heart raced inside my grey C&A shirt. Slumped against the wall, I quietly pondered my new blue suede trainers, my matching shiny satin-effect bomber jacket and my old grey Marks & Sparks corduroys. Soon the jacket would be ditched by an old ripped school blazer, a ripped black Stranglers T-shirt and black monkey boots. Only the cords would survive, this time replete with graffiti – and the centre parting will be cut with a Stanley and spiked with Vaseline.

As the clatter of the tin can echoed about the concourse, my *Rattus* badge was the only clue I gave off. A warm breeze from the black tunnel blew dust in

Battersea Park, London, September 16, 1978.
It was more than just the strippers, Gary Kent discovered something else that day

my face, and as I blinked and looked up, I spotted an un-phased, half-running, half-caste Goldy appear from the escalators while the skinheads flattened the can into the tarmac.

"Alright geez?"

"Yeah – got the tickets?"

"Yeah. Let's go."

Saturday September 16th, 1978

was indelibly etched into my cerebellum forever when The Stranglers played Battersea. It had been mooted to be London's big outdoor event of the summer, but for fans like us, it was also a gig that almost didn't go ahead. In response to the threat of violence and disruption caused by Punk concerts, the former Greater London Council had postured and spurned previous gig applications for QPR's ground at Loftus Road, Hyde Park and Ally Pally. The open-air gig at Battersea Park was granted permission at the eleventh hour.

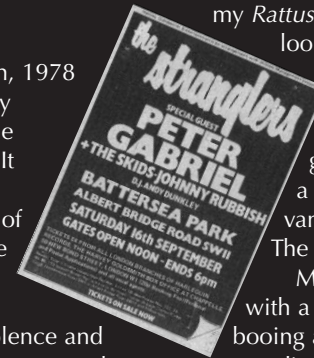
In front of the padlocked gates, we sat cross-legged in the sun on the worn out grass as Stranglers badges and patches were compared and discussed in the crowd. Surrounded by rips, tears and safety pins, I felt overdressed like a shop window mannequin. A girl opposite me had written on the side of her scuffed-up plimsoll: 'Yeah – Take it Hugh!!!' ...as JJ shouted in *Something Better Change*. She didn't see me staring at her for she was busy relaying to anyone who would listen that she had once met JJ backstage, and that she kissed him. A boy sat next to her,

impassive to the girl's saga, with his head in his hands. He'd hacked off the black grooves off his Peaches single and wore the label as a badge on his jacket. It wasn't a pretty sight, and neither was he with a safety pin through his nose, eyeing my *Rattus* badge. He knew how cool it looked – he told me so. I think he wanted it.

Bang on midday, a man with a key unleashed the gates allowing Goldy, me and a hundred others to secure our vantage point down the front. The dam had burst.

My first gig experience began with a steady shower of tins and booing aimed at the head of comedian Johnny Rubbish, who played a truly tuneless version of *Mull Of Kintyre*, altered to *Mud On My Tyre*. His timing was awful, his jokes unfunny. More pleasure was derived from an expertly aimed can than his act.

"If you throw one more tin can, I'm gonna go off..." formed Rubbish's epitaph and early bath. A shrilling kazoo marked the arrival of the duo Spizz Oil who split eardrums in two in the process. Erstwhile Clash member, Lu Edmonds brought out his new New Wavers, The Edge, who played relentlessly in spite the restlessness of The Stranglers' crowd. The Skids' set was up tempo and blistering, and I knew then I'd be buying everything they released. Ex-Genesis, former prog-rocker Peter Gabriel worked the crowd well, weaving about the stage singing his grown-up songs to the grown-ups in his



white outfit and orange hard hat.

Finally, The Stranglers ambled across the sun-soaked stage and took up their positions to rapturous applause. Talk in the press that week had said the band had planned to arrive with jet-propelled backpacks, but the training required would have been too time consuming. The opening keyboard signature of *Grip* formed the clarion call for frenzy and mayhem down at the front. The crowd bobbed up and down, and I was parted from Goldy in the melee. The sight of my heroes up there, playing live, sent tingles up my spine. I watched JJ and Hugh up close for the first time in the flesh. The whole band were clad in black; Hugh with his nodding oily quiff and JJ strutting and leg-cocking, and both Jet and Dave with their shades on. Tracks from the first three albums were churned out in a frenetic whirlwind as Heathrow bound charter flights hovered over our heads in the heat.

Hugh snarled and spat out the lyrics with venom while JJ, with Sparta in his eyes and then sans shirt, used his black Precision like a weapon to deliver an endless stream of incessant bass twanging menace. Their performance of *Death and Night and Blood* was probably the most poignant, iconic Stranglers song on the day. A Sherman tank fired off a few times through the gig, but the biggest shock occurred at the end when a troop of stocking-clad strippers took to the stage to tease and gyrate to an extended *Nice 'n' Sleazy*. I'd never seen a stripper before.

Once the fishnets and thongs had gone, and *Toiler On The Sea* was now a rudderless wreck in an ocean of analogous white noise, the party was, for us fans, over. The crowd reluctantly dispersed at the insistence of the stewards, but Goldy and myself made our way over

to the scaffolding at the side where we thought there was some backstage activity. With fingers firmly gripped in the ring fencing, we peered between press jackets and security guards for a glimpse of this other world we weren't allowed access to. Beyond the mayhem of bodies, we could see the strippers, with their clothes on, as the policemen addressed them and took down their particulars. Then, one by one, the band swiftly departed in a cavalcade of roaring Ford Cortinas and Granada Ghias. We watched in awe, spying through the looking glass, as the motors revved up and sped off to some fancy bar, club or bordello.

As the rest of the crowd was being cleared away, the stewards swept away the debris remains of empty Coke cans and lemonade bottles. A shoe, a sock, a ripped T-shirt, a screwed up poster.... A tampon. A used tampon. Urgh! With a gentle nudge from a dusty blue suede trainer, I flipped over the soiled, bloody tampon with horrified curiosity. While us two spotty fifteen year olds stared at the blood-sodden plug, pondering the events leading up to its public abandonment, the steward's big broom came along and scooped it up along with the rest of the post-gig flotsam and jetsam.

Now having broken the gig cherry, I was keen to go to my second gig the following month, and once more I went south of the river. This time, to see The Lurkers at Thames Poly, Woolwich, where a raucous fracas exploded when the National Front skins fought the British Movement skins tooth and nail. But memories of Battersea remained firm, and we were so inspired, that Goldy and I became part of a school band with Craig Mack on vocals, Adrian ("small c, big C") McCleish on guitar, Sparky on keyboards, Goldy on bass, and me, or my self-



appointed alter-ego – General Jah – on drums. Why shouldn't a drummer have a nom-de-plume, eh?

Thursday nights were eagerly whittled away down a very damp Allan-Gordons Rehearsal Rooms in Midland Road, Leyton from eight until the electric went off. There was just one solitary strip light, but it gave out more heat than the dysfunctional one-bar heater. Over the ensuing months into 1979, our set stretched to *Grip*, *Peaches*, *Go Buddy Go*, *Hanging Around*, *Nubiles*, *Something Better Change*, *Tank* and *Nice 'n' Sleazy* – once I'd managed to keep hold of the two drumsticks, not to mention nailing down Jet's off-beat drum tempo in the latter. I named the band The Shovels, partly because it started with 'S' –

knowing that we could have records released and filed in Roach's in the same section as The Stranglers, and mostly... because nobody else could think of a name. As my skills at holding down the beat improved, we split. This was mostly due to musical differences, and partly because McCleish ("small c, big C") couldn't get to grips with the Peaches verse chords, so he was fired as we collectively called it a day. I said goodbye to the drums, and dreams of standing in for Jet were suddenly shelved, as were our chauffeur-driven limousines.

We all left school the following year and vowed to stay in touch forever, and apart from Goldy, no one did. In 1980, I started helping out on Strangled magazine while Goldy helped with the merchandising. With a deal under his belt, Goldy asked me to play keyboards for his rock band around 1989, and an album's worth of material was laid down at Advision, just off Oxford Street. Plush coffee making facilities were eagerly shared with current chartsters Climie Fisher, Wet Wet Wet, Fuzzbox and Jimmy Somerville and gigs at The Astoria in Charing Cross Road and The Marquee followed in the balmy summer of 1990. We'd cram all the amps in the back of a battered Ford Transit and blow away the headliners as imaginary Ford Granada Ghias whisked us back to the hotel. That all came to an end as the band was 'restructured' that year. The truth was I couldn't get hold of any speed before a gig at the Pegasus, and it got too late to turn up. I knew I'd missed the soundcheck, so I didn't show up. Hence, I was liberated from my keyboard duties for timekeeping. Goldy would never touch drugs: he was way too smart for all that – for he was always on time now, and I was left standing on the platform. □

I was there, two!

More memories of the **Black And White** gigging days

New Bingley Hall, 30 May 1978

We'd just bought some cheap lager, when this metallic blue-grey Ford Granada pulled up beside us: "Wanna lift to the gig?" We did. We dived into the back and the car sped off. I noticed these two guys in the front, dressed tight T-shirts and Man Utd tattoos, and wondered if we'd made a massive mistake.

Were we about to take a beating in the middle of nowhere..?

We sped off and suddenly we were being dropped off right outside the stage door! These guys are with the band! Realisation dawned years later – these were obviously Finchley Boys en route to

the gig. After dropping us off, me and my mate Gav sat on the grass drinking our cheap lager in the sun in front of the former old agricultural hall. Bingley Hall was big, seating 5,000 – it meant the band were stepping up in status with the relatively small **Black And White** tour taking in bigger halls, such as the Brighton Centre just 10 days before.

Once inside, I grabbed a Tony Moon *Strangled* magazine as Steel Pulse took to the stage. The crowd jeered and started to heckle, and bottles flew at them from the audience before they walked off. Next up, an angry Jet Black appeared at the mic:

"Steel Pulse are our friends, so fuck

Harvey Goldsmith Entertainments presents

Ticket Price £3.00

THE STRANGLERS

in concert

(IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALBION MANAGEMENT AND THE DAILY MIRROR POP CLUB)

TUESDAY 30th MAY 1978 at 7.30 pm

BINGLEY HALL, STAFFORD

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Harvey Goldsmith in association with Albion Management and The Daily Mirror Pop Club present

the stranglers in concert

at the **NEW BINGLEY HALL, STAFFORD**

Tuesday 30th May at 7.30 p.m.

Tickets £3, from the Box Office, New Bingley Hall, County Showground, Stafford 0782 658105/Mike Lloyd Music Shops: 23 High St., Newcastle Under Lyne 0782 610940; 5 Lamb St., Hanley 0782 24641; 109 High St., Tunstall 0782 84680/ Lotus Records, 40 Mill St., Stafford 0785 48240/Cyclops Sounds, 8 Piccadilly Arcade, New St., Birmingham 021 643 2196/ Hime & Addison, 8 St. James Sq., Manchester 061 834 8019/Paperchase, St. Anne's Sq., Manchester 061 834 7992/Ray Ross & Co., 29 Stanley St., Liverpool 051 236 7652/Wilson Peck, Leopold St., Sheffield 0742 24123/De Montford Hall Booking Office, Town Hall, Town Hall Sq., Leicester 0533 27632/Ear 'Ere Records, 14 Market Entrance, Lancaster 0524 61400

off!" Soon, the lights went down once again, and The Stranglers burst on with a fast and furious *Burning Up Time*. You just could not stand still, even if you wanted to! We bobbed up and down pogoing with the mass – it was total bliss! I was 14 and this was my first gig ever!

My favourite band were feet away. It was so hot, someone sprayed water from a fire extinguisher over the squashed, sweaty bodies. *Heroes*, *Something Better Change*, *Tank*... there were so many highlights as the white lights rained down on the stage for the **Black And White**: *Curfew*, *Do You Wanna?* *Death And Night And Blood* and *Nice 'n' Sleazy*, complete with a dancing stripper.

I've since seen the band play many times but Bingley Hall on 30 May 1978 was definitely the best gig of my life!
Carl Sanderson



Lancaster University, 11 September 1978

It was a case of third time lucky seeing the "Guildford Four" play live: I'd already missed a night club gig in my own town – before they'd signed a record deal – and they also played at a nearby village in the spring of 1978 during the Pubs And Clubs Tour.

So later that year, this 13 year old made sure he got to see them at Lancaster Uni. And they were amazing! They kicked off with *Something Better Change*, and went into *Grip*, *Nubiles*, *Peaches* and *Hanging Around*. At that point, an altercation erupted between Hugh and the crowd; they seemed intent on showering the band with spit. At the intro to *Nice 'n' Sleazy*, Hugh threw down his Telecaster and walked offstage! Ironically enough, it was JJ who defused the situation, persuading Hugh to return after 10 minutes. Back to the set list for *Threatened*, *Tank*, *Burning Up Time*, *London Lady* and *No More Heroes*.

A short break later, and the band returned for a ceiling-raising version of *5 Minutes* and *Toiler On The Sea*, the latter almost being aborted half-way in a mass stage invasion where one of Dave's keyboards almost ended up in the audience!

Gary Cook

Cocks go to college

The Stranglers committed TV suicide in the early winter of 1978 when they stormed off stage during a BBC recording. Dom Pilgrim looks back to that gig, and dreams of the bootleg that might have been

IT IS notable that there are few quality British TV and audio recordings of the Stranglers halcyon years of 1978 to 1981. This dearth of quality material can in some way be traced to the infamous Rock Goes to College incident in October 1978, where the band stormed off stage after the second scheduled number of the night.

The producer of the show was Michael Appleton, who went on to produce the BBC's other influential and cool Old Grey Whistle Test. There is no doubt that the band were denied crucial TV and radio exposure, as the only show to feature them was Rockstage in mid-1980 MIB phase.

Most other acts of similar popularity had gigs on In Concert (Radio 1) or on local radio stations. They had effectively gotten themselves banned by the BBC. It appears to have taken the Titanic success

of Golden Brown to break its resolve. And the radio friendliness of La Folie must have helped the band be invited back onto the airwaves in Britain (BBC Radio One In Concert, February 1982).

The late 70s and early 80s BBC series Rock Goes To College featured bands playing on various campuses. It featured new wave acts and popular groups of the time – bands such as AC/DC, Tom Robinson Band, The Cars and the Boomtown Rats played in 1978. The next years saw the Police, The Specials and Siouxsie and Banshees make successful appearances on one of the key live music shows of the time.

It was essential viewing for anyone into music at the time, especially for those too young to be allowed out to see their heroes strutting their stuff. The announcement in the press of their appearance on RGTC was manna for all the fans of the Stranglers.

Unfortunately, the gig itself was rather short of Stranglers fans, and this was the crux of the matter, and the catalyst for that evening's entertainment.

Series host Pete Drummond's insipid warm up gag ("She was only the tobacconist's daughter, but she was the best shag in the shop.") and inability to know where he was ("...is it Colchester we're here this week?") gave no warning of what was to come. This was also the band's last UK gig of the year.

A caustic *Ugly* opened up the show. The first of three "warm up numbers"



before the recording started. A quick "Shut up!" from Hugh and into *Wog*...then: "This is fucking boring. You lot are a load of the most boring people I've ever seen in my fucking life." The disdain in Hugh's voice is plain to hear on the soundboard bootlegs doing the rounds. "Nube count's pretty low as well..."

The Stranglers at Surrey University, Guildford, was set up by the BBC and Howard Marks, an independent plugger hired by the Stranglers management.

The surprising ire on show was sparked by a deal the group believed they had struck regarding the sale of tickets. They weren't keen for the tickets to be available only to students. Wanting local fans to get a chance to see them (this being the area where the band proper started out, and they were still banned from the main local venues) they asked that half the tickets to be sold through local independent record shops. Howard Marks assured them that he had secured this arrangement with the BBC.

After the sound check on the day of the concert Hugh spotted an offer of free tickets to the concert for new students who

attended a cheese and wine party. Suspicious, he interrogated BBC personnel to discover that no-one had heard of any agreement to sell tickets to the general public. It soon became obvious that all those queuing to get in were from the university. On top of that, those fans who had obtained tickets had paid through the roof. The Stranglers had let some public non-ticket holders in, but these were ejected by stewards.

By the time they had stormed through *Bring On Nubiles*, and before the cameras were to be turned on, Hugh decided to make the band's position on the audience clear: "You all look like a lot of escargots. You should be boiled alive, the lot of ya."

After a pause he quizzed the crowd: "Anyone from Bellfields estate here? Never 'eard of it have you? Two people. Anyone from Park Barn? Three people... Jesus Christ!"

Jet: "Anyone from Guildford University?" A huge cheer erupts. "Fuck Off!"

They raced through *Burning Up Time*, Pete Drummond returned for more limp-wristed intros and one of the angriest versions of *Hanging Around* proved to be the last number of the night. Hugh: "Guildford University never represented Guildford. We hate playing to elitist audiences, so fuck off."

Jet: "And for the record I think Guildford University sucks." Plugger Howard Marks resigned later that night.

JJ Burnel admits on these pages that it may have done the band some harm: "I suppose I have to regret the impact, the perception people had of us."

Years later the fans have one huge regret, especially in light of the power of the performance.... no high-quality mixing desk bootleg from an the **Black And White** era! □



Pete Drummond – funny or what?

Portrush – Chesters Arcadia Ballroom – 8th September 1978

Rovers' return

Donald MacKay gives a personal account of the men in black on their second ground-breaking tour of Northern Ireland

When you're a 17-year-old schoolkid living in small-town Northern Ireland you rely on radio and very limited TV coverage to hear any new music. All we had were strangely popular Country and Western groups and

Showbands, who covered the latest hits. We were starved of decent live music; hardly any name bands crossed the water, with many maybe using The Troubles as an excuse to give NI a body swerve. So news that The Stranglers were to return to

NI in September of 1978, for their second tour in a year, was incredibly exciting. Portrush, only six miles away, was inked in as one of the dates on the Pubs and Clubs Tour. I was ecstatic.

I had been transformed into a fully fledged fan of the band the previous November, when The Stranglers became the first punk/new wave group to play my home town of Coleraine, as part of the *No More Heroes* Tour. I was still a bit of a heavy rock fan at that time (Alice Cooper, The Who, Deep Purple and others I won't mention) and I hadn't bought anything by them. That would change soon enough.

After that first gig I was hooked and bought all the records they had released.

The Stranglers were massively popular at the time, and were seen by us as pioneers of the musical revolution that was punk/new wave. They were the band among this unlikely alliance that had the musicianship to garner respect from the older kids, and they also had the instantly catchy singles to attract the younger music fans. They were the ultimate cross-over band (heavy rockers could admit to liking

them and they were also cool to the kids just getting into music). That's why *Rattus* sold so well – everybody liked it.

There was no real scene where I lived. This was limited to Belfast, though I was ignorant of this at that time. I'd been to only two or three gigs previously: Stranglers in 77, and Stiff Little Fingers in early 78 (after I heard their first Peel session, scarcely believing that there was a decent punk band from NI – we were so used to the idea that "pop stars" came from somewhere else and were kind of god-like).

Punk definitely gave us hope that we could do something different, and you didn't need to be some sort of musical expert before you gave something a try. This DIY mentality was punk's greatest strength and inspiration. Punk was the unknown, the spark for thinking that things could be done differently – time for action. I realised more than ever that I had to escape from the small-town mentality that surrounded me.

The gig

The Ulsterbus from Coleraine to Portrush seemed like a stretch limo that night. We were special passengers; we were going to see the best band on the planet. A couple of pals from down my street, and my older brother, were the other VIP travellers.

We dared to have a couple of pints in the Harbour Bar – this was an exciting enough start 'cos I hadn't started going to pubs. The tension was building – should we get there early? No-one knew what time they would be on, so we left to make sure we didn't miss anything. But my brother had met some pals and smugly declared they wouldn't be on for ages. (He arrived halfway through the set!)

Once at the hall I bought a few badges, including a large album cover one



Pic: Alastair Graham

Belfast Ulster Hall 7/9/78



Belfast Ulster Hall 7/9/78

Pic: Alastair Graham

with no writing – cool as fuck, and a pair of BLACK AND, AND WHITE ones which made me snigger, 'cos they were so clever. These badges were destined to proudly

adorn my school blazer lapels for many a month afterwards. In fact, the whole fifth and sixth form seemed to be walking adverts for the band for a week or two. Of

course, I wore mine longer than anyone else! It felt for a while like we were all part of one tribe.

And behold, my first ever sighting of a Strangled magazine! Vol 1 number 6. I had never even heard of this publication, so was totally intrigued as to what it was. I bought it and stuffed it down my trousers for the gig. This crumpled copy became a bit and worn during the actual gig, but I later smoothed it out and began my love affair with the hallowed publication.

The venue was perfect: a seaside ballroom, with balcony around the edge of the medium sized room and no seats, hooray! Capacity about 1500 so a nice size.

After a short period of jostling for position close to the stage, the support act appeared. I had no clue who they were, and no announcement was made. They just got on with it. I asked someone beside me who they were and the reply came: "The Undertones".

The amps were emblazoned in white lettering: THE STRANGLERS – ALBION MANAGEMENT. During The Undertones set, this reminded you who you were waiting for, and heightened the anticipation. Yes, they were really here, and we would see them soon!

The band appeared to a huge roar, and they immediately launched into a triple onslaught of well known numbers that blew the place apart. The lighting was stark; lots of white, not as colourful as the previous year, where the main colours were green and red, per the pic on the inside cover of *No More Heroes*. It was fantastic to see them again in the flesh, and it such a good feeling to know all the songs. JJ bounced around like he was doing an assault course, Hugh scythed at his strings, Jet pummelled the skins, and Dave's arms were a blur, as he used every key available. Mesmerising!

It was hot and sweaty, the audience was young and enthusiastic, and the band was firing on all cylinders with superb old and new songs. The set was very direct and incredibly powerful. This band was totally in control and masters of their craft. The dark clothes had replaced the jeans and t-shirts from 77. Hugh wore a white t-shirt under his black jacket, with the motto "Support your local Hell's Angel". JJ wore a leather jacket, with the famous netting top underneath (per the *5 Minutes* video). Jet and Dave were sombre in their colourless gear. Boy, did they look mean and moody. They were here to work, not have a laugh. There was very little chat from Hugh – no jokes tonight. The intensity of the songs spoke for themselves.

About three numbers in Hugh speaks for the first time, "Anyone here from Coleraine?" Jeez, he is talking to me! Huge roar goes up from the many that had been the previous year.

Then... Hugh shouts "Black and white!!!" and the boys burst into *Tank*. It was like standing in an aural wind-tunnel as the roar hits you. Totally mind-blowing, and exciting all at once.

The spitting that hadn't seemed to bother the Undertones continued, and eventually JJ had enough. During *Hanging Around* he stopped playing and pointed to some jerk who he had identified as the

The Setlist

Something Better Change, Wog, Go Buddy Go, Tank, Nice 'n' Sleazy, Sweden, Hanging Around (restart), Peaches (cut short), Toiler, Threatened, Burning Up Time, Curfew, Do You Wanna?/Death And Night And Blood, No More Heroes, Straighten Out, Down in the Sewer, 5 Minutes

worst culprit, giving him some verbals off-mike. I think Hugh also said a few choice words about the situation.

The band restarted Hanging Around (much to my delight 'cos I didn't want to miss any of the songs) and things seemed to settle down a bit as far as that unwelcome variety of audience "participation" was concerned.

However, the dickhead in the crowd got his dutch courage back, thinking he was really tough hiding in the darkness of the crowd. But half way through Peaches JJ showed him who was toughest. I was standing about two rows from the front close to JJ. Like a flash, he threw down his bass and dived head long past my left shoulder into the crowd. Mega surprised, I turned round to find JJ a few feet away on the ground with the culprit in a headlock. I bet this guy shat himself when he saw JJ coming for him! Hugh jumped down into the crowd too, to make sure his mate was OK. No fear, there was now a wide circle around the two combatants. JJ dragged the guy away towards the nearby entrance and the bouncers then took over. I expect the guy ended the evening with a bruise or two – served him right. Hugh walked right past me on his return to the stage and I patted him on the back. That was when I first realised how tall he was.

Thankfully, after that we had a

phlegm-free gig and, if anything, the natural anger of the band created an even more intense atmosphere. JJ ripped into *Toiler* with incredible ferocity to vent his anger at the idiot minority, and the majority responded with enthusiastic support. No-one was going to mess with JJ now.

The new songs were even more impressive, probably 'cos they meant more to me, being new yet familiar. I just loved every minute of this stuff.

Sweden was absolutely superb. I still remember JJ staring right at me (or so it seemed) as he sang the "too much ti-ime" backing vocals. I yelled in unison, of course. Strange how little snippets of gigs stick in your mind. I always think of that vision when I hear that song.

Toiler blew my mind, it was just sublime!

Threatened was cool, especially "...piece of my Mummy..." 'cos I felt good about knowing the words to shout along with JJ, unlike the majority in the crowd. *Curfew* was

really impressive also, the songs from the Black side seeming somehow more accessible in the live setting.

The "oldies" were expertly executed also and my particular fave from 77, *No More Heroes*, was played perfectly, with of course the classic keyboard sound in place.

Every song was totally enjoyable, but

the pride of place went to *Down in the Sewer*. It was so good that night. During the finale the crowd all started clapping above its heads in time with the insistent rhythm. The atmosphere was nerve tingling, and I'm sure JJ and Hugh were getting off on the audience reaction. It is one of the highlights of my gig-going experiences. A totally brilliant performance of that song.

And soon it was all over. The post-gig euphoria followed.

These early gigs are unsurpassable for excitement and full-force power of a band on a mission to prove how good they were. Artistically and commercially successful, The Stranglers could do no wrong. As good as it gets, really.

Looking back on it now, this was the gig that really cemented my love for the band. Although they later became more musically adventurous and sophisticated, the raw energy of this period of the band's development was truly unbeatable for me. Things were never again quite as manic and thrilling as this! Just check out the Rock Goes to College footage to get an idea of what I am talking about. This is pretty close to my gig. In contrast the open-air footage from Battersea Park lacks the atmosphere of the indoor gigs of the time.

Post-gig euphoria

The last bus home had gone, so I had to phone my Dad to come and pick us up (very rock'n'roll). With my ears ringing, I watched proudly as he perused my Strangled magazine. He became a little

uneasy about the "Hello little girl..." cartoon and asked, "What's this?" I replied hastily, "It's only a joke". I'm not sure he was convinced, but put down the mag and wandered off. I took his reaction to my mag as evidence of the generation gap, so I felt good about being young

and different to him. Strangled had got me already! I soon subscribed and got the back issues (30p each!).

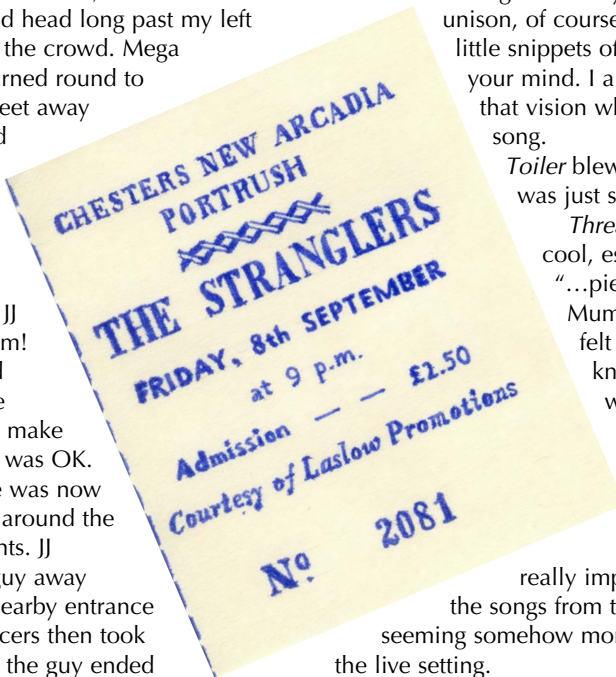
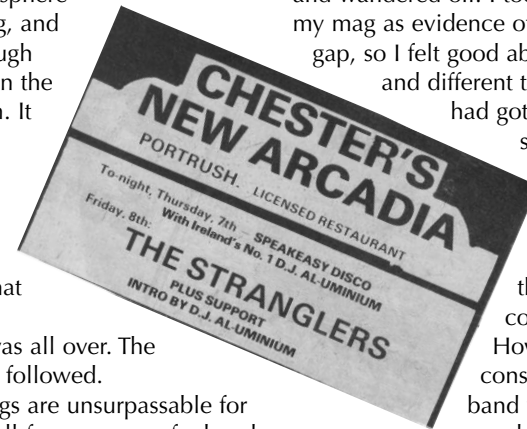
Battersea Park was imminent, but there was no way I could get to that one. However, there was the consolation that the band were going to record Rock Goes to

College soon after, and I was so looking forward to seeing this set on prime time TV. Alas....

A few weeks later I saw an advert in *Sounds* (my music paper of choice) for a local fanzine called *Alternative Ulster*. The bit that caught my eye was that The Stranglers were featured, so I sent off for one.

When I opened the home-spun pages I was delighted to find not only a review of the Portrush gig, but also some great pix of the boys in action. [This article is reproduced here in Burning Up Times from the very copy I bought way back then. And Alastair Graham's fab pix from Portrush and Belfast that have only recently been discovered are published throughout for the very first time].

The Stranglers were definitely now "my band". They were starting to metamorphose into variants that no-one could have predicted, and it was fascinating following their journey into the unknown, all the while producing





Belfast Ulster Hall 7/9/78

Pic: Alastair Graham

intoxicating music. Certainly the live shows always retained my 100% interest for many a year to come. We all have our favourite eras, and no doubt the "first time" has a major influence on how we all perceive their exploits. Well my second time was the best, and will live with me forever as the greatest gig ever. Cheers lads.

The following year I had an interesting conversation about **Black And White** with a guy I met during my early days at university (I had escaped!). His local band was the Skids and he saw himself as a bit of a "punk". I said I was a big Stranglers

fan and he said "I liked the first two albums, but **Black And White** is shite! That's not punk rock." Well, exactly! I said "Who cares? It's fucking brilliant!" This for me highlighted the difference between Stranglers fans and the "punks". We thought for ourselves and didn't give a toss what the image makers said about what we should and shouldn't like.

I loved this band and I would defend them against any idiotic statements from any quarter. This helped breed the loyalty of the fans, and I never met any punk fans that were as loyal to the cause as us. We knew our band was the best. □

Alternative Ulster fanzine:

the stranglers:
 BY ROGER and ALISTAIR GRAHAM.
 (ALL PIX - ALISTAIR)

BLACK + WHITE BECOMES...??

Stranglers ... in BELFAST. THE QUEUES OUTSIDE THE ULSTER HALL ARE MASSIVE BUT, AS AT THE RATTS' GIG, IT'S LARGELY THE TOKEN WEEKENDERS WHO ARE OUT IN FORCE ONCE AGAIN. YOUNG FREDERICK'S FATHER PUTS DOWN HIS COPY OF THE TIMES + SHRIEKS "YOU'RE NOT GOING OUT DRESSED LIKE THAT ARE YOU? WHAT WOULD YOUR MOTHER SAY?!" THUS BEING THE BACKGROUND FROM WHICH MANY OF THESE REAL POSERS HAVE APPARENTLY EMANATED FROM TONIGHT.

7.35 PM + INSIDE THE HALL THE STEADILY-GROWING CROWD IS SEETHING WITH ANTICIPATION + ENERGY - "WE WANT THE STRANGLERS!" THEY CHANT, NAIVELY OPTIMISTIC AS THE BAND AIN'T DUE ON FOR ANOTHER 2 HOURS, BUT AFTER WAITING OVER A YEAR FOR THIS MOMENT, 120 MINUTES DOESN'T SEEM MUCH LONGER TO WAIT; BUT MOST OF THE FANS HAVE BURNED THEMSELVES UP BEFORE THE STRANGLERS HIT THE STAGE.

THE SUPPORT BANDS WERE LIKE A WET CLOTH SMARTLY SMACKED ROUND THE EARS; DRIZZLY, PAINFUL, UNINSPIRED - OH DEAR, I SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR NAME! YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHO THEY WERE ANYWAY, NOW DO YA?

THE STRANGLERS BOUND ON TO DEAFENING CHEERS + BURST INTO ACTION - THE STAGE IS INVADED - 3 OR 4 TIMES DURING THE SET BY EXCITED FANS. THE NEXT DAY HUGH + DAVE BOTH SAID THEY DIDN'T MIND: "IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME IN ENGLAND... WE ENJOY IT ACTUALLY, BUT THERE COMES A STAGE WHEN THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY PEOPLE ON + IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO PLAY OUR INSTRUMENTS". BUT EVEN WITH ALL THE PEOPLE ON STAGE GRABBING A PIECE OF THE ACTION, THERE DID SEEM TO BE SOME BARRIER BETWEEN BAND AND AUDIENCE - A BARRIER WHICH WASN'T REALLY SATISFACTORILY BROKEN DOWN - BLACK AND WHITE BECOMES GREY.

HUGH CORNWELL DISPLAYED LITTLE RAPPORT WITH THE CROWD, BUT THEN THAT'S NOT WHAT THE STRANGLERS ARE ABOUT - IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER ANYWAY - THE MUSIC WAS THEIR MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND, BELIEVE ME, WAS IT HOT! ALL YOUR STRANGLERS FANS PERFECTLY EXECUTED AND THE SONGS OFF BY HD / SURPRISINGLY COMING OVER MUCH STRONGER THAN ON RECORD. RATHER A SHORT SETS BUT 3 ENCORES INCLUDING "5 MINUTE" + "DOWN IN THE SEWER". A LOT OF VERY

AND IN PORTRUSH. SO THE SHOW MOVED ON TO SUNNY PORTRUSH ON ULSTER'S NORTH COAST. WE WERE HOPING FOR SOME HOLIDAY SNAPS OF OUR HEROES SURTING DOWN ON THE BEACH, BUT IT POUCHED WITH RAIN PRACTICALLY ALL AFTERNOON, SO THAT WUZ THAT!

INSIDE THE NEW ARCADIA BALLROOM (WITHOUT DOUBT THE BEST GIG IN THE WHOLE PROVINCE - I HOPE IT STAYS THAT WAY!) THE SOUNDGICKIN' STRANGLERS FIND MORE PROBLEMS WITH DAVE GREENFIELD'S FAULTY SYNTHESIZER, HOWEVER THEY THOUGHTFULLY OUT THEIR CHECK SHORT IN ORDER TO GIVE TONIGHT'S SUPPORT ACT WITH POWERS LONDONERRY'S RED-HOT UNDERONES, A CHANCE TO TUNE UP AND GET THEMSELVES SORTED OUT. (OVER)

Handwritten notes at the bottom: "HTIC of DO... 217 217 P.4"



THE UNDERTONES ON STAGE AT PORTRUSH'S NEW ARCADIA CFC BY ALISTAIR GANNAM
L-R: Sean O'Neill, Mickel Bradley, Feargal Sharkey

Stranglers (cont'd):

A BIG CROWD WAS EXPECTED TONIGHT AND WHEN THE DOORS OF THE ARCADIA WERE OPENED, THEY POURED IN LIKE IT WAS A JANUARY SALE AT C&A! IT WAS THE FIRST TIME A SHOW LIKE THIS HAD COME TO THE HOLIDAY RESORT OF PORTRUSH + THE PLACE FAIRLY BUZZED WITH EXCITEMENT.

SOON THE UNDERTONES WERE ON STAGE DOING THEIR THING - INCREDIBLE IS NOT TOO STRONG A WORD TO DESCRIBE THEIR SET ON THIS PARTICULAR EVENING. IT WAS ONLY THE 3RD TIME I'D SEEN 'DEERY'S HEROES BUT, HELL, THEY'VE SOUNDED BETTER AND LOOKED MORE CONFIDENT EACH TIME! THE E.P. I KNOW IS GREAT, BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY DO THEM JUSTICE, THOUGH THE IMPROVED SIRE MIX SOUNDED MUCH BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL; THEY'VE GOT STACKS MORE GREAT SONGS; SONGS LIKE "MARS BARS" "YOU WON'T GET FAR AT THE CASBAH ROCK" AND THE MARVELLOUS "CAN'T GET OVER YOU" (EVEN BETTER THAN TEENAGE KICKS" I THINK) ARE GREAT LITTLE GEMS + SHOWS THE DEPTH OF THE 'TONES SONG-WRITING ABILITIES. THE 2 ACE TRACKS OFF THE DISC "KICKS" + "TRUE CONFESSIONS", WITH ITS CHARMING BARKING VOCALS, COME OVER TONIGHT AS THE CLASSICS THEY RIGHTLY ARE + THE CROWD RESPONDS ACCORDINGLY. A FULL SET OF ORIGINALS ALL CRIMMING WITH POTENTIAL GREATNESS; POWERFUL, CATCHY, MELODIC - INSTANTLY MEMORABLE - THIS YEAR'S ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND IN THE TRUE SENSE.

AND THE GUYS THEMSELVES? FULL OF CHARACTER + HUMOUR - THEY USED TO THROW MARS BARS INTO THE CROWD WHEN THEY PERFORMED THEIR SONG OF THE SAME NAME 'TILL FEARGAL GOT TIRED OF BEING HIT ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD WITH THOSE HORRID BY BILLY, THE DRUMMER! - HONEST!

ANYWAY, LET'S SEE THE HEADLINERS FOLLOW THAT! BEFORE THE STRANGLERS COME ON WE GET MORE SPINS ON THE OLD 'TURNTABLES FROM ACE - D.J. AL UMINIUM WHO REALLY KEEPS THE WHOLE SHOW FLOWING + ALIVE.

SOON THE LIGHTS GO DOWN - ALL IS QUIET - THE LOCKER ROOM BOYS PROWL ON + BEFORE YOU CAN DARE SAY "NO MORE HEROES" THEY'VE SET THE PLACE ALIGHT - THEY ARE THE HEROES IN THE EYES OF A GREAT MANY WHO HAVE TURNED UP ON THIS COLD, RAINY NIGHT TO SEE THEM.

THERE WAS A LOT OF GOBBING FROM THE CROWD WHO WERE PROMPTLY TOLD THAT THAT PRACTICE WAS 2 YEARS OLD, AND THIS WAS 1978 + NICE BOYS DIDN'T DO THAT ANYMORE ETC ETC. THAT DIDN'T STOP IT THOUGH SO I.J. DECIDED TO EMPLOY HIS OWN PARTICULAR BRAND OF PERSUASION AND HALF-WAY THROUGH "PEACHES" LEFT INTO THE CROWD TO HAND OUT SOME 'BOVVA'!

SURELY THERE ARE MORE SUBTLE + LESS VOLUNT LAYS TO DEAL WITH GOBBERS, BUT SINCE WHEN WE'RE THE STRANGLERS NICE AND SUBTLE; + YOU JUST DON'T MESS WITH JEAN JACQUES BARK WHITE BROSMS BARK. AFTERWARDS HUGH EXPLAINED - "WELL WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN PEOPLE JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND PLAIN ENGLISH? WAS HE THEN JUSTIFYING BEHAVIOUR?"
J.J.'S: "NO, CERTAINLY NOT - IT WAS AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT IN WHAT WAS A VERY GOOD GIG."

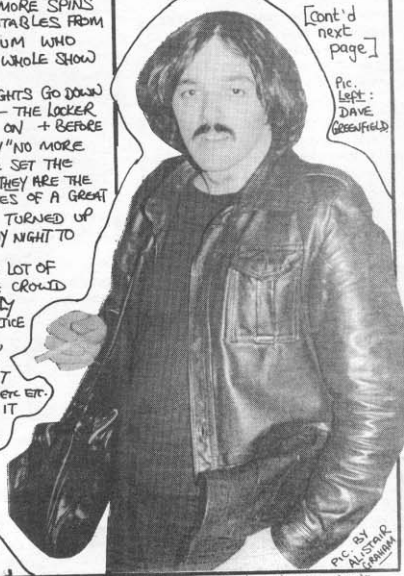
A.U.: DO YOU EVER HAVE THIS EITHER IN ENGLAND?
H.C.: "NO, NOT REALLY - NOT ANYMORE"

THIS BEGAN A VERY INTERESTING POST-GIG INTERVIEW AND, AFTER DAVE GREENFIELD HAD KINDLY DONATED HIS STREAK 'N' CHIPS TO A.U., IT CONTINUED SOMETHING LIKE THIS.....

A.U.: HOW ARE THINGS WITHIN THE BAND - I'VE HEARD RUMOURS OF A SPLIT?
DAVE G: "AS A BAND WE'RE STILL GETTING ON VERY WELL... WE SPEND A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER AND EVERYTHING'S GREAT AT THE MOMENT."

A.U.: I REMEMBER READING RECENTLY THAT YOU SAID YOU HAD BURN'T YOURSELVES UP VERY QUICKLY.

[Cont'd next page]



Pic. Left: DAVE GREENFIELD

Pic. BY ALISTAIR GANNAM

This sheet reduces down to 8 1/2 x 11 1/2 (85%)

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(Stranglers' interview cont'd):

HUGH: "NO... WHAT WE SAID WAS 'WE ARE BURNING OURSELVES UP QUICKLY' - BUT WERE NOT FINISHED YET BY ANY MEANS".
A.U.: THERE'S BEEN SOME TALK OF SOLO ALBUMS BY YOU, DAVE, AND BY JEAN-JACQUES.

DAVE: "YES, THERE ARE PLANS FOR ME + JEAN TO DO SOLO ALBUMS IN SO MUCH AS WE'LL BE WRITING ALL THE MATERIAL ON THEM".

A.U.: DOES THAT MEAN, THEN, THAT AS YOU'LL BE DOING A LOT OF EXPERIMENTING WITH SYNTHESISERS FOR THE SOLO ALBUM, THE STRANGLERS' MUSIC IN THE FUTURE WILL BE MORE SYNTHESIZER-ORIENTATED?

DAVE: "YES, IT PROBABLY WILL MEAN THAT - ON 'BLACK + WHITE' WE WERE EXPERIMENTING A LOT ON THE 'BLACK' SIDE - TRYING TO GET INTO PEOPLE'S MINDS MORE. THERE WERE HEAVIER, MORE PROFOUND MEANINGS AND FRESH IDEAS - THERE ARE MANY NEW DIRECTIONS ON 'B+W' - WE'LL FOLLOW SOME OF THEM UP FOR THE NEXT ALBUM."

A.U.: YOU'RE THINKING AS FAR AHEAD AS THAT, THEN?

DAVE: "OH YES... THERE'S A CHANCE THAT THE NEXT ALBUM MAY BE A LIVE RECORDING. BEFORE THAT, THOUGH, AT THE END OF THIS TOUR, WE'LL PROBABLY TAKE A BREAK AND THEN DO A NEW SINGLE WHICH MIGHT JUST BE AN INSTRUMENTAL... MAYBE. WE HAVN'T WRITTEN MUCH SINCE 'B+W' THO."

A.U.: THE STRANGLERS AS A BAND NOW ARE PROBABLY AT THEIR PEAK AND YOU'VE

REACHED THE STAGE NOWHERE YOU ARE SEEN AS 'STARS' - HOW DO YOU REACT TO THAT?

DAVE: "I DON'T LIKE SEEING MYSELF AS A 'STAR' - I MEAN, WE HAVN'T CHANGED AS PEOPLE - WE'RE STILL THE SAME IN THAT RESPECT".

A.U.: WHAT ABOUT THE MUSIC PRESS - WE ALL KNOW YOU DON'T GET ON TOO WELL WITH JOURNALISTS?

HUGH: "WE'VE JUST GIVEN UP WHERE THE PRESS ARE CONCERNED."

BELOW: HUGH CORNWELL BURSTS INTO ACTION: PIC. A. GRAHAM



THOUGH THAT SPREAD IN THE N.M.E. WAS PRETTY GOOD - WELL-WRITTEN... I LIKE FANZINES THOUGH, 'COS THEY'RE HONEST."

A.U.: AH YES, YOUR OWN FANZINE "STRANGLED" - WAS THAT YOUR IDEA?

HUGH: "PARTLY, YES; ALONG WITH TONY MOON..."

"I READ IN YOUR MAG ABOUT THAT NEW HARP BAR CLUB - SOUNDS A GREAT NEW IDEA; I HOPE IT'S A SUCCESS."

DAVE WENT ON TO DIVULGE HOW HE'D BEEN IN SO MANY BANDS BEFORE THE STRANGLERS AND THAT HE'D STARTED OFF HIS MUSICAL CAREER AS A RATHER MEDIOCRE GUITARIST BEFORE TAKING UP KEYBOARDS.

A.U.: HOW DID THE RAT SYMBOL COME ABOUT?

HUGH: "THE WHOLE THING ABOUT THE RAT BOTH AS SYMBOL AND FOR THE COVER + TITLE OF THE 1ST LP, WAS TRIGGERED BY THE TRACK 'DOWN IN THE SEWER'; THAT WAS THE BASIS FOR THE WHOLE RAT CONCEPT."

A.U.: FINALLY; WILL YOU BE BACK



JET BLACK, HAVING THE TIME OF HIS LIFE IN PORTRUSH! PIC. A.G.

TO ULSTER ON THE NEXT TOUR?
HUGH: "YES; BELFAST DEFINITELY BLACK + WHITE BECOMES..."

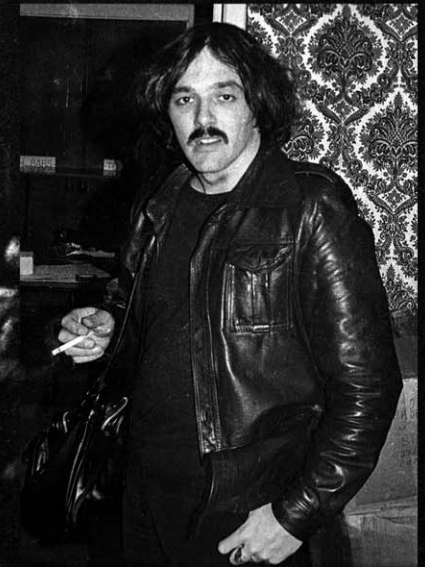
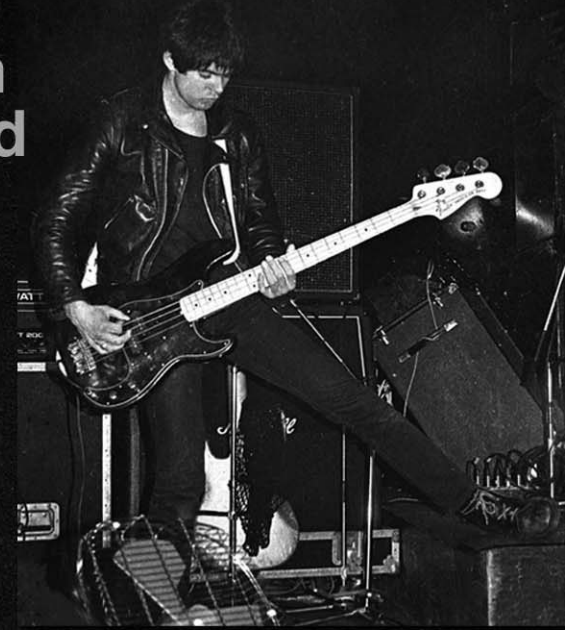
TO ROUND OFF THE ARTICLE, A FEW UNBIASED THOUGHTS ON THE GIGS FROM YOUNG ALISTAIR: "IN BELFAST THE STRANGLERS AS A TEAM WERE SUPERB, + INDIVIDUALLY EXHILARATING; WITH JET BLACK SOLID DRUMMING, BURNEL'S THUNDERING BASS, CORNWELL'S FANTASTIC PLAYING + DAVE GREENFIELD'S FANLESS KEYBOARDS TO FINISH OFF. BELFAST, YOU'VE JUST BEEN STRANGLED."

JEAN JACQUES AT ARCADIA GIG - SUPERB PIC. BY ALISTAIR GANNAM



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The Stranglers in Northern Ireland



Main photo: Ulster Hall, Belfast
Top left: Hugh in Belfast
Top right: JJ at the Portrush soundcheck
Bottom right: Dave at the Portrush soundcheck

All pics courtesy of Alastair Graham

Stranglers aficionados expose their brains, do lots of tapping, click on send and tell us what **Black And White...**

Means To Me

Satan

Jim Drury

My favourite moment of working on the book [Song By Song] with Hugh was actually doing **Black And White** when he picked up his guitar and started playing the 'satanic' chords to *Threatened*, which is my favourite song on the album.

Tank

Billy Bragg

I remember *Tank* as being one of my favourites off **Black And White**. Not only is it a great track, but it's particularly poignant for me, as that is what I used to do in the British Army, drive tanks. Yeah – I'm gonna get it now on CD.

Yukio

Chris Alderton

My favourite song off the album is *Death And Night And Blood* (Yukio) with JJ's snarling voice... Dave's heavy keys... and at gigs, the way crowd joined in – "Hey little baby don't you lean down low, your brain's exposed and it's starting to show your rotten thoughts, yuk!" It's an unforgettable experience being at a gig with everyone joining in with the words. Rather like a church service where all the congregation sing "I Vow To Thee My Country" – in tune. I only hope JJ found it therapeutic every time he performed it and got whatever it was off his chest. Think of all those hours of Anger Management classes he's saved himself. The song was very angry and menacing. It got the blood flowing and the heart beating. That's what it did for me. It lifted the roof. It was pure Stranglers.

Fuck my new boots

Damian Franklin

Black And White got me hooked on the Stranglers. I even bought a pair of Monkey Boots on the strength of seeing Hugh's on the cover of **Black And White**. I then got myself a pair of Jam shoes like Dave's a short while after. My older cousin lived in Finsbury Park, and he had a copy of **Black And White** with the White EP. He used to take me to see The Stranglers at the Rainbow on many occasions. Having seen them play live over a hundred times, for me, it's the **Black And White** songs that come out best. Although there was one gig that proved to be the exception – Ally Pally. I thought *Toiler* was ruined by John Ellis' guitar work. A year on from that, I was fortunate to catch Paul Roberts' first UK date at The Old Trout in Windsor when he sung a superb version of *Threatened*.

SleaZzz...

Mark Tall

Every night at 10.02pm I tuned into John Peel's late night show on Radio One. In the darkness of my room, I lay there with my little radio right up to my ear, hoping my parents wouldn't find out. One night in April 1978 I'd drifted off into a light sleep when suddenly John announced in tomorrow's show he was going to play the whole of the first side of the forthcoming Stranglers LP, **Black And White**. I actually leapt out of bed in my C&A jim-jams right there and then, shocked from slumber and with nowhere to go – I paced around my tiny room in the dark bumping into stuff. I was so excited I had to catch my breath. I

was totally wide awake – how could I survive the next 24 hours?

Anticipation was building. I happily went to bed and amazed my parents in the process. Into bed, out with the radio and under the covers. The intro. Dum- da-dum, da dum, da-dum ... what a spine-tingling sound...waiting for the spindly little guitar note that heralds the dour night time tones of Mr. Peel. He waffled on as he did, mentioning a few bands he had lined up...and it seemed an age until he again said that the whole of Side One of the new Stranglers album would be played...at some point. I dipped into a sleep once or twice, and did my best to stay awake in my cotton cocoon. Then suddenly – I awoke with a start. I checked red numbers on my bedside clock: I'd missed the first 24 minutes of the show. But had I missed The Stranglers? Surely not... time was passing into the night. "Oh shit! It's now 11.25..."

Now it's 11.35. Less than half an hour to go. The anticipation was killing me... But then the opening chord, and the joy and the relief as *Tank* opened the segment. I wanted to capture every note and sound and I wished my ears could grow bigger. I pressed the radio hard to my ear and my synapses went into overload, busily trying to process all the information. And just like my very first Stranglers gig that very year, the whole thing went by in a blur. Haunting memories of the beautiful *Outside Tokyo* portrayed an unexpected departure in sound, and the mesmeric *Toiler On The Sea* – with it's mantra- like finale fading into the whoosh of the sea, or was it the South West

radio reception playing up? Uncle John ended the bedtime session with: "Well – there you have it."

The Stranglers sounded different. Less poppy, more sharper, more textural, more challenging, more pensive. Something had happened to them. They'd grown up. Grown wiser. And I was growing with them. And what if Peelite had played the Black side? What would we have made of that in our pyjamas, eh? We'd have probably put it down to bad reception. Little did we know what waited for us on May 12, 1978.

What a picture!

Stephen Howard

I got into The Stranglers when I heard *No More Heroes*. Pocket money was scant, and I used it to get singles from Revolver in Cheetham Hill, Manchester. One day I walked in and saw a brand new display advertising **Black And White**. I'll never forget it. The display dominated the shop window. But it wasn't until a trip to Salford's Woolies a few weeks later with my Dad, that the LP became mine. I rushed home and put it straight onto the turntable. I couldn't wait to tell my mates I had The Stranglers new album.

Black And White has that special place for me: my first album admittedly, but musically, it's up there with *Rattus* and *The Raven* as amongst the best. I'm still blown away by *Tank*, just as I was then, whilst the intro to *Toiler* must rank as one of the greatest in rock history. But it is the Black side that captivates me then now, as it did

back then. *Curfew* – dark and menacing but with a great pop chorus... the threatening *Do You Wanna?* merging into *Death And Night And Blood* showing the bands great artistry... In the Shadows was pretty creepy, especially in the dark of the night. However, *Threatened* stands out the most. Never has there been a more aptly titled track. Musically, it's suffocating and JJ's vocal is, well, threatening: "Bring me a piece of my mummy – she was quite close to me..." *Enough Time* never really did it for me but the rumours that the code at the end was some dark satanic message made it fascinating listening but my main memory of this track is how my brother rushed in thinking I had damaged the record player in the slow fade out.

An album of great music and memories which were brought back on my trip to Bath last year to hear Norfolk Coast. JJ kindly showed me around Charlton Farm and we popped into the merchandise office and there in the corner, was a huge cardboard cut-out of Jet from the **Black And White** display. For a moment I felt I was back in Revolver...

What a photograph! *Al Wallis*

It's a classic album cover, it's up there with Abbey Rd, Dark Side of the Moon and many, many more. Talking of Abbey Rd – do you remember the myth surrounding that cover? Paul McCartney had allegedly died and was replaced by a doppelganger! Paul has bare feet, a symbol of a dead man. George in denim, the gravedigger. Lennon in white, the preacher or the angel. Ringo in black tails, the undertaker. It's all bollocks, we know, but hey! **Black And White**'s cover is just as interesting, considering the ultimate outcome of The Stranglers Mk1. JJ the naughty child, the imp, in almost a foetal position. Jet, the

rock, the centre of everything, the universe! Dave.... well I dunno about Dave, he just looks mental! The mad professor, the genius, his crazy deformed hand! And Hugh – the odd one out, the only one not facing the camera, head hung down. He looks not dissimilar to the Hanged Man card in a pack of Tarot. He also has the look of a mime (a clown?) in his black gloves. The martyr? A very brave move to not include the band name on the front too.

No troubles... *Donald MacKay*

When **Black And White** came out none of the record shops in Coleraine had copies containing the White EP. This was because Northern Ireland was excluded at the time from the Chart Return. I was highly pissed off at being treated as a second class citizen by the music biz! I got my White EP a few weeks later on a trip to Glasgow, making my second B&W album purchase – the start of the multiple purchase trend for me! I thought *Tits* was hilarious, with Hugh very cleverly taking the mickey out of the self-indulgent "serious" rock musicians of the pre-punk era.

The new Stranglers sound was different but not so radically different as to alienate fans like me. The White side was musically accessible and instantly enjoyable; the Black side was definitely very interesting but was going to take a bit more work to get into. A challenge! The lyrics (thankfully printed on the inner sleeve) were at times obscure, and deep. I was not used to thinking too much about lyrics, 'cos I hadn't come across such unusual topics before in rock music. The sounds were dark and serious, the words were intriguing and challenging. I wasn't sure what it was all about but I had to find out. The effort required was essential – and rewarding.

I thought the cover of the album was a

very powerful image, and I perused this stark, unusual shot along with the challenging lyric sheet for many an hour as this musical masterpiece revealed its intricacies to me. The speakers struggled to cope with the demands placed on them as the sounds drowned out all else in my world (well, my bedroom). This music was goddamn interesting and getting addictive, and I played the album all summer long. The previous year there was no question in my eyes (and ears) that The Stranglers were a punk band. They were part of the scene in the music press and seemed to have no problem with being labelled as such. But **Black And White** was asking more questions. They were certainly moving on and becoming something else, as they revealed their darker thoughts.

Stay in your homes *Gary Kent*

First the adverts appeared, then Peellie's night-time teaser, then Friday May 12th, 1978... I bunked off with a mate – and £3.75 – and raced round to Roach's Records in Church Lane to wait for the shutter to go up. Back at my hi-fi, with the salient sleeve propped up on top, we spent the day blasting Leytonstone with the newest, freshest, tightest explosion of instruments ever – hanging on to each word, we laid there awestruck. I can't recall ever having the same feeling for a piece of plastic wrapped in a bit of cardboard either before or since that day. Magical monochromatic masterpiece.

On the rocks *Jamie Godwin*

I was 15 when I first heard **Black And White** in 1993. To be honest, I thought the album sounded empty at first and didn't make much of an impression. But like most Stranglers albums, it grew on me, and now

it's firmly established in my mind as the definitive Stranglers album! I stuck on **Black And White** the first time I raided my parents drinks cabinet, aged 16, getting hammered with dubious spirits while listening awestruck at Dave's complex keyboard arpeggios in *Toiler On The Sea*. After a while I became dizzy and had to throw up! My favourite tracks off **Black And White** must surely be *Toiler*, *Curfew* and *Sweden*.

Years later – and to me it's obvious that this album was a characteristic masterpiece embodying much of what we now appreciate as typical Stranglers musical motifs. It is all here in abundance: the scathing vocal approach, the rumbling bass, the manic keyboards, the powerhouse pretentious-free drums, and the dark subject matters. Truly a classic.

Grey becomes... *Barry Spooner*

Back to a time when I wasn't 40 plus, married, with kids and debts... It's Nottingham, 1978. The second half the 4th year. I'm 14. I'd heard a lot about punk. The Stranglers were the ones in the press and on the radio, but they still hadn't impressed me. Until *5 Minutes* came on Top of the Pops! I have never seen a band look or sound so menacing! Also never seen a singer look so cool as JJ... This is a life changing moment and I knew from that moment The Stranglers really are something special. That fact was proven when Kevin Bennett played me **Black And White** on his music centre a few months on. Although listening to *Toiler* was an unforgettable moment, it was tracks like *Threatened* and *Curfew* that made the major impact. I could hear it was JJ singing – this cool-as-fuck French man, and I the fixation with JJ started right here: his looks, his style, his attitude, his voice and, of course, the sound of his bass guitar. I have never seen/heard/known

of anyone like him. He is a truly awesome individual. An icon.

At the end of the school holidays, I rushed round to my record shop and grabbed *Walk On By*, knowing I'd be going back to school a different person. Things were never be the same again. This was the point that I really started to seriously listen to music and collect records.

Heavy rok

Carl Sanderson

It's February 1978. The Stranglers haven't released anything since *No More Heroes*, Autumn last year. Then the full-page adverts appear in the music press – *5 Minutes* – wow! I picked it up on release day from my local record shop, but – wait a minute – what's going on? A plain black sleeve with just the bands' name and the title in a red LED typeface, no logo on the front? And no rat?!

As soon as I get home and give it a spin, I soon realise why the sleeve is all in black: *5 Minutes* is the darkest, blackest, heaviest thing that the band has released so far. A real appetiser of what is to follow on the black side of the next album... The kick drum intro sets the feel... Dave's keys and Hugh's lead riff... leading up to JJ Burnel's bass run of all bass runs. Martin Rushent's production was almost perfect: heavy, hard and driven along at a murderous pace. God how I loved this song! And then came *Tiswas*...

Hugh and Jet are being interviewed Saturday morning kids telly – the pair were fairly unforthcoming as they threw sweeties over their shoulders to the youths behind them. They play the videos to *5 Minutes* and *Rok It To The Moon*. What a video! A low budget classic, which has got to be my favourite clip ever. The band looking hard, mean and moody as they mime along to the playback in a rehearsal studio...the look on Jet's face as he pounds away is an absolute gem. So we got an awesome song

and an awesome video, what more could a fan ask for? Some awesome gigs..... but that came later!

Strangers in the night

Mark Tall

5 Minutes was a watershed. It was the first release of a new year. 1978. It brought a fuller sound and arguably the best single sleeve the band ever produced – clean, clear, modern, threatening and very black. For most of us, it was our second year with the Stranglers. During the first we foraged for NME articles, clippings, reviews and most importantly visuals of the band. Visuals that seared through our eyes and into our memory.

It's fair to say that Burnel and Cornwell were the characters we most adored. They were different – to each other and to the Punk crews we were engaged by. We read of Cornwell's bohemian intellectualism, his way with sarcasm and his student rag dress sense that covered his puny, boney body. But it was Burnel who really caught our imagination and desire. An angry, cheeky, smart, bouncy, lithe, lean, risk taking, motor bike riding French boy prone to sporadic acts of violence and partial to a tight leather jacket. He was the one to watch.

And so came the video to *5 Minutes*. As a boy of thirteen, the excitement of this video being played on Top of the Pops was electrifying – almost unbearable in its sensoral asphyxiation.

The moody, subterranean, wire strewn dungeon and luminescent light. TV's blinking and flickering all around. We had chanced upon the Stranglers lair – their London hideaway. Jet quaalude-laden and leaden, standing as he pumped out the fierce insidious beat of the song; Greenfield debuting his ability to provide glistening arpeggios as he drank unknown European beer; Cornwell in tight black pants, hungry,

intense and looking frighteningly unstable during his solo; and then there was Burnel..

The new Burnel was totally in black. Black leather jacket, black Dr. Marten's hammering out the intro beat, but now with tight black jeans, black string vest and most importantly, the black Fender Precision with cream neck. The first time we had seen it. It was gorgeous. It sat so snug. It was as if it was connected. A toy. A weapon. A beast of sound. It moved across and back, across and back to the rhythm of JJ's hips and to the beat of the song. It was magnificent to watch.

We sat in silence. The impact was made. The sinister button had been turned up a notch. We knew things had changed. There was no album, just a tease of something smouldering to come. The band seemed older and wiser. More unstable. More extreme. The lyrics shouted of rape, knives and revenge. We were scared. But so excited. We all wanted more. Four months later we found out. 1978 was the start of things going black. *5 Minutes* was the turning point. And when *The Collection* video came out...which one did I go to first? *5 Minutes*. It's the best.

Nice 'n' Uneasy

Eric Vonk

Black And White was the hardest record to like at first. Although *Tank*, *Nice 'n' Sleazy*, *Outside Tokyo*, *Curfew*, *Threatened* and *Death and Night and Blood* were superb. In retrospect, it's a very good album but a bit "hit and miss" to be honest. They were very much left of centre, drifting further away from the pub rock/punk sound of the first records and not being afraid to get a bit intellectual on the punters with harsh future scenarios like *Curfew* or Japanese suicidal literature *Death And Night And Blood* which comes across a lot deeper than, say, *Peaches*, *Princess Of The Streets*

or *Something Better Change*. These days, in the era of MP3s etc., I still play a handful of these tracks regularly.

Bangor and mash

Mike

I was much too young to be listening to nasty horrible groups like The Stranglers! That's why I didn't buy *Black And White* in 1978. But a seed was sown by my mate's brother who was into the band. I remember seeing the advert for *5 Minutes* in my sister's Record Mirror, and she bought me *Black And White* from Cob Records in Bangor. I remember listening to it with mixed emotions, but *Threatened*, *Outside Tokyo* and *Toiler* were the stand-out tracks by a long way.

Eerie, USA

Richard Kolkman

I live in Indiana, USA – no one here has ever heard of them. I was a Beatles snob who discovered The Stranglers' *Black And White* LP in the discontinued bin on the cheap in early 1979. I was 16 at the time and Stranglers were like nothing I'd ever heard. All other bands paled beside the complexity, aggression, melody The Stranglers produced (and humour). I was hooked the minute I heard it. In 1997 I built the www.xlucomics.com/stranglers.html site, I'd had almost 19 years of obsession behind me and an entire set of Strangled magazines to work with.

Killed by sanity

Dom Pilgrim

I first heard it in 1986. A guy at college had it and we played it in his room very loudly on a hi fi one crisp, cold blue-skied Friday afternoon in November. *Death and Night and Blood* (which I knew from my first-ever purchase: *Live X-Cert*) and *Threatened* were the songs that really twisted my head. □

THE STRANGLERS may after all get to play their open-air concert in Hyde Park for Londoners who have effectively been barred from seeing the band this year.

The band had originally approached Virgin Records, who have the rights to stage concerts in the Park, with a view to staging a free concert in the park but at the time Virgin felt that permission would not be forthcoming from the Department of the Environment if they were to apply.

Now Sounds understands that fresh approaches have been made to put the band on in the Park which are being regarded in a much more favourable light.

The Stranglers' basic problem with London gigs is that while they could appear at any of the major seated venues in London, they want to play in front of an unseated audience but no suitable venue will accept them.

Stranglers the park

Stranglers deny 'split'

THE STRANGLERS this week denied reports in the London Evening News that they're "splitting up." The story quoted Jean Jacques Burnel as saying they were all sick and "criticisms being levelled against them," and that too many people were after their "don't want to split," but the situation looks bad" was one of his alleged quotes.

Stranglers choked

THE STRANGLERS has to cancel Scottish dates last week at Dundee and Aberdeen because of problems with the keyboard equipment.

Keyboard player Dave Greenfield said last Friday: "The basic reason for the postponement of the shows was to repair the gear. The organ hasn't been working and I couldn't get a proper synthesiser in Ireland. In fact, we were only able to do the gig at Lancaster University last Monday when a replacement synthesiser was brought up by train at the last minute.

The have now rescheduled the Apollo gigs in Scotland. 30 and 31 will be between Ruffles and Glasgow. 2 and 3 are at Dundee and Aberdeen.

They're planning to do a gig at Glasgow Apollo (October 2) and Ruffles (October 3) and Dunfermline (October 4).



Just plain literary, I guess. — B.C.
 IN PREVIOUS interviews Jean Jacques Burnel has always insisted that he was not a punk because he is not from a working-class background. Well, if an immigrant-owned restaurant in dormitory Guildford isn't working class, then one is tempted to enquire what his His admission that he is a much-vaunted degree was, in fact, gained at Huddersfield Polytechnic, will not enhance his snob rating either.
LARRY N. Smart London Address.
 Sorry one can leave all that sort of thing to "wankers" on — B.C.

Stranglers is the musical unit they are short of superb when separate earthlings SEEM little short absurdly obnoxious.

But to the vinyl in hand The single is a revamp of the version included in the "Black And White" package. To resuscitate the beautiful Bacharach/David song was a great idea and they almost manage to make it as powerful a reinterpretation as, say, Bowie did on "Let's Spend The Night Together" or Annette Peacock on "Don't Be Cruel" — i.e. to gut, restructure, take over and make it a sign of the times. Accolades are prevented only by the instrumental breaks which seem to go on and on and on, however skilful they might be.

Flip over and find two bonus cuts and two bonus guests. First up is "Old Dodger" where George Melly sings in tooth and jaw but (erstwhile Hot Rod) already sings and Lew some wonderful mouth- Melly's flamboyant taunts are all the more for the Stranglers' song. Also you must have to laugh. Finally, the album cut, "Wank", makes a re-appearance and sounds as brutally mach as ever. P.S. Hugh Cornwell has metamorphosed into a woman on the cover. A touch of irony!



P.F.S. 13 Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex



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STRANGLERS' main London appearance cancelled after licensing problems with the GLC. The band's Alexandra Palace or QPR football ground, and is now offering free transport to anyone from the show at Starford's Bingley Hall on May 30. Tickets are available from Chappell's in New Bond Street, London. Album: p26

The bare facts...

"I HAVE to tell you, miss, that I am obliged to take down anything you say..." The Boys In Blue failed to share in the joke at The Stranglers open-air gig in Battersea Park last Saturday and promptly busted a bunch of strippers who peed off to the delight of the crowd during a torrid rendering of "Nice 'N' Dirty" — or a full report and more salacious pix see page 46.

ough time