

After Dark

Stories exploring the
past, present and future of
nightlife in Nelson.

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The Mirror and the Fire

SB · 60s/70s · 2:18 · rec. DM

The mirror in the Imp's ladies, the bright shiny dresses, and standing in the street in 1976 watching the ballroom burn. The question asked over the fire engines is the one this whole archive revolves around.

Play next: *Stargazing on the Hill* - fire taking a building, and fire gathering a family. (Page 104)

I really, really wanted to go to the Imperial. And my dad said, no, you're too young, can't go to the Imp. He would take me to the Imp. Wait for me. No, I'm not doing that. No. No way. But we did. Eventually, I was allowed to go to the Imp. And the band that really sticks in my mind is the Kinks, that was absolutely uplifting, marvellous, fantastic. And because of the way that the Imp was, you could get close to the bands. They'd come down off the stage for an interview and they talked to people.

So what I remember about the Imp was in the ladies. It had a huge mirror. And I loved these beautiful, bright coloured, shiny dresses, which I tended to wear. I can remember looking at myself in this mirror and thinking, oh, you look all right. And then going off for a dance. And so that became part of our week, really. I think for me it was a Saturday. We'd go down to dance, but before then we'd meet at the Lord Nelson, which wasn't a bit as it is now.

Upstairs was a cocktail bar, very posh. So we'd go up there first, meet our friends, have a cocktail or whatever and glass of wine, half a beer, and then make our way down to the Imp. And that went on for several years. But then my interest changed and I started, I was more interested in folk music, so we didn't go to the Imp as much. But I remember the night. I can't remember what day it was now. It was late afternoon and someone said, the Imp's on fire. And we lived just around the corner from the Imp.

So I remember a group of people standing there watching it burn down and just feeling absolutely horrified and so upset. Where will people go now for their nights out? Yeah, that was real. And of course people were saying, oh, it's been deliberate and all sorts of things. I don't know what happened. I don't know what the outcome was, but it was very, very sad. And I really don't know where people went to after that.

Top Line Talent in a Town This Size

DB · 60s · 2:55 · rec. RSJ

How a mill town of 30,000 people came to book the Beatles twice, the Stones twice, Otis Redding and Stevie Wonder.

Play next: *What Happens in the Dark Stays in the Dark* – buses laid on from surrounding towns, and a graveyard nobody walks past. (Page 72)

It had started many years before, but it really came to be the thing in the 60s and 70s getting the Beatles twice, the Rolling Stones twice, and just about every major British act you can think of, and a lot of American ones as well the Byrds, Otis Redding and such people, Stevie Wonder all appeared there, and it was quite remarkable for a town the size of Nelson to be able to attract top line talent like that. And as a result, people came from quite some distance away when there was a big group on that said, they ran these free buses to and from places like Clitheroe Earby, Barnoldswick and so yes, it was very well frequented, a big area for dancing with the stage and then a bar area to one side and then a balcony area where you could go and sit.

And so yes, once, once you were sufficient age. I think most people graduated to going there whenever they could afford it. Although the price is, when you look at now, you know, seven and six to go and see most groups. I think when Otis Redding came with his Soul Stax show, which included people like Sam & Dave and the Bar-Kays and all these different types, and I think it was 15 shillings then. So it's very expensive because when I started working in 66, I was on 3 pounds a week. So if it was a well-known group, you would get people queuing, you could buy tickets in advance, but a lot of people just queued to get in at the door.

So there were often queues stretching back up over the bridge, and it was usually fairly packed. And you'd get the, if they were a well-known group, and you'd get the girls shouting and screaming, so you couldn't hear them too well. But yeah, it was great. It was really something to see these acts that you'd seen on Top of the Pops or whatever, appearing there in front of you. As I said, there would usually be one or two fights break out, but they were very low class affairs, and if you didn't want to get involved in it like that, you were able to steer clear and usually outside afterwards, waiting for the free buses, fights breaking out.

But it wasn't anything untoward. You would never say I'm not going to them because it's a violent place or anything like that. So yeah, on the whole it was a fairly good natured thing.

It's Nelson, not LA

RK · 60s · 4:26 · rec. DM

Skiving off school and outrunning the headmaster along the railway line to buy Stones tickets from the butcher's, and one of Pendle's first mods astride a scooter outside the Sunbeck cafe.

Play next: *The Last Clarion House / The Unity Hall - a scooter outside the coffee bar, and a field bought by weavers for the community.*

Right, I was always interested in night life, I couldn't wait, when I was younger, I couldn't wait to get amongst it somehow, you know. I used to stay in on a Friday, just about 13 years old, thinking, I'd love to meet an English girl, you know, especially the ones with rollers in their hair that walk around the market on a Saturday. I thought that looks really weird, but I kind of like it. Slowly the scene was getting going, the mod scene, and I met a lad. If I could, if I had a camera like you and I'd 've been quick enough, I could have taken an iconic photograph of a lad called John Greenwood who still lives in Colne.

He must have been one of the first mods in Pendle. He had suits and I was, so I'll be about, now 15, 16. And he was on a scooter outside the Sunbeck on a day like this. We were loafing about because we weren't old enough to really get into the pubs too easily. But there he was, astride a scooter, shades on and I thought, well this is Nelson, this not LA.

There was a place in Nelson, it was called Reed's Butchers. It was across from the library to the left of it, front of the library to the left, it was on the corner there, that was Reed's Butchers and he sold tickets for the Imp. I think Electron sold them as well. Various places, as well as other towns, you know, they had outlets everywhere. So I decided I needed to get one early. As soon as I heard the Stones were on before, before we even printed the things I knew they were on.

So, I was in school one day, I said, I need to get, somebody said tickets have started selling already, I thought, Jesus Christ. Right, I need to get going, so I skived out of school, and I got done, didn't I?

You know what we did? It's like the Great Escape, Fisher More had a sloping grass thing down to some tennis courts and a railway line. So at play time or whatever we called it, lunchtime or whatever? It was dinner time. Me and a friend, Freddy Barker from Barnoldswick, stood there and waited, sat there. The bells went and then eventually teachers would get fed up and go "come on, get in!" We hopped down the side, just out of sight, and waited. Everybody went in. It looked clear, we walked along the bottom onto the railway line, along to the bridge, got onto the bridge and I felt quite, I think I thought, we're okay here.

And I saw a car coming up Gibfield Road and I looked, I said "Jesus Christ, run! It's the headmaster and deputy head, Mitchell, Moore and Thomas." We jumped onto the railway lines and ran along to

Nelson. Got to Reed's the butchers where there's a butcher in a bit of a bloody thingy, you know, and he says "two tickets?" He says, "aye, hang on". So I got me two tickets to the Stones. So we got 'em.

But, the first big soul act I saw that stuck out was Otis Redding, they called it, The Atlantic - it had different names - Atlantic, Stacks. That's two record labels - sister labels - the Atlantic Stacks Roadshow, some called it the Stacks Volt. That's another label, V-O-L-T. Stacks Volt Show or just the Otis Redding show you know. So, it had lots of names and toured Europe, toured Europe in 1967. So there's footage of them. You can find some of that. The excitement was palpable from young people, you know, because these guys all look sharp. They looked cool. Short hair. And that one, I don't know how many they got in the Imp. Must have been, there would have been well over a thousand. Then, I think we might be talking two thousand. It was packed upstairs, downstairs. And we had, on the show, we had, so it was the roster of the labels that were. It's er, it's a southern label Atlantic, you know down Memphis way and places like that. They made the music as opposed to the Tamla Motown that was made in Detroit in the north. There were a southern based group of singers, probably blues artists initially, and then gospel singers, church singers, and then soul. Otis Redding was big in that, you know, it was very big.

A Venture Into Ticket Fraud

RK · 60s · 1:55 · rec. DM

An apprentice at the printers who made the Imp's posters, and the morning all ten apprentices were lined up over some tickets that had gone missing.

Play next: *Campfire Conversations* - a print room full of apprentices, and a fire gathering young people. (Page 116)

You know what I used to do at Coulton's? We did all the posters, the Beatles, the Stones, the Animals, just everything, you know. You just don't think when you're younger and you think it's forever. Don't you? And I nicked a few bits. I've got some. I've got some of the old block typefaces and a few plates, copper plates that were printed. We were just looking at them the other day. I've still got some. If you want to look at them, you can do. But never really kept anything I should have done, you know.

One day it was a Friday and the Imp opened on a Friday. The CID arrived at Coulton's and they got all the young apprentices lined up. There must have been about ten of us. They said "okay," they said "who's been printing tickets for the Imp?" Dunno, no idea! Well, they said it's pretty obvious innit? It's only you guys could have done it. You said, "you know, you're probably going to have to go inside, I think" he said "it's fraud". Oh, bloody hell, that bad? Me Dad certainly wouldn't like that, you know, very strict, you know. So we said, "maybe I found one floor and used it", you know. And they said "telling you if this happens again you will definitely go down. No doubt about it. You get done for fraud." It kind of stuck in that lesson really that they knew what we were doing, you know, but being in printing, always meant you were able to get, I mean, one of the lads got a card for a club, I think it was the Aces of Spades in Morely, and it was, they'd made it really difficult because it was scored crisscrossed and he's painstakingly got a scalpel, printed it and he's doing this scoring. I thought, wow, fair play.

So that was our first venture into fraud and the life of crime.

The Imp, Up Close

SM · 60s · 6:35 · rec. DM

Turning down a chance to meet the Byrds in order to listen to the Small Faces, and the night three members of the Spectres, later Status Quo, ended up sleeping at the house.

Play next: *Hidden Lives* – a house with Status Quo asleep in it, and a life with nowhere to be.
(Page 88)

There were the two bars, but there was a milk bar as well. So he could have obviously milkshakes like American style ice cream soda and stuff like that. And you're quite happy.

So who was your favourite band then?

Oh, I don't... Oh, there were so many. But I were such a lover of the Small Faces. I remember Jimi Hendrix. That was the first time I ever saw anybody dancing on their own. Because we all used to do humbug dancing. And then the blokes would walk round one way, and girls would walk the other way, and then you'd have a dance, you know.

But that night, people were just dancing on their own. But I read one of these booklets, I don't know, produced it. He was saying there were a lot of racism when Jimi Hendrix were down that night. I'm surprised at that, because we'd had a lot of coloured artists down there, that when there were groups or artists coming over from America to do a nationwide tour. To my recollection, a lot of them started off, they did the Imp first, whether it was just to get a feel for the place and then they'd go on to the big, you know, the big theaters?

But there were so many of them came. In fact, I was telling Patrick, when the Small Faces came. That stage there. And then there were big settees all the way around there, and they were sort of hogged first, were them. I never sat in them because I like to be up and down. But they'd said to me and my friend. The Byrds were due to come, I don't know if it was the week after or the one after that, but they said "if you make a lot of noise, when the Faces are on, Small Faces are on and that scream and oh... We'll make sure you've got front seats and you can meet the Byrds." And I thought, you can't scream at the Small Faces. You know, you can wait to watch them and listen to them. Not, not scream at 'em. You know, it's not like when the Beatles came and everybody's going, oh, gosh. So I turned down meeting the Byrds. It was a tremendous atmosphere because it was so big. You know, you could just keep moving round. It could be a rough place, you know. There were fights, but, you know like the old testosterone going.

And I went on holiday to Butlins at Minehead and Bob came, the manager of the Imp was at Butlins and this group were on the Spectres. So we nattered Bob Kane, nattered him, nattered him and he ended up working them, and the top of the bill was the Honeycombs. Do you remember them? They

were really good. Lady drummer. And they came round to ours, and we only lived in a two up two down and took. My dad said, "so where did you stay last night?" They said, "oh, this guest house." And they said, "we're going to sleep in the van tonight, it were horrible." They said we were all itching and so my dad said, "you're not doing that lads." He said "you can come and stay here." So he went two doors down. This couple in those days, you know, whenever you called everybody uncle or aunty or, in respect. "Uncle Herbert," he said, "can you put these lads up for night?" So I think three of them stayed there and three of them stayed at our house. And, and then when my mother sent me to bed I thought "I can't sleep when Alan's down there."

But I kept in touch with Alan for quite a while. And when they came up again, he came with presents, particularly with my mum, and he brought me some perfume. But when they came back from Saturday night at the Imp and Rodney, Rodney and Doreen, who we were talking, me mum's friends, they used to go out Saturday night and then come back and have sandwiches and me dad went, remember the old tape recorders with big tape and then microphone? My dad fancied himself as a singer, so when he had a drink. So he's there, tape recorder, it weren't even going. So he's singing to me mum. So there's Francis Rossi sat there with a guitar and Alan and they were composing bits of songs. Yeah. And then doing a bit and, and then my dad would say "chime in with this one". Uncle Rodney, right up to him dying, used to say, "hey, I remember when them lad's come to your house." Yeah.

And what did they become?

Status Quo. Yeah. So when I remember being upstairs and Edwina had Top of the Pops on and shouted upstairs to me: "Oh, look, it's Alan!" and I come down and there's this, they're this big band all of the sudden. Yeah.

The Beatles and the Blues

MR · 60s · 2:24 · rec. MP

The night no one could hear the Beatles for screaming, and Paul Jones stopping a Manfred Mann set to say this is serious, this is the blues.

Play next: *A Reflection of the Town's Decline - the night the town was at its loudest, and an account of why it went quiet. (Page 126)*

But the night the Beatles came. Well, it was, the atmosphere was absolutely fantastic, you know. We'd all bought a ticket and things was so cheap, in those days. It was only about 4 pounds or something. And they'd opened the top door, and as soon as you went in the atmosphere, and you couldn't hear anything. And when they were singing, you couldn't hear anything because everybody was screaming. Yeah. Yeah. And another thing I remember, particularly when Manfred Mann came and I wasn't all that keen on them, but I'd been persuaded to go by a friend. And they were playing the various hits, Five, Four, Three, Two, One and all these sorts of stuff which I wasn't that keen on. And then, then they started to play something. And then Paul Jones, who was the singer, said, "stop!" So they all stopped and he said, "you can't talk. This is serious. This is the blues." And then he started to make this, started to play Smokestack Lightning by Howlin' Wolf. Yeah. And that was the first time I was aware of or had heard any blues. And I remember being really, really impressed. Yeah. And funnily enough, a couple of years ago I was at the Blues Festival at Colne and he, Paul Jones, was there singing.

And I mean, I'm 81, but I'm surprised, I'm surrounded by young people. And I made an eye contact with him. I wondered if he remembered coming down the Imperial?

Yeah. I have a friend, and her husband was a policeman. And the other job keeping girls out to the vans where the Beatles were, keeping them off them. Yeah. Oh, yeah, we were lucky, you know. People had to travel miles, and we just used to walk, I used to walk from home go in the Lord Nelson, have a couple of drinks and then walk down to there. We didn't know we were born. Well, it was only younger people that were interested. I couldn't remember my parents thinking "who's this load of rubbish?", you know, because they were they were hanging on to their era and what they liked, you know. And the time before that had been the big bands, hadn't it? You know, because when it's open up at first it was, the Imperial. It was a skate, a roller skating rink. Then it went on to host music and things. Yeah. Big, big bands out there with all the rage before that.

Bodies on the Living Room Floor

LP · 60s · 2:03 · rec. RSJ

A six-year-old creeping into the front room on a Sunday morning to count the sleeping bags, because support bands slept at the house rather than drive back to London.

Play next: *Bingo and a Singer at the Carters - bands who stayed the night, and a room still full on a Saturday. (Page 51)*

My sister had, she was really into music from a very early age, so she had a really brilliant record collection. And because my mum was in the business, you know, she managed a club in Colne before she managed the Trop, and, so she knew the guy who was the promoter for the Imp who used to bring the bands there. And somehow he knew of what a good record collection my sister had. So he used to borrow her records to play before the bands came on. And so as a thank you, Lynne, my sister always used to get to go backstage.

So she met all the bands. Yeah, you name it, you know, because everybody came there, the Beatles, the Stones and American acts and stuff, yeah. So I really, even though I was only like six or seven or whatever, I kind of got the sort of whiff of that really. I knew, you know, I knew it was happening and also and, and inevitably as well, often she would just invite bands, you know, particularly like supporting act bands and stuff to come back and sleep at our house so they didn't have to get back in the van and go and drive back to London or wherever.

So I used to find it really exciting, waking up on a Saturday or Sunday morning and going and peaking in the living room and seeing how many bodies were on the floor, sleeping in sleeping bags on the floor in all. All lads. Yeah. Inevitably, with quite long hair.

Anybody that Was Anybody Played the Imp

BE · 60s · 1:32 · rec. DM

Mungo Jerry, Kenny Ball, the Friday fights and the bouncers who appeared from nowhere, from a musician who played the revolving stage himself.

Play next: *Nowhere to Go, So We Made Somewhere* - a town everybody played, and a generation with nowhere to go. (Page 106)

We played with what he's called, *In the Summertime*. - Mungo Jerry. I just remember seeing Mungo Jerry, the big bag round his neck and it was full of photographs of himself. But I mean, Kenny Ball. I remember, I remember playing there because it had a revolving stage.

I've heard about the revolving stage.

I remember that we were playing, the band that I played in was like a small dance band. And I remember we were playing *Midnight in Moscow*. And then they came round the other side and they were playing it proper. We said. But I mean, I can remember there was, there was always fights on a Friday night.

And so, you know

Lads letting off steam.

Right. Yeah. And obviously, when people like we were on, they wanted the top liners on, and they'd be throwing stuff at you, you know. You know.

And if there was a fight, the lights dimmed? The bouncers appeared from nowhere. And if we were at the back of the stage, they would just. You could just pick people up and they would throw them against the wall and the door against the doors. And they just like the door. These bars on the doors.

Yeah, yeah. Safety and that. Crash bars. Yeah. And they were out into the street.

I remember it and remember, it went up in flames on a Thursday night. But it was...

Did you see it going up in flames?

Saw the flames from where I live over the rooftops?

But anybody that was anybody played at the Imp. You name it.

The Acts at the Imp

BH · 60s · 3:07 · rec. DM

Tina Turner while she was still singing in Ike's backing band, the Beatles twice, and the Stones smuggled in for a Sunday night show.

Play next: *The Earlies at The Good Night Club - the acts that came to Nelson, and the room that let Nelson's own bands play. (Page 61)*

But I could always remember going down in, when I was 16, 17 and Adrian Shaw, I think he were 18 then and he were so impressive. He filled bloody door he were that big, you know, I thought, wow. And, and I were weightlifting then you know, and we all worked out pit then we were all miners. So we're pretty strong lads. You know. And I thought, wow, this is way, the way forward for me being a big thing. Most of them touring acts in there from 70s, 60s and 70s, I've seen 'em. Tina Turner I saw her when she were in a backing band for her husband Ike Turner. Jimi Hendrix, I seen him down there.

What was Tina Turner singing at that point?

She were only in the backing group. They were singing Ike Turner songs, but she wrote two of them herself, so. And you could tell she were a gospel singer. Well, it stood out, you know. There were Tina Turner, and there were other girls in backing. And then I saw Beatles twice. And then Rolling Stones when they said, Stones are coming, but they can't play on a Saturday, they can only manage a Sunday. So I think they smuggled them in, in a police van or summat like that.

And I thought it were ten shilling on a Friday or Saturday night, if did a good band and it were ten bob. But Sunday night it were 12 and six. It were another half a crown, and I thought, you'll never fill it on a Sunday - half a crown - too much, you know. Anyway, it were bloody jam packed. Yeah. And Stones were just, I think they had one record going then. Well, I said to my, my granddaughter, our Jessica, and this is ages since she said grandad, "have you seen Tina Turner's life story video?" I said "no I haven't." She said, yeah, she said "you can borrow this then." So I, I said, "wow." I said, yeah, "I can remember seeing her." She said, "you haven't seen Tina Turner!" I said, "'cause I bloody have." You know, she said, "how have you seen her?" I said, "yeah, she's been in Nelson." Well she were living in Nelson at the time. She said "she won't come to this dump", you know. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. And Cilla Black, I must have seen her 20, 20 odd times. 30 times. Yeah. Because every time a band didn't turn up they'd phone Liverpool and she'd come over and then everybody went to bar and bar were full all night.

You know, only the girls wanted to see her. I thought she had her awful voice, awful singing down her nose. And I thought, well, I've heard better singers in there when we played, you know. Yeah, but she did all right out of it, yeah.

So what were the Beatles singing when you...

Love Me Do that were first on and what others. They did a few cover songs. They were quite bluesy at first were Beatles and if you can remember Oasis, they sounded very much like the Beatles when Oasis started. And I thought when, first time I heard 'em I thought they were copying the Beatles because they were, they were pretty raw.

There were none of them master musicians. You know, it took a while before they mastered their instruments, you know, but they were good, you know, they were.

A Sea of Factory Chimneys

DB · 60s · 2:59 · rec. RSJ

Seven cinemas, dozens of local groups and a working men's club for every trade, seen from the hills above a valley full of chimneys.

Play next: *Catwoman and Dogman* - the town seen from the hills, and the town at street level after dark. (Page 67)

Yeah. There was like, I mean, we didn't go over a week. Couldn't afford it, and also there might not be a group we particularly wanted to see, particularly Sandie Shaw as well. So, yeah, if you didn't go there, you were usually at the cinema, you know, or at a youth club or something like that. There was always something going on, someplace to go. Which I think is one of the problems for teenagers these days, is that In Nelson, there's nothing really for them to do of an evening. There's not one cinema. For a town that had eight cinemas, there's not one at all. There's still some working men's clubs, but I don't think they're the sort of places that young folks are likely to go to. So, there used to be a glut, and now there's a dearth, really.

Yes. Even as I say, the cricket club, you know, having groups there, they like Merseybeats and Mud and one or two others, and a lot of the local entertainers at the working men's clubs. Otherwise local groups, of which there were, as I mentioned, there were dozens of them. So, yeah, there was always something like that to go on.

There was one a stone's throw from where I was brought up until the Palatine. There was The Dresses, the Pigeon Club, Star Cycling Club, Carters and Motormen or Fast and Slows as it was usually known. So yes, they were dotted all over the place, these. Again, they weren't always particularly favored by our age, you know, teens, early 20s, because they would have singers on who were more 50s type rather than 60s and comedians and whatever. So we didn't go to as many of those. But yes, all in all, it was a great time and a great place for being a teenager and early 20s.

And I think the number of working men's clubs and so on was testimony to the communities. A lot of them related to the various aspects of the textile trade which dominated the place at that time. If you went up onto the hills and looked down, there was a sea of factory chimneys, whereas now there's none I don't think, there because of all the textile mills. My parents both worked in the textile mills, my grandparents, although my father soon gave it up and become a nurse instead. But, you know, usually some families had some connection to the mills.

Northern Soul Came to Nelson

PH · 60s/70s · 1:40 · rec. RSJ

Inheriting a father's soul records, a middle name taken from Otis Redding, and DJing the same scene fifty years later.

Play next: *Where Are The Girls At Night?* – a scene that filled the town, and a town centre that empties. (Page 93)

But it's still connected to that kind of working class culture in the same way as like, the Imp had that, you know. Northern Soul has a lot of roots in this area as well, in the sense of like the feeder clubs or I'm not I'm not exactly sure where it happened in Nelson. I know it did happen in Nelson, but other than the Imp, but like Brierfield, which is obviously not far away, Walter Street Club has had a night, still has a night called The Bird Trap. And that was a feeder club to Soul Nights, where you went off to Blackpool and Manchester and Wigan and that and that culture I got from my dad, you know, my dad, he was into that.

He went down the Imp, he saw everyone that he loved, you know, he was a big Otis Redding fan, Sam and Dave. And he saw all those people in Nelson. And my middle name is Otis, after Otis Redding, so it's kind of carried on. And I recently inherited all my dad's soul records, northern soul records, which I am now deejaying again, because that scene is so still alive in this community, of which, I mean, that's a really interesting scene in the sense of generationally, you've got this like cycle of young people getting into it because it's just such a great, such a great vibe, it's good music. Everything about it is still really alive, even though the music is like and some of it's still new music is being made still around it, but it seems to have got legs. Do you know what I mean? It's just going on and we and we have this great history of having a place around here in Nelson that you could see these people in the early days of like Motown and soul. And they would, they'd be on a coach and driving around these places and playing as well as the Beatles and Hendrix, you know. It's just mental that these people came to Nelson, you know?

115 Steps to the Imp: A Ten Year Old Alone At The Wrestling

SB · 60s · 7:40 · rec. self-recorded

Ten years old and newly arrived from Pakistan, walking alone to the Imp to see wrestlers previously known only from a neighbour's television. The walk was measured again this year: still 115 steps.

Play next: *Never Allowed Out After Dark - a child who walked out alone, and a child who never could. (Page 95)*

My life in Nelson for people of my generation and more importantly, people of my background was, to put it politely, somewhat limited. Nonexistent might be closer to the truth, to be honest. Still, necessity has always been a gifted teacher, and we became quite skilled at creating our own entertainment. The year is 1969. Neil Armstrong is landing on the moon, and my family and I are landing at Heathrow Airport as immigrants. History was taking a giant leap and we were taking smaller, all the more nervous steps.

Life in those early years felt sparse. It was really hard, quiet, and often painfully lonely. We didn't even have a television at home. Thankfully, we had kind neighbours with an open door policy and more importantly, they had a TV. Through that glowing little box, a whole new world suddenly appeared. Saturday afternoons belonged to World of Sport and Dickie Davis. This was before, by the way, the age of Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks. Wrestling then had its own strange cast of heroes and villains. Amazing names and characters. Kendo Nagasaki, Jackie "Mr. TV" Pallo, Adrian Street with his glam rock swagger. And of course, Mick - the man you love to hate - McManus, a man who seemed to spend the entire match being flattened, folded and generally rearranged - battered basically - only to somehow emerge victorious, always victorious, always battered but victorious to a soundtrack of furious boos. But my favorites were the Royal Brothers, Bert Royal and Vic Faulkner. They looked so completely different that I was convinced they had been some kind of mistake. Surely they couldn't actually be brothers. They just looked so different. Apparently they were.

Then one day, as if by wrestling magic, I discovered that my heroes were coming to Nelson all the way from, coming out of the TV set and into Nelson to wrestle at the Imperial Ballroom. As I mentioned, the Imp on Carr Road. Now, when I say it was close to home, I mean close. I recently measured, in fact, I actually went out today and measured again 115 steps from my house where I lived. Now this is really strange and quirky. Strangely enough, after 55 years and ten house moves, life has performed its own little wrestling maneuver and brought me back to Carr Road. So this is such a weird kind of symmetry, although it's a different house, different location, but it's actually almost exactly 115 steps from my house, my current house, to the, the entrance to what would have been named. And it's almost exactly 115 steps to the house that we lived on Bennington Street in all those years ago. How amazing is that? Really strange.

Now, what's even more amazing, actually, is that I went to this wrestling match totally on my own. Absolutely on my own. I was around 10 or 11, perhaps. Maybe 12. I barely spoke any English. I didn't know a single person there. Yet, all alone, somehow I spent the entire evening among hundreds, perhaps thousands of strangers through clouds of cigarette smoke, surrounded by alcohol and the roar of passionate, of a passionate crowd, I watch my heroes the Royal Brothers perform. And then I came home. Goodness know what time I came home? It might have been midnight. I don't have any recollections of the actual wrestling, but I am pretty sure they would have won. And the other thing, nobody bothered me. Today, before the first bell had rung, social services would be on speed dial. I would probably be taken away and my parents possibly locked up anyway. Anyway, years later, I tried to work out how this remarkable adventure, which had been locked away in the vaults of my memory for many decades, and it came back to me in the recent past.

So? So I said, I try to work out how this remarkable adventure ever happened. And from what I can remember, I think it was one of our first Eids in this country. I mean, we had a little way of celebration. We didn't have any family here. The community was pretty small in those days as well. There was no events whatsoever. And this wrestling contest happened to coincide with that special Eid day. And I can remember a boy from school, older and certainly braver, had arranged to go with me. I wish I could remember who he was, but I just can't.

Anyway, I waited outside the Imp on that bitter winter evening. It was definitely winter time. No hat, no gloves, no scarf. We didn't even know such luxuries existed. I waited and I waited. He never came. Perhaps he changed his mind. Perhaps he was simply taking advantage of the quiet, naive kid. And maybe others were in on his joke. Anyway, under normal circumstances, I would have gone straight home. I was a shy, bookish child, far more comfortable hiding behind a book than stepping into a hall full of strangers. But your heroes can sometimes perform miracles that can inspire and motivate you to do unusual things and move you out of your comfort zone.

I can remember my mother secretly slipping me my Eidi money. That's kind of Eidi, is like an Eid gift, basically. And hiding that whole affair from my father who worked nights and remained blissfully unaware. Mothers are like that. They keep your best secrets. I also have no idea where my older brother was, because had he been around or in on this, he would almost certainly have vetoed the entire operation. Now, oddly, I cannot remember the wrestling itself. I don't remember who the Royal Brothers fought that night. Was it the Hells Angels or perhaps the Saint Brothers?

I can't even remember what happened in the ring, but perhaps that's not the point. The details faded long ago. The adventure never has.

The Revolving Stage

BH · 60s · 3:35 · rec. self-recorded

A son reading from the book his father was writing when he died: a covers band's first gig at the Imp, and a revolving stage that turned the wrong way at the worst moment.

Play next: *Home Before the Streetlights Came On* - the biggest stage in town, and the streets children were called in from. (Page 63)

My name is Benny, I'm a library assistant at Nelson Library. I'm going to share with you some stories by my dad. He passed away earlier this year, and we discovered that he was writing a book about his life in local bands. My dad was a drummer and he played in many bands. He was known as Bob. One of my dad's first bands was a band called Smokey Gun, a 60s cover band. They just did popular covers of that era. And this is an excerpt from the book from chapter two. The title is called A Proper Band, and this is the moment when Smokey Gun played at the Nelson Imp.

Steve's girlfriend was a dancer, so she became a part of Smokey Gun's act, and we seemed to get a lot more responsive gigs from blokes in the audience. Don't get me wrong, she wasn't anything like the dancer with Hawkwind, but I don't think any other band in the area had a dancer. Dave, the agent finally got us a gig at the Nelson Imp. Everyone was excited about it and determined to make it a gig to remember. We arrived at the Imp and were shown where to set up on the revolving stage.

The PA speakers had to be set up out front and when the stage revolved around the speaker, leads had to be plugged in while the band played an instrumental piece. It was agreed that Bob would plug in the speaker leads as he wasn't playing an instrument, and once the leads were in, we'd go straight into our opening number. The stage area, when at the back was a bit small to say the least. Basically a drum riser and just enough room to set up the amps, but when it revolved around it was enormous. With more than enough room for three guitar players, a singer and female dancer. The time came for us to get ready to play. We all got onto the tiny stage. A guy told us he would give us the nod when to start playing. He would then close the doors and revolve the stage around to the front. We asked which way the stage revolved and he told us it went clockwise, so we prepared ourselves. The moment for our entrance arrived, we got the signal to start playing and the doors were shut. When the doors were closed and the guy looked at us through the window in the door, it reminded me of one of those old horror films with Boris Karloff. The stage then moved anti-clockwise for a few seconds and then jerked in the right direction. Unfortunately, this caught us by surprise and instead of a smooth instrumental piece, we gave a jerky, missed notes piece. As the stage slowly revolved to the front. We were blinded by the bright stage lights and missed a few more notes and beats. Once the stage was fully revolved, Bob did his job, wired the speakers and away we went. Surprisingly, nobody seemed to have noticed our mishaps. Or maybe they were used to them after seeing other bands suffer the same fate.

The gig itself went well and we got a good response from the crowd, especially Steve's girlfriend, the dancer. We even got an encore. Then the moment came for the stage to revolve back. We started the instrumental piece. Again, the guitarist and Bob got in position. We braced ourselves and off we went. It was only when we were about three quarters of the way around, we heard a big thud and realized that Bob had forgotten to unplug the PA speaker leads. We dragged one of the speaker cabinets off stage. As soon as the stage stopped, Bill and Terry ran out front, and retrieved the speaker cabinet. The only damage seemed to be a slight chip on one corner and the lead was snapped. Going home in the van, nothing was said about the incident, and we all said our goodbyes and that we'd see each other at Tuesday's rehearsal. As soon as I got home, I couldn't stop laughing about it for at least ten minutes. It still brings a smile to my face today.

The Jukebox in The Sunbeck

MC · 60s · 2:09 · rec. DM

A coffee bar near the station, the man behind the counter with his little moustache, and Nelson's first jukebox, decades before this one.

Play next: *Not Home, Not School* – a coffee bar that was neither home nor school, and young people asking for similar spaces now. (Page 144)

Did you ever hear of little coffee bar called The Sunbeck? Right. I'll tell you exactly where it was. It was a block down. If you come out of the station pub, out of the main door right, and turn it left. So you're facing the station itself, aren't you, okay? The interchange. Turn left. Walk down one block before you get to the Arndale Center and all that. The Sunbeck was just on the corner, and that was the start of what they used to call the Espresso frothy coffee. And everybody went in there.

Jim. I can see him now. Jim with a little mustache. And he used to stand in the bar, and say "coffee lads, coffee lads", you know, and everybody went in there. I think the jukebox was something like thrupence. Put thrupence in and he got a BAL-AMi jukebox, which was top stuff, but it was always packed. In fact, I'll tell you a little story. This was my ex-wife's claim to fame. She just had my daughter, and she came out of the Sunbeck with my daughter in pram and ran over Tom Jones's foot.

That was Margaret's claim to fame. She died about two years ago. But that were her claim to fame running over. She said he were hopping about! And he was at the Imp that night. And he arrived in a, in an army jacket. You know them? Denims. Not denim, what do they call them? Khaki jackets. But you could tell straight away he were destined for stardom. The voice and everything, which hasn't seemed to change much in all these years. Still got that power in that voice.

Hardcore Uproar on the Lomeshaye Estate

SR · 90s · 7:08 · rec. MP

On stage in an industrial unit with a hired reel-to-reel, asking ten thousand people to make a noise for a record: the silence that followed, and the scream that broke it.

Play next: *Gaming Is My Nightlife* - ten thousand voices in a room, and a nightlife of one voice in a headset. (Page 136)

I'm sure you know about the Blackburn raves. There was illegal parties there and it was addictive stuff. It really was. You know, we were all very much on the right side of the law. Apart from the fact that we were inside an illegal event. But apart from that, we were very much just clubbers, just ravers, just music lovers. And it's no exaggeration to say that every single time you went, it was the best night of your life. And I'm not kidding. I spent a lot of time with The Hacienda, which is often described as the best nightclub in the world, and it just was.

It was probably better because of the scale of it. So yeah, I'm just telling you that because we were very excited about being in that area and we wanted to write a record, and Jonathan, just wanting to do everything right. My band mate, he insisted on getting a real crowd for it, and he asked the organisers of the Blackburn raves - "can we come in with some recording equipment and record the crowd?" And they said, they said, "yes, you can do that as long as you name it after our, our raves."

And for some reason, it ended up being this event at Nelson. And, I remember the party. I mean, obviously it was, you know, 36 years ago. So, you know, it's not 100% crystal clear. But I do you know, they are hard to forget these events. But, it was it was extremely special because they were getting bigger and bigger every week. Just, the more people went, the more people would tell their mates, "you have to go to these parties!" They're amazing. And we were all teenagers, you know, we were kids, lying to our parents that we're staying over at our friend's house. Obviously not saying that we're going to a rave, but, it turned out to be that one. And we hired some recording equipment. This is significant for what I will tell you happened later. I had some recording equipment from a place in Stockport. And the reason I'm telling you this is because it looked like we had the recording equipment, looked like we were with the organisers, you know, we were part of the organisation. And we went, we got on the stage, put the recording equipment up, and we asked them when we should record and when's a good time to record the crowd.

And they said, "what we'll do is we'll stop the music so you can just get a clean recording of the crowd." In fact, we asked them, of course, yeah, we asked them, "can you stop the music?" And they said, yeah, they cool with that, because obviously if we were to record it while the music's going on, we couldn't use that in a piece of music, you know, because there's another track. So, we had the equipment there, a reel to reel. It was all very, very sort of a professional looking audio equipment. And then we went off for a bit of a dance to kind of enjoy a bit of the evening, and it was just, it was

just mind blowing from the, from the point of view of these events were incredible. I'd been to the early ones where there are about 500 people there, they were incredible and then started growing when there was just a thousand, couple of thousand, few thousand. There were always just, just it was as if the more people that are, the better it is because, you know, people cheered at the music. There's more excitement, there's more people to meet. It was all very, very exciting and incredible music all night. Lovely people from all over the place, literally all over the country, you know. One thing that I really enjoyed doing is saying to people, asking them, where have you traveled from? And it was great to hear, I'm from London, I'm from Glasgow, I'm from Bristol, people from all over the place, everywhere. And so the event itself was just something else. This huge space, illegal, you know, it's just, the whole thing just blows my mind how somebody can put on an illegal party, get all these people in the room and put on the night of your life for one night, and then it's going to be on somewhere else.

And so the event was just, beautiful, you know, I can't talk about it. You know, if you get what I'm saying. It was, like life changingly good. Honest to God. It was like, you know, there's people who talk about it, just how exciting and fantastic it was, because you could see it was probably the biggest one yet. It seemed to just expand, just explored very quickly. And, the parties going on, everything is fantastic. And we went to the organiser, the DJ's and the organisers and said, okay, it's time for us to, the party's buzzing now, you know, there's a lot of people here. Be a great time to stop the music so we can just get a recording of the crowd and the idea we will use it in our record and we can say, that's a real rave that is in. People will think it's really nice and authentic. Rather than using a sample of a football crowd, which people did on these records. We wanted the party, the events that we go to and we loved.

And they stopped the music. At first, there was silence. We didn't know what was going on. And when we realised, oh, people think the sounds, the kind of sound system's broken down. And so everyone's just like looking round like, "oh, sound systems broken down. Okay, maybe it'll come back on." So in an attempt to get people to cheer, I scream: "Yeah!" and sort of whoop. So that people can hear that the sound hasn't broken down. We just want you to cheer so we can record this in stereo. We need it for our record. And somebody else joined in, and then someone else joined in. There's more and more. And then somebody had whistles and air horns. And the great thing was it just sort of built up nicely from silence to this to 10,000 people cheering. And we got an incredible clean recording of that. We hoped that, you know, we obviously hadn't heard it while we were there. But, you know, Jonathan knew what he was doing, his professional sound, qualified sound engineer. So we got a recording of that and we said, right, let's get this equipment in the car and we can come back and carry on with the party. Enjoy the rest of the event.

Hendrix at The Bull

MC · 60s · 1:27 · rec. DM

Jimi Hendrix falling over a table in the Bull with a bottle of bourbon the morning after his Imp gig, and what the crowd had shouted at him the night before.

Play next: *Tracks, Thatcherism, White Working Class* - a crowd's racism, and an attempt to explain the town that produced it. (Page 110)

Like I said, my favourite knock of all was the Bull, because I were interested in cars, I were interested in motorbikes and you used to get a lot of characters in. Oh yeah, the characters that used to come in. There was a bloke, it was run by, I can remember him, the landlord, they called him Big Ron. I think he'd been in the army for a long while, and his daughter used to work behind the bar. But we were in the Bull one Sunday morning, and Jimi Hendrix came in with a bottle of bourbon and fell over the table right onto us.

He'd stayed, I think, at the Nelson hotel at the station. He'd been at the Imp on the Saturday night. And he were walking about with a bottle of bourbon. And people were booing him at the Imp. Oh, if they don't like 'em they'll tell 'em, and they didn't like Fleetwood Mac at the Imp because of Peter Green, because Peter Green had left the band, you know. And he was a man, you know, the Albatross and all this kind of thing. And they were very vindictive, and they shout, some of the racial stuff they used to shout at bloody Jimi Hendrix. 12 months later, he was the biggest star in the world.

Not a Bunch of Freaky Long-Haired Hippies

BH · 70s · 4:37 · rec. self-recorded

A prog band's first gig ending after twelve minutes when the headmaster had the DJ pull the plug, read from a father's unpublished pages.

Play next: *The Priest Gave Us the Keys To Set Up On The Altar* - the room that said no, and the room that handed over its keys. (Page 120)

Phil got us our first gig at his old school in Nelson at a dance they were holding. We rehearsed what we intended to play and timed it so that we wouldn't overrun our two 30 minute spots. In between our spots, a DJ will play music. We had two weeks of rehearsals before the gig and felt we'd got everything down to a fine art. Both sets of tunes ran to 31 minutes, and the primitive light show seemed to add something to the music. We were raring to go and all of us, including Dave and Stewart, couldn't wait to show off our material.

Phil's dad run an industrial window cleaning firm in Nelson and said we could have the use of his vans for transport. This was a great help as we wouldn't need to hire a van and driver. For now, Phil's older brother would drive us to gigs. The day of our debut gig arrived. We loaded the van and set off. On arriving we were met by the organiser who introduced us to the DJ. He showed us where to set up and where the electric sockets were located. He asked what sort of material we did and when we told him it was all original, he shook his head and muttered something that none of us could understand, then left.

After setting up our gear, we did a quick soundcheck and set up our lighting rig. Well, two homemade cabinets. We placed the lighting cabs in front of Phil's keyboard and the other in front of Dennis. We were now ready to go and all sat around waiting for the magic moment to start. It was agreed that we would start the first set with In the Hall of the Mountain King, as we thought people would know this number better than King Kong.

The DJ seemed to be playing a lot of Motown and soul music, but no one seemed to be dancing. Instead, they just stood around talking and looking at each other. Good sign, we thought, obviously they're more into rock music. The DJ informed us that he was about to play the last record and asked if we were ready. To a man, we told him we were and took our positions at our respective instruments. The record faded and we were on. A quick four count in and we hit the first note. Not a problem.

All that rehearsing had paid off, and we were like a slick machine, perfectly in time for the lights, in sync with the beat, everything in time and in tune. I glanced at the audience. No one had jumped onto the dancefloor yet, but give them a few more minutes and they'd all be up - so I thought. The number came to an end to a deathly silence, not a murmur. We looked at each other and Phil said "straight into the next one, quick!" I counted the number in and away we went. The first time we played one of our compositions in public. Again, all that rehearsing seemed to have paid off as we coasted through the beginning.

We were just about to start the middle improvisation when suddenly the lights went out, the bass and keyboards fell silent, and I was left all alone – the only one making any noise. I kept the beat going and added a few fills waiting for the boys to rejoin, but nothing. Instead I was joined by Gladys Knight and the pips or something like that. What the f**k I thought. And looking over I could see the DJ's smirking and telling me to stop playing. He was holding an extension lead plug in his hand. I realized that the smirking b*****d had pulled the plug on us.

None of us were amused, and stormed over to the DJ to ask him what he thought he was doing, pulling the plug. Before we got to him, a chubby gentleman stopped us, telling us that he had ordered the plug to be pulled as people were complaining about, as he put it, that terrible noise we were making. The chubby bloke turned out to be the headmaster and chief organisers of the gig. He informed us that he thought he'd booked a modern band that played songs people knew and could dance to. Not a bunch of freaky, long haired hippies playing rubbish.

As far as he was concerned, our gig was over, that we'd better get our gear together and leave. He added he thought Phil knew better and what would his dad say? He pointed out that Phil's dad had supplied transport, that we knew all about the band, and asked who was going to pay for the damage, if there was any, caused to our amps and keyboard. We argued for at least half an hour over the damage, the gear payment, and then our fee. On both items, the chubby guy wasn't giving any ground, so we informed him we weren't leaving until an agreement was reached.

At this, the smirking DJ entered the argument, saying we hadn't played for as long as we'd been booked and therefore shouldn't be paid. Things seem to be sorted out when someone told the DJ where to go, and if he didn't, he'd be eating soup through a straw. The chubby guy said he didn't want any trouble and would pay his half our fee. And at that our first public performance was over. All 12 minutes of it. The good thing, though, was that it hadn't put us off, it had made us more determined.

We were on the right path musically, and we needed to look for gigs away from Burnley and the surrounding area.

The Good Night Club Jam Night

PH · 80s · 1:50 · rec. RSJ

A monthly jam night above the Salvation Army where teenagers got up with strangers and found out whether they could actually play.

Play next: *The Wounds Are Still Wide Open* – a room that let people experiment, and the buildings that lay empty. (Page 124)

From when I was like, more like 17, 18, getting more confident in playing myself, just across from the Salvation Army., there was a venue that you went upstairs to called the Good Night Club. And the Good Night Club used to do what they call a jam night, not an open mic night, it was called a jam night. And so it was really lovely like you went up the stairs and you straight into it and booths and a bar in the corner. It wasn't huge, but it had a really nice little stage.

And basically I think it was like a Thursday night. It was either Wednesday or Thursday night. It was just open for once a month for anybody to come get up and play. But people played with each other. So you got up with people, you got to know them like month to month as it went on. But literally you got up and you just made stuff up. You just jammed. A lot of it were bluesy. There might be a bit of Hendrix, Hendrix stuff or whatever, Led Zeppelin, but it just was this environment where you could like, actually step up onto a stage and have a go yourself before, you know, you started doing things like your own gigs.

And I just remember that just being such a great experience, like really challenging. Used to scare me to death. There was a young, there was a, there was like another, there was slightly younger than us, I think. They were very confident, and they got up and they were absolutely like they were shit hot at playing. And a guy on guitar could really, really play. And I was kind of trying to find my style and I was really wrestling with like, do I want to be a twiddling guitar or do I want to be a little bit more alternative and just play nice riffs and all that sort of stuff with the music I was getting into?

But, I was always slightly daunted, but I remember the point where, like me, my brother who was playing drums as well, so, you know, we got the courage to get up and jam with him. And it was just, it just felt like you were like rock stars. It was amazing. It was great.

My Mum and Dad Met at El Trop

SD · 70s onwards · 3:07 · rec. RSJ

Discovering that the club avoided as too rough in the 2000s was where two parents met thirty years earlier, one of them with a huge afro, dancing to funk and soul.

Play next: *The East Lancashire Lesbian and Gay Switchboard* – a room where you could meet someone, and a phone line for people who couldn't. (Page 86)

Yeah, it's funny 'cause, I mean, I think, I think I only ever went there once. And it was, the reason was because it was notoriously really rough. Like, there was a lot of like, I remember the crew of lads who used to go there. They were like Barrowford, Nelson and they were, they were a rough, long and so I sort of avoided it at all costs, if I'm honest. But I had friends who sort of went there fairly regularly. It was, these places were, like they were, they were dying.

But, you know, I think they were sort of if they could, the only way that they could get punters through the door based on who was willing to go into Nelson to, to go and dance and what have you, they had to put on a Scouse house night or just say, alright, you and your mates and can DJ and MC and as long as you bring the crowd with you. That's how it's worked. So when I found out that my mum and dad met there, however, you know, 25, 30, you know, 30 years earlier, it completely blew my mind because, you know, my dad was sort of like he had a huge afro, really look the part who was, you know. He was bang into funk, soul. Disco to a degree, I think. And, you know, I guess sort of like, that's when sort of dub and everything was coming in as well. But, so you kind of like it painted a picture in my head of it being quite a cool place to have been back in the day, but I think, so, I'm, I'm 37 now. I've felt like, and I don't mean this to sound like I'm a victim of any kind, but I've I've always felt that my sort of age group, even just by like, I don't know, three years on either side, maybe even two, just always miss anything that is of any real cultural importance and everything is kind of watered down, not that cool. And I think Nelson sort of even reflects that because, you know, you had friends, good friends, who I grew up with around me, like their parents, who were maybe slightly younger than my mum and dad, and they were more like pub goers. And, you know, they talk about Nelson and places like the Trop and the Good Night Club being like legit places to go out on a, on a night out. And you could have a full night out in Nelson. I think there actually used to be a club under the station as well.

I can't remember what that was called or what have you, but, you know, those kind of places. It was there was a lot of, a lot of nightlife. It was a lively place. And in my head as a kid, I remember thinking a bet like Equinox is, well, good, but yeah, I bet it weren't.

Dancing, Cinemas and Singing

MR · 60s · 2:37 · rec. MP

A town with seven cinemas, two ballrooms, a choir, a brass band and Morris dancers, and learning to jive at thirteen.

Play next: *The Romany Ballroom* - learning to jive at thirteen, and learning it properly above a furniture shop. (Page 103)

Well, I think you could say my night life started when I was about 13, and there used to be dancers on a Sunday night at St Bede's youth club, and that's when I learned to bop or jive, whatever you want to call it. Very exciting. We used to dance all night and get a cup of tea and a bun, and then later on I moved down to the Romany Ballroom down Scotland Road with Mona Petty and her husband, who were famous dancers. We used to go there on a Wednesday night, and then when that was over, we used to walk back more or less to this spot now where we are in the library and get a bag of chips just across the road at Gate's fish and chip shop. And then when I get a bit older, I used to go down into Imperial Ballroom. I think the first time I started going was when it was the night school dance. And then I started going and I was there every week to see the Beatles and Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dusty Springfield, Acker Bilk, you name it. I've seen them. Yeah. And I continued until I met my husband when I was 21, and he wasn't interested in music.

So we bought a motorbike and off we went traveling around the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District. Not a lot. There's no there's not. There's nothing going on here now. I mean, we used to have about seven cinemas and two ballrooms and loads of working men's clubs and, and a lot of cultural activities. Oh, well, I mentioned I joined in Nelson's Civic Junior Choir when I was 11, we met Edward Parr. The Library and Arts committee after the war in the 1950s started all sorts of cultural events. They had started a choir, a brass band, Morris dancers, and they all already had an orchestra.

So there was lots going on in the evening, like natural history societies and things like that. So yes, a big part of my life was singing and we used to put concerts on at the Civic Theatre and Christmas, we used to put a big concert on at the Palace Theatre. So there was a lot going on in Nelson then a lot. And of course I said, as I said, we had about seven cinemas. So I used to spend a lot of time at the cinema as well. Dancing, cinema and singing. That was about it.

There isn't. There isn't any nighttime experience now in Nelson as far as I'm aware of. It's all happening in Colne. I mean, they've got three theatres in Colne and that's where it's all happening.

Northern Soul at the Central Methodist Youth Club

LP · 70s · 1:43 · rec. RSJ

A church hall at the top of Carr Road where grammar-school sixth formers DJ'd rare soul, and people came from miles because the records were that good.

Play next: *We Looked After Each Other* - a youth club that had everything, and a youth with little here. (Page 118)

When I was about 12, 13, we all used to go to a youth club at the top of Carr Road called the Central Methodist Youth Club, and it was just a kind of, you know, church hall. And it's still there, actually. And it's funny to see it. I'd love to go in it now because I know that the building still exists, but I don't know what they do with that room. But it was like the centre of our world. And it was really great because for some reason, a lot of the, the, well, a handful of the older boys at our school, which was then Nelson Grammar, used to DJ there, and they had a really great rare soul record collections.

Which, you know, then became, well, which was Northern Soul because it was a big scene. Like my sister always used to go to the Twisted Wheel in Manchester and stuff. So the Northern Soul scene was very hot at that time in the mid to late 70s and beyond. So you know, you get loads of people would come to that, the youth club, to the Central Meths - as it was called - and that, you know, that were much older, much older than us because the music was so good.

Club El Tropicano

LP · 70s · 2:46 · rec. RSJ

A club kitted out like a cave with tropical fish tanks above both bars and a casino on the first floor, cleaned every Sunday morning by the manager's daughter.

Play next: *The Attic Facing the El Trop - the same building, from inside the bar and from the bedroom opposite. (Page 62)*

My mother managed a really, in well, a club that became really infamous in Nelson. The El Tropicano on Hibson Road. And it is absolutely hilarious that well, the owner was friends of ours. I mean, what possessed him to call it the El Tropicano in Nelson, I have no idea. But obviously it was that the call of the exotic, you know, and it was, I'm sure other people have said it was extraordinary because it was kitted out like a cave. And they had tropical fish tanks above both bars.

And I used to stock the bars on a Saturday and Sunday morning with my dad. And from the age of 11 till right up really until 17, I think. And we were constantly having to work around the guy who changed the fish tanks every weekend. And so he'd have his ladder in the bar, doing, you know, this very awkward process of cleaning these fish tanks that were in a really awkward place above the bar.

But when my mum first started managing it, not sure whether it had all the caves stuff in, I'm sure it must have done, and palm trees and, you know, on the ground floor. But the first floor was a casino because it was before the Gaming Act. So in the late 60s, early 70s. And so they had all the tables, you know, the blackjack, the Chemin de Fer. And there was a stage up there and they used to have a combo as they used to call them, which was generally, you know, a three man combo with a drum and a couple of guitars and occasionally a double bass. And it was very, and again, that felt very sophisticated because at that point, when they still had the gambling upstairs, people dressed up to go gaming.

But yeah, it turned into something very different by the 1980s.

Cafes, Crawls and Dancing

LP · 60s/70s · 4:55 · rec. RSJ

The strict geography of the town's cafés - which ones the mods used, which the bike boys - and the allure of the one with a reputation.

Play next: *The Death Of Culture and The Price of Property* - a town full of cafés, and an argument about why it emptied. (Page 148)

It was just a very cool kind of culture, actually. I mean, it was so cool to me because as I say, you know, I'd be about when she was, you know, 16 to 18 and hanging out. They looked really cool because they were all the 60s fashions, particularly the mod fashions, you know, then. And the thing in Nelson, there were very distinct cafes where the mods would go and the rockers would go, you know, like the biker boys would go. And there was one at the bottom of the Railway Street, can't remember the name where, where the biker boys used to hang out and it had a real reputation and it was so there was a kind of allure with that because it felt edgy, you know.

And I used to actually go, well, I went once or twice to, to one in Burnley by the bus station called Atlantis, which was also super cool. And it's and I think those, those sorts of cafes, you know, they were people really dressed up. I mean, not formally, but they were really, you know, sharp dressers. And looking back on it, that's the kind of a parallel with the rise of the football fashions and the casuals. And, you know, there's that whole vein running through it of people dressing up.

And I think it's very different now for young people. And it's less kind of segregated into kind of what music you like and what, you know, what badges you wear. We were the first generation to go to Nelson and Colne College for sixth form, and so we had a common room with a jukebox in it there. And so that felt very cool. But we used to like wander up Scotland Road from Nelson and Colne College and basically do a pub crawl. So from the first pub you hit was the Derby, and then the Bull and then you go through Nelson centre to the Lord Nelson and then the Clayton.

So there was like a whole line where you'd wade up from one to the other. But the Lord Nelson was the biggie because I mean, literally it was a big pub and it was in its heyday, I think, really. Well, it was in our generation's heyday in the 70s. So we spent a lot of time in the Lord Nelson. And there was a club or a little, well I suppose you'd call it a club underneath the Railway Hotel called The Trax. And we spent a lot of time in there and, and then the other club, when I was that age teenage, late teenage was, I think it was called The Sands and then it became it, it had another name after I'd left. And again, you know, they, it's incredible to think that how much time we spent in those places and, you know, that it was, you know, it was a very small world, but it was a, you know, it was our world.

Well, you know, it was owned by us, you know. And we all knew each other. And if you didn't know somebody, then it was really quite exciting. That's somebody new or from another school or from out of town. But yeah. No, it was just really, I remember it being really good fun and we would dance all

night and, and well, I, me and my friends didn't, didn't drink very much. We were just dancing all the time, you know, it wasn't you weren't going out to get drunk. You were going out to surf and, and you know, the music scene always felt really kind of dynamic in Nelson.

Bluebeat Night at the George

SB · 60s/70s · 1:36 · rec. self-recorded

Wandering into a room above the George full of West Indians dancing to bluebeat seven-inches, and dismissing the records as derivative: a mistake, he says, that took years to correct.

Play next: *Top Line Talent in a Town This Size - the music upstairs, and the music the town queued round the block for. (Page 5)*

When I was 16 or 17, me and a small group of friends used to wander around the streets and pubs in search of god knows what. We used to get away with underage drinking, although we really couldn't afford to drink to any excess. Musically, there was a lot happening in the northwest and Nelson, although on the edge it all seemed to be in the center of things with the Nelson Imperial, where there's an amazing flow of what was later recognised to be great bands. My favourite northwest band was David John and the Mood, who specialised in improvising on 15 minute plus versions of Bo Diddley tunes.

Less can be said for Joe Meek, who couldn't really capture the magic. I actually saw Bo there when I was 16, and he was at his height, in 1964, His bass player fell ill and was replaced by Jim Megson of local band Mutineers. That was no doubt the highlight of his career. But the one gig that is burned in my mind happened in a room upstairs at the George and Dragon in Barrowford, where we strayed one night to find the place full of West Indians dancing to wild ska tunes and bluebeat seven inches.

Unfortunately, it never clicked for me at the time, as I was well into blues and r'n'b and foolishly thought the Jamaican records sounded derivative, a mistake that was only corrected about three years later when, I was befriended by a Rastaman whilst working at a glue factory on Hackney Wick.

The Nelson Railway Workers Club

BW · 70s/80s · 6:55 · rec. self-recorded

Cycling over from Burnley to the record shop that was the only place stocking punk singles, and the Friday DIY club night that followed.

Play next: *Everyone Wants to Be A Gangster These Days* - a Friday night run by young punks, and a town centre teenagers now avoid. (Page 75)

My name's Boff Whalley, and I was born and brought up in Burnley, and thus kind of spent a lot of time right along that kind of main valley out through Brierfield and Nelson and Colne, because a lot of, a lot of really interesting things were happening along there that weren't necessarily happening in Burnley. And I grew up in the punk years. And so one of the first regular pilgrimages that we used to make when I was about probably 17 or something, was with my friend Sage. We used to go over to Nelson, to Ames record shop, what was it called in the Arndale Center?

And we went there because for some reason, the guy who worked there was stocking the punk singles. So any of the early punk singles that came in, you couldn't get them in Burnley, you know, in Woolworths, they were kind of notorious for refusing to sell that kind of stuff. So if we didn't want to go to Manchester, we went to, to Nelson, to, to there. And then kind of as part of that, that time we were part of belonging to and organising and helping be part of the North East Lancs Musicians Collective, which was basically set up after me and Sage had seen how Manchester Musicians Collective was set up with people like Joy Division and the Fall and things like that.

So we we were part of that and a couple of the really kind of enterprising punks around the Burnley area, Spider and Quentin, a little bit older than us and they kind of were good at organising things, and they kind of led the way in teaching the rest of us how to basically do it yourself and how to get involved in doing fanzines, renting vehicles to get to gigs, going, starting bands, pooling equipment, starting venues - there were various venues. And one of these venues which came through, I think through Spider and Simon Lansdown from Mid Pennine Arts was the Nelson Railway Workers Club.

The Nelson Railway Workers was an incredible place for us because what happened is that it became a focus, a hub or whatever. It became a place where people gathered from absolutely all over. People came like more or less every week. It was the kind of punk things always happened on a Friday night, I think. And there were people who would come from all over, from Yorkshire and from places like Bacup and, you know, Rossendale, and it was just a fantastic place because what happened was it was the first kind of community that I was part of that wasn't kind of school or where you lived.

So you were meeting people from all over the area, all across East Lancashire that you'd never met before, and you knew that you shared these kind of these ideas. It was a movement that was built on ideas, not just on the music. Obviously, that was a big part of it, but on things like the clothes and and your attitude and politics and the whole do it yourself thing. And, and this was all in the kind of pre-

Mohican leather jacket era of punk, when people were kind of making it up as they went along and the Nelson Railway Workers Club became a big part of that.

It was a kind of fusty old working men's club that was kind of right under the railway arches in the center of Nelson. And it was obviously a very, it was an old and tatty and pretty much unloved place, which is presumably why they would have accepted the idea that every Friday the upstairs room was just basically full of, you know, probably 150 punks from all over the place. And we put on a lot of bands there. There were bands like, and again, mainly it was people like, like Spider and Notsensibles and people like that, and we all chipped in to be part of this thing where we were putting on bands like The Fall and Frantic Elevators, which was Mick Hucknall's first punk band, Crass, Discharge, some, you know, there was some fantastic bands on there, but it wasn't just about the bands, it was it was, as I say, it was about the community there. And Notsensibles, are a band from Burnley and Pathetic from, I think they were from Nelson and I think. And Notsensibles kind of were spearheading that kind of community at the time. And this, this is what you're listening to in the background now that's Notsensibles. And they played at the Railway Workers quite a bit. And when, when I basically joined with some of my friends and we started a band, we were called Chimp Eats Banana and we played one of our very first gigs at the Railway Workers. And what I remember about it was that we were so untutored in what we were supposed to do, to be in a band and how you went about it, which was brilliant, you know. This idea, well, we'll just do it anyway. We don't really know what we're doing. We'll do it anyway. And I remember getting on stage, it was like, okay, yeah, you're on now. So we went on stage and I had a guitar, which was a bit of a crappy old electric guitar that I think I got for 10 pounds from a market stall in Kent. But anyway, somebody gave me a lead, a curly lead to plug in, and I didn't know what to do with it. I could see that one went in the guitar and I thought I had no idea where to put this, the other end of this lead. And that's kind of what stage we were at. And it didn't really matter because it was just a space where people could say, I want to get up on stage and do something. And people in the audience were kind of cool and accepted interesting things going on. And it wasn't all, you know, roses. And it was, you know, there were fights and some pretty brutal fights and some pretty bad drunkenness, you know, and people just kind of falling drunk senseless down the stairs and things like this.

But in general, it was just a fantastic gathering place. So yeah, as I say, it was this just kind of nothing old, old, kind of weary, tatty place, which just became an incredible focus of energy and sound and ideas. And, you know, even now I look back on those times in that place so, so fondly and it really stuck with me, the atmosphere of it and what we were trying to create there, an amazing place.

Mrs Hubbard Took Us to Trax

JC · 80s · 2:39 · rec. RSJ

A teacher taking fifteen-year-olds to a nightclub under the Station Hotel, and a dance floor remembered as entirely black.

Play next: *Save the Last Dance* - a first nightclub at fifteen, and a last dance nobody was watching. (Page 137)

Anyway, as I grew older, Nelson became important to me in a different way. There was a regular bus which stopped right outside our house in Harle Syke, the number 78 and it ran every hour between Burnley, Harle Syke and Nelson. So this gave me and my friends a lot of freedom to visit the town under our own steam, not being dependent on parents and lifts so much. Anyway, when I was 15 I think, yeah I was 15, our English teacher, Mrs. Hubbard, who was lovely, she took us to Trax nightclub in Nelson.

I think it was some sort of end of term occasion why she took us there, I don't know, but anyway, it was underneath a pub called The Station. It was small and dark, with a low ceiling and a compact dance floor. The dance floor was black, and the overriding color theme, all I can remember is black. Black, and a bar and some toilets. That's all it was. I don't think I thought it was particularly sophisticated, but it was where they played the music that I listened to. So anyway, it specialised in rock, prog rock and heavy metal, and I was deeply into all that at the time.

But it also played reggae, new wave and other music. So this was in the early 80s, and then on certain nights I think it was Fridays, it leaned more towards punk and new wave, which I was also really into. I still am. And I remember, I've got diaries from the time, still, I've been looking through them. I mean, they're all pretty dog eared, but are the ramblings of an idiot, you know? But everything is in there. What, what music was played, what blokes I was looking at, even what I was wearing, what my friends were wearing.

It was just, you know, only of interest to me, really, I would say. But they are historical documents. But I do remember they used to play the Police a lot. Adam and the Ants, that was the big thing, David Bowie, Roxy Music obviously ACDC, Queen, Eric Clapton. I remember they used to play Cocaine every week, I don't know why. As well as bands from the new wave of British heavy metal like Saxon, Motorhead, Whitesnake, Judas Priest. Anyway, that first night with my teacher there, I met Peter Lawrence and I remember what I was wearing. I was wearing these extremely bright yellow jeans because it was the 80s, and electric blue man shirt. I used to a lot of men's clothing and rolled up at the sleeves and Burgundy stilettos. Why? I can remember this, I don't know, but I thought it was quite striking.

Trax, 1977

NB · 70s · 0:55 · rec. self-recorded

*Friday nights at Trax with Rumours just released:
feeling safe on the walk home.*

Play next: *The Haunted Ginnels and Parks -
staying safe on the way home, and the ginnels
where you felt uneasy. (Page 65)*

So here we are, 1977, in Nelson. I just finished school and started going to Nelson and Colne College, and on Friday evenings we all used to gather at the Trax in Nelson, underneath the Station Hotel. And in March 1977, Fleetwood Mac released the album Rumors. And that was a really big hit with all of us. We loved the sound of it, and it was played often, and this is my memory for the Trax in Nelson, 1977. It was a great meeting ground and we were always walked home safely by friends. And it was a long time ago, 1977, as I say, but good memories and happy times.

Ska at a Working Men's Club in Nelson

CP · 80s / 90s · 2:56 · rec. DM

Six or seven clubs to choose from on any given night, and the disbelief that greets anyone who says Jimi Hendrix played here.

Play next: *The Band's First Gig (The Spirit of the Imp) - a circuit that has gone, and a band starting anyway. (Page 151)*

I've been here as long as I remember. And we'd mix it up and we'd come to Nelson because there were more venues. And, you know, you bump into people, you know, and so on. And there were lots of nightclubs. I think about 6 or 7 you used to be able to go to, take your pick. Yeah. It was lively. Yeah. Good Night Club. Yeah. Because it used to put live bands on and sold real ale. So it were the only one. So in my opinion, I went to the others. But the Good Night club, in my opinion, was the best.

And at the time when I first went out with John Southworth and I think Vonnice ran it and yeah, we're always a good place. Yeah. They had cabaret on entertainment, but also after that it was a disco like everywhere else, but it was a little bit better. Well, it's amazing if people mention it to you and you mentioned the Imp. They think they look at you strange when you say Jimi Hendrix has played here and and Beatles they thought, not in Nelson get away, you know. But they have. And living memories still can prove it.

I had me 21st here. So you know when you think I came to Nelson for me 21st birthday party and that weren't that long ago, really? It's actually 30 odd years ago, but, yeah

You're a spring chicken.

If you're having your having a 21st in Nelson, then that shows you how good it were. And it were fantastic. We hired the whole Good Night Club so all my family and friends and it were open for public later. Yeah, they were probably the most memorable. But even on a normal weekend, I'd come and go to one of the restaurants up the road. There were that Saddlers, or they were Saddlers Steakhouse, and then there was an Indian restaurant here. We'd go to one of them, and then with the girlfriend at the time, we'd go up to the Good Night Club, or whichever place and sometimes if you were out with lads, you'd end up in El Trop, which was always entertaining. Yeah, yeah, there's many a good night in Nelson. That's good as well, because where else could you go to a nightclub on a Monday as well. One of the few places open on a Monday. Yeah. Well it were a good night.

Yeah. Well it's a shame. It's, it's, it's not there. But everything changes unfortunately. Yeah, there's a few surviving and some of them are doing quite well. You know, we're bands on. There was a cracking band at what they called the Gravel last weekend. I'm into ska music and they had one of the best bands if you're into ska music, in my opinion, on there. So that was fantastic. You know, in a working men's club in Nelson. So they still have good stuff. Okay. Occasionally. Yeah. Well it's the future is ska music.

At the moment unfortunately you've got in pubs bars. I think there's only two places you can go to a pub in Nelson now and then you've got the Station and there's the Thatch and Thistle, but that's desperately trying to be in Barrowford. Even though it is actually in Nelson. It does do its best to be classed in Barrowford, but plenty of clubs still.

The First Drag Artist I Ever Saw

AN · 80s · 1:16 · rec. MP

A working men's club bill of crooners and comedians, and the first drag artist seen in a room that would put on anything.

Play next: *The Devil's Workshop* - a club that would put on anything, and a café parents didn't approve of. (Page 96)

I think it's just the terms that themselves said that they were very much, you know, playing the tunes of yesteryear. But there was a fascination to me. I was into music wise. I'll listen to anything back from, you know, Frank Sinatra, crooners like the way up to, you know, techno and beyond. But I think it's I don't think I think it's interesting in terms of what they had on there was they had sort of comedians who in this day and age wouldn't have been very, very acceptable. But like, I could always remember it being the first place I ever saw a drag artist, the Star Cycling Club, because I was there, you know, when it was like a variety of stuff there.

And then you'd have, you know, the bands and people like that. When I did the exhibition of the photographs, there was one I always remember called Sammy Lee, who seemed to be a lot younger than that, than everyone else, and seemed to sort of play more upbeat and more modern tunes. And so she kind of stood out a lot, really.

Monday Nights, Breakdancing

PW · 80s · 5:41 · rec. LC

A walk through the shopping centre, standing on the concrete where body-poppers met on Monday nights in 1983, pointing out what each shopfront used to be.

Play next: *Not as Safe as It Was - the same precinct, forty years apart. (Page 76)*

Hiya, me name's Pat. Back in 1983. I would have caught myself a body popper because body popping came around before breakdancing. And I'm not sure how much of this is relevant to anybody. Is it even relevant to me nowadays? But we're actually walking out towards the entrance, the current entrance of Pendle Rise, and we've gone past what used to be Boots and actually old school Nelson before it was a Pendle Rise as it was the Arndale Centre and currently where we are now, this was the centre and it was in between what was a Woolworth's, which is now, I'm not sure what it is.

What is it? Pound, Pound Grown not, Poundland.

It's got a very strange logo on it. And that was the Woolworth's. And in between the Woolworth's and here was just this large expanse of concrete. And as we looked down. So I've still got my back to the Arndale, Pendle Rise. And I'm looking to the right. That was the Place de Creil. So as in the French, because Nelson is twinned, as far as I know, with Creil. And there used to be a sunken area down there, and on a Saturday we would come down with cardboard. And in this sunken area there's only about four steps down. And somebody would bring what we call a ghetto blaster. And you'd have, you might have somebody cool who'd have an electro tape, but you probably had Breakdance the film soundtrack, Volume One, plus Ice-T doing The Groove. "Once upon a time, a DJ's task was just to play records. What more could he ask?" And he goes on and on, I like that. So we used to do Saturdays here. Saturday afternoon, most people, most Nelsonions, Nelson-ites would just walk by bemused.

But I think from that, possibly they, somebody approached or the Arndale at the time said, why don't we let these guys in on a Monday night? And I'm not really sure what time I was 11, 12, but you come down and shall we go back inside?

Yeah, go back in now, especially because it's getting a bit windy out there as well. You could come back in or could come back in that little Pat doing his dancing now as we're walking down.

It was frail, and the interesting thing given, of course, the Arndale turned into Pendle Rise, of course, the balcony at the moment as you walk back in here now, there used to be two lots of steps going up.

That was always the actual flight of steps, was always going straight up. But the actual steps that were

here, we've gone past them. There used to be a second balcony and then it will go up to the main balcony, and you could basically go up if you didn't want to actually dance. And you just want it to be nosy or you wanted to, you know, like snog, a las, or a lad, and you could actually stand on the balcony all the way down there. And the were the actual shops there.

Gentleman John's was there, which was like the forerunner of Home Bargains and all the rest. Cheap as chips. Gentleman John's cheap as chips. If it was made in plastic, they had it. And if and if it was likely to break within ten minutes they also had it. But so we used to come down and there are some brilliant period photographs of that time. And I'm hoping that you've got these as well on a Monday night. And you can see on occasion it was packed out. And I'm not saying this with somebody who's got bias built in, it was genuinely packed.

And also this central area coming down here had, I guess, what they call like sunken gardens were like water features and fountains. So but this, this floor is the original floor that we used to breakdance on. And if you just come down here and I don't know if you've got some sort of. These are my car keys. Yeah. Now this is rock hard and it's really painful to read breakdance on. I can't imagine doing head spins on this. No, but but but we were never of that ilk.

The best breakdancer. And I mean this back then and now was a guy called Mushy. Yeah. Mushy, who I presume I presumed that stood for like, you know, a Mushtaq or something like that. And he had on, this red and blue Nike Windcheater cagoule. Yeah. He may have had the pants on. I can't confirm that. But he was genuinely, he had he had a bit of charisma about him, a bit of cool. He was older than us, but he could have been 15, 16. But he was sort of like, oh wow, he's Mushy, oh. Where's Mushy? He's there, he's there.

And like, you know, like you keep your eyes on him. But he was genuinely good and he knew what he was doing. And the interesting thing, and this is quite genuine and, you know, somewhat serious, is that given Burnley and Pendle have had historically going back certainly to the 80s, odd incidents involving race involving religion. But and also this was a time when the schools, my Catholic high school, the only South Asian faces that were there, were the kids of parents who'd actually converted to Catholicism. So if you're Asian, you went to Edge End and you went to Mansfield. If you were white, Catholic, you went to Primet and there was a bit of segregation that was already built into the system. But Monday nights breakdancing...

A Call to Garms

PW · 80s · 5:08 · rec. self-recorded

A poem about family dos, the slosh, and hearing electro and the Gap Band for the first time: a dance still being done inside.

Play next: *Little Moscow / The Donkey in the Club* – a family do, and the clubs the family belonged to. (Page 112)

This poem is about growing up and dancing in Nelson at places like The Silverman Hall, the Great Marsden.

Family dos of the 1970s and early 1980s before being a teenager, meant that I went to Henry Africa's World Show in the Silverman Hall, saw, heard and felt records that were being DJ extolled, and I realised a little about life outside of Nelson.

On the one hand, there was isolation as just about moving machine doing the slosh,
and on the other it was all about connection with soul.

Listening to the Gap band, to disco, to electro music, reconciling my days, doing the slosh and body popping the extended beats of Thriller by Michael Jackson is a dance within myself that I still do, and this poem is part of that too.

A Call to Garms

(i) A waist of time

By mum wrenched from our table,
we stripped of objection and truth
or an aunt, kids are always able,
to slosh to the Sweet's rapey tale
to eye pace-made bodies' movements.
A chorus-lined us with a built-in flail.
Arms presenters, Karloff-mordent
mummies, teapots short and stout.
All custom-ready to honour family
on these flag days, handles and spouts,
and blurred beats show a manned levee,
staunch back and legs, tops rigid strict.
Demob-ready from the whispers, turn!

Tight-mouthed us keen to spoil the edict,
 pimpled red in places, blame carpet burns.
 Rather use found paper, make a plane
 than scent uneasy looks re. a wigwam bam
 or a spinner folded with secrets planed,
 no sense thrust hips bone-join to gang bangs,
 than to locate a pathway home.

Right hand on left elbow is a tendon memory
 of camp abundance, a dampening sojourn,
 pieced up like Joel McCrea, the muscle Mary
 at a cook pot dance in a jungle flick
 his pomade askew, our empty greenhorn hunt
 to slosh tidily, our resolute on tick
 brought back before the grave,
 rave in a type of madness
 the discomforting tutor of a named dance
 endured, it is lasting, and stiffness shocks.

(ii) *Gone wilding*

Claps cut into the Sydney Silverman Hall,
 through the MP who put the noose in the news.
 Before then there would be Ruskin-approved
 classes - talking with pebbles, macrame - shuck that.
 Weavers' descendants foregoed given lines,
 went AWOL - plumped for fun - let the remedial loose
 with a plunge to the floor, to the gap, our banded Oops
 blackish palms smack, sample this fagged grunge
 in fibres which fence a dancefloor sprung
 drip-hit by 'trical touch as the fingers stretch
 we jettison the tame for Eighties kick drums
 gone wilding with Henry Africa's cabs
 that stretch-string our town square - new blues brung
 from afar - sequence mixed electro with tail-end disco
 in a cabbalistic sight simply freshhhhhhhhhhhhh
 waved over from Detroit and Brooklyn basements
 to still socialist Nelson and all its hideouts.
 Each has a bash solo popping in a circle, jumping
 inside the moody dim. White Diadoras squeak, teen
 legions deep 'thralled with winking Vincent Price,
 as Thriller comes and wheels, puts an X this time

to PG-rated red-Nikey blue windcheaters
that kite us as true machined youth with robot
yearning for a whack at breaking, to the bone
-brought thud thud thuds coming on neatly strong.
Black-top zombies ready to hook up their limbs,
pre-laser locked, calcified. HALs of our own making
stuck in segues that house stop-motion thought,
the blinks at the hereafter which is set to be our coda.

(iii) First good times

Impact of the crowded slush was curbed over time.
It left a marked disdain for marches that lack oomph.
You cannot eat a flag nor keep an army hungry and
Theremin-like conduct left no scratches on the surface.
Our fate was assigned, this place would not hold us,
following first good times felt with a Technics turntable.

Squid Rave

MH · 90s · 3:10 · rec. RSJ

A youth worker employed to move young people on from the bus station, who helped them run their own monthly rave instead, a quid a head.

Play next: *A Venture Into Ticket Fraud - tickets sold by teenagers, and tickets that went missing. (Page 8)*

What happened, I got approached by the youth service, and Ama's here tonight. He used to youth work with me in Brierfield, detached youth work. So we got close. And it was when youth work was starting to come in, detached youth work. And we used to have a major problem in the bus station at Nelson. So we used to get a lot of young people hanging around and giving people grief. So this team, me, Steve Jones and a lad called Jaba, Abdul Jabbar from Brierfield, we got employed by the Youth Service to go out and work with the young people.

So what we started with the Squid Raves and basically all we did was get a community like Unity Hall. We used to use Palatine, we used a few times. We even used a place in Barrowford at one time, Brierfield Community Centre we used and it was about getting young people to put the raves together. And those days the raves were the thing where people used to, you know, go into barns and, you know, take over fields and have these raves for about two days or whatever. So we went on that sort of vibe, and it was about the young people organising security. We had Colne as well, the youth centre in Colne.

So it was about the young people organising security, organising, ticketing, organising getting the music, doing the deejaying. And it just I mean, to give you an example, a lad called, we used to call them Turbo, God rest his soul. He passed away a few years ago. He actually did the security on the doors, and he was only about 16, 17 at that time. He actually made a career out being on the doors. Paul Semper went on to work for Radio One, actually DJ'd, and then he made a life out of DJing. So it was, you know, they'd given him a sort of direction. And within about 3 or 4 months, what we found that young people were starting to do other things rather than hang out in the bus station all of the time. So it was quite a successful thing where it alleviated the problems young people were causing in the town center and the reason they were called Squid Raves because they were a quid and that was it. We called a quid a squid. So that happened. We ended up doing one one every month, and it was just building up to that.

And every group that we work with in the evenings on the streets, we named them Gipsy Jive Group, Library Group, Unity Group, Palatine Group. So it was, we knew where there would be. And what we found, young people are very territorial, so they would only hang around in their own areas. But once we started doing these raves, what we found were people were coming together and it got rid of a bit of that animosity between kids, really, because otherwise, you know, they're all a bit standoffish. So that was a really good way of actually connecting young people together as well.

We used to get kids from Barrowford coming at the end from Colne even, Brierfield. So it was a really, really successful project.

The Station Was the Launchpad

SD · 2000s · 6:00 · rec. RSJ

Lacoste tracksuits, organised fights outside, and a pub still described as the nucleus of a night out in the 2000s.

Play next: *Operation Alkali (The Sun Doesn't Shine Blue)* - where a night began, and how another ended. (Page 149)

And it was very, it was very tracksuit. It was very Lacoste tracksuit. A lot of Nike, a lot of just. Yeah, tracksuits. And there was quite a lot of friction between certain groups of people who were hanging around in particular areas. And we were, we used to knock about around this time on the Hard Platz in Brierfield. So we would sort of known as like the Hardies lot and all around Edge End where and there were other people from deeper into Nelson. And on a couple of occasions when I wasn't there, but there were, there were big sort of scraps, organised fights as well, that had happened outside the Station pub, which that's kind of the Station for me, is the nucleus of what I remember of like nights out in, in Nelson.

And actually it was rough around the edges and there were a lot of characters in there, but it was, it was actually quite a fun place to go. And it was, it was like it was unspoken that like on a Friday and a Saturday night, people would start there regardless. And whether you were getting a minibus to go over to Wigan Pier or you were going into Burnley, or you were going up Colne or into Barrowford, the Station was a place where everyone would sort of congregate and it would it was cheap beer.

It was, you know, back in 2005 and pretty sure it was 99p a pint of Carlsberg. And then it went up to like, you know, incrementally in 10ps because, you know, I remember like really is 1.19 these days, but, you know, it was, it was very cheap beer and it was it's actually a really beautiful pub inside. You know, I, I can remember it very well. And there was sort of the back room with the pool table, you know, it was, it was fun. It was pre smoking ban. So it was, you know, it was obviously just just a hazy smoke in there. And there was a good mix of people, you know, there was a lot of the locals who were there. There was a lot of down and outs because it was the kind of pub that I'm guessing opened at 10 in the morning, may have even been a Wetherspoon's at one brief point, but then, I don't think that lasted too long.

So there was a lot going on there. And it was, it was really fun. And apart from like, the odd, you know, bust up that happened there, I do actually have pretty fond memories of it being just a fun time for, as on the cusp of being legal drinkers, having a relatively safe space to just go and hang out.

Because before that there was a lot of us just being on the streets and not really having much to do at all. So it was quite nice to have. That was like our pub where we were, we would go and yeah, some people, some of my friends I think even ended up working there for, you know, for, for a while. And

like I said, it basically the Station was the launch pad for going out. I mean, you could go, it was right across the road from the bus station. So. And the train station. So if you were going into Burnley, you know, you didn't even need to get a taxi. You could just still get away with paying half on the bus. Go pay you 60p into Burnley Town or Colne or whatever.

But there was a period around I'd say 2005 to 2007 where people actually stayed in Nelson for the night out. You know, they started off as a bit of a, a bit of a piss take going on around the pubs there, you know, and then, but then it actually because obviously the more people that end up going out, the better it is.

So there was, the Lord Nelson, which everyone calls the Zoo. And then there was the other pub next to. Oh, I can't even remember. It doesn't exist anymore. It was next to, Follies doesn't exist anymore either. But there was a pub there that people used to go in as well. Just on the main road as you coming into Nelson on the left hand side. And then of course you have places like the Star Cycling Club, which again was sort of pretty common to go to. But people that have like their 18th or their 30th there and or the upstairs in the function room.

So yeah, I have a lot of memories from, from going to those places. And again, just being pretty, you know, it was very Phoenix Nights in there. But it was fun. You know, they'd be the, the sort of the sort of your sort of DJ Rave-on style DJ, you know, playing all the classics and, and what have you, but pretty, pretty nice and good fun. So yeah, that was sort of like the circuit. And then I think it sort of stretched down to like the Bull and so on.

And that's when people started, you know, the Good Night Club. I remember just it felt like it was holding on for dear life. But, you know, they put on the odd night there, whereas before that I remember going to a couple of gigs there watching kind of small like funk and jazz bands there with my dad. I don't know if that was sort of overspill from the Blues festival, but it, you know, there was, there were things happening and but it was, it was, it was you could feel it was, it was fading.

And then if that sort of core group of younger people who, you know, which happened, started to disperse and moved to different places, then, you know, it wasn't really there wasn't really much appetite to be out in Nelson after that.

Bingo and a Singer at the Carters

DM · now · 1:10 · rec. RSJ

Walking into a working men's club expecting nothing and finding it packed, silent for the bingo and roaring for the singer.

Play next: *Original Nelsoners - who is in the room now, and who counts as being from here.*
(Page 91)

It's been interesting as well. Looking around the workingmen's clubs, because I wouldn't necessarily have done that. Well, I wouldn't, I don't do that. But maybe I will now because they have interesting bands on as well. And it's surprising how many people do go. I went into the Knights of Saint Columba not knowing what to expect because the facade outside is not very invited. But you go in and it was lovely, that had a singer on and people in their all dancing and singing to it. And that was cool. And then I went into the Carters and Motormen and that was packed.

That really surprised me. And they had a singer on, and they also had bingo on and it was quite funny really, because they were doing the bingo and it was really quiet. You weren't allowed to talk. If anybody was talking, it was like, "shhhh!". And then, then the singer had come on and then they'd all go lively again, and then it could quiet again and start the bingo and woe betide if you speak while the bingos on. But that was quite interesting too.

On the Door at Trax / Tarmacker's Lament

BH · 70s · 3:55 · rec. DM

Working the door at Barbarella's and then Trax, and a count of how many pubs Nelson had then against what is left now.

Play next: Epilogue: Quaker Nights -
the loudest door in town, and the quietest room in it. (Page 71)

When we first moved up there, I got a job. I had a job during the day as a window cleaner. And then I got a job at night working behind the bar and doorman for down at the Station. So when they opened the Trax nightclub, that's right at end of the building. And you can still see under the window where door were, with the stone work. And I used to be doorman on there for a couple of years, yeah.

And it was so busy. Honestly, you'd never credit Nelson where it was like, now. But when you think of what pubs it used to be in Nelson, that's shut now, there's only the Station going now, isn't there? Well, the Marsden got knocked down. And it's all an old folks home now, you know. Although I said there were Trax, but I'm sure it would called someone like Barbarella's at first. And then they called it Trax when they opened it up. And that were quite busy.

Now when I worked there, there were bloke that were manager. He were an ex detective from Manchester and they were like on point of retiring. So he got offered a pub by the brewery so he came over and took it. And he was a sound bloke, he were alright, you know. But it was busy every single weekend it were heaving and we had a bloke come and did Trax at end of night, you know, turned the disco over.

And he came across from Lord Nelson, which they nicknamed Zoo. And he were called Keith Thompson and his nickname were Takeaway Thompson because at night you'd get a couple of takeaways at end of night, eat his takeaways and then he'd come across to the Trax nightclub, and he played disco all night, and it would go on until 3 or 4 o'clock every morning. And then there were another one just around corner, and he used to do disc at El Trop and all. Yeah. So it were a real busy bloke were Takeaway. And he had Lord Nelson for must have had well over ten year.

So it built it up there and, and a weekend. Lord Nelson at one time when I were courting my misses when we frist were married, we'd go in there and it were like, your pub down the stairs, but if you went upstairs, there were a lounge upstairs, a really fancy lounge. And they were like couples only upstairs, you know, it weren't like your scruffs going up, it were, you more or less you were dressed up when you went upstairs. Well, when that shut, it never opened again. And it was a gorgeous room upstairs in Nelson.

And they got, they got a bloke playing piano halfway up the stairs. So you went upstairs, you come to a landing and then another set of stairs. Well, they put a piano on the landing and he were well, he

trained at Manchester School of Music, all his family were musical. Martin Bradley, he were called. His mum played violin, his sister, I think his sister on a wind instrument or summat and he played piano. And he was at one time, when he were a kid he used to go around old folks homes doing entertaining, you know, just doing a turn here and there all family and mum would sing as well sometimes and they were quite well known.

But he, when he got it, passed all his exams when he was in his 20s, I think he got into drugs a bit too much did Martin. But he was so talented and he joined, he started tarmacking for a living w' a gang from Colne and there were a big gang of them, about eight lads all working together, and he were only, send him up knocking, knocking on doors saying do you want your backyard tarmacking and all this.

Anyway, we once went into the Station and he come in, did Martin and he sat down at piano and he started playing. He said, I wrote a song that it were called Tarmacker's Lament, and he started playing and it were a jazz tune, you know, he could play anything. He were so talented, it were unbelievable. But he got into drugs and there were a few that went like that in Nelson with drugs

Pugilists in the Fields

MH · 50s · 3:10 · rec. RSJ

Bare-knuckle fights in fields above the town, rings put up and taken down in a night, arranged with farmers known from the slaughterhouse.

Play next: *Let's Be Honest, There's Nothing Here* – a night out in a field then, and a night out in a park now. (Page 128)

And me granddad he were old school, and he were one of them where he were really hard. Like I say, you know, he were a bare fist fighter during Second World War. He were in war, radio operator, he did Bridge Too Far and Operation Market Garden and all that kind of thing. And these pugilists used to meet at the top of Nelson, which is like the Shooters pub area. And that's where the little tower, that's where the little hamlets were of Great Marsden, Little Marsden, and all rest of it. And basically it were farmers meeting in the field, putting a makeshift ring up and having a boxing fight, and he'd come home from butchers and then go to Shooters then, because he knew all farmers because they used to bring stock in for slaughtering, you know. So he knew all farmers and then they all. Heyah Lizzie, that was me Grandma Elizabeth, heyah, a bit more brass pot. And that's what he used to do. But he had no airs and graces about it. It were earning brass for him. It weren't fighting, nowt to do wi fighting or owt like that. It were just earning brass for his pot for house. And that's how it were. And I love him. Love him to this day dearly. And like I say, it's it's a great memory to have and a great memory to continue on hopefully and like I say, he were one of the first pugilists in Nelson.

Oh, there were a lot of wrestling. A lot of wrestling went on Big Daddy, which was Shirley Crabtree and Giant Haystacks, Kendo Nagasaki and Tally Ho Kaye. I don't know whether you've heard of Tally Ho Kaye. Well, he used to live in Shelfield Farm, which is just a little bit tops near Shooters, and that was quite a big wrestling paternity family, the Kaye family. And that was Tally Ho Kaye. And every week the yellers used to get women wi' handbags at side of ring going giving it, giving it rocco giving it rocco and that was, yeah. And that was going back to Grandstand and World of Sport days. And every week at municipal hall there used to be fights for wrestling. But the boxing was a bit more underground as regards to pugilists and this, it were a bit more underground. It were Muller. Yeah. You used to get travelers coming over and fancying their chances and this that and t'other. But there were a lot of burly old farmers that were seven foot, built like a brick shithouse. And you know what I mean. They'd have to walk sideways and under doors because they were that tall and built like brick shithouses. Because that was the farming community. Yeah.

But you don't exactly think soft when you think of traveling communities do ye?

No you don't, you don't. No, but as regards to the, it was the farming communities that basically, like I said, got together and made makeshift rings and then. Yeah.

Because I'd always associated that more with The Furies over at Morecambe way.

Yeah. Traveling community. Yeah. Paddy Dockerty and all that kind of stuff. Yeah yeah yeah. And like I say, it was pretty much the centre of Nelson because there were all these little hamlets all over the place.

Yeah. So, Nelson, like I said, I've been called Nelson probably 250 to 300 years.

They Were In Their World And I Was In Mine

SN · 90s · 2:45 · rec. RSJ

A mother whose daughters were at the warehouse raves, campaigning against the Criminal Justice Bill, and going off to a council conference knowing exactly what would happen.

Play next: *None of Us Thought We'd Be Touring The World* - a parent on the outside, and a son who went further than anyone expected.
(Page 122)

Well, my kids are involved in, my daughters especially, were involved in the rave culture, you see. So they, and we used to go to benefit concerts in the Mechanics at Burnley in support of the, well against the Criminal Justice Bill. So yeah, that was exciting, Buffalo Soldiers, they were a good band. They used to come, there were a Bob Marley tribute type band. They were great. And campaigning, we were, we used to campaign against the Criminal Justice Act, but they were a bit wild and my daughters at that time. So, yeah, but they had a good time and because I was on, then after my political introduction by Stan, I actually got elected under Pendle Council. And so I was off. I used to go off to conferences quite often, and as soon as they knew I was away, that was it, that of a party, they'd have a rave here. That was before. And we had a barn and everything. Yeah. So these are great raving time, but they used to go off to the warehouse parties as well. One at Lomeshaye. Yeah, they knew about that. Yeah. And Blackburn had some as well. Yeah. The Lomeshaye one was infamous locally. Well it was, it was. Well it just, it was just an empty warehouse and that's what they were called warehouse parties. And there were no mobile phones at the time. So the word of mouth was the thing - "there's a party, it's at ... don't tell anybody, but it's at Lomeshaye". And the traffic of people going was unbelievable. The traffic of people coming here was unbelievable too. But yeah, good times had by all. But it was a brief, a brief alternative type nightlife.

Great fun. Same time as things like, Spike Island and, the place near Liverpool as well. They went to all of them. They were. They were crazy. I didn't, I knew nothing about any of this. I was in a different world. They were in their world and I was in mine. And I learned about a lot of this afterwards. But, you know, they, I just loved the fact that they were enjoying themselves and they were doing nobody any harm, and they were having such a good time. And there are lots of friends. And I got to know lots of their friends, which was lovely. They weren't. They didn't want to go into the clubs and the pubs because it was, "oh, it's too old fashioned. We don't want to go in there. We grew up having to do that. Mum. No."

Blueberries, Thursday Night '97 With DJ Jacko

DJ · 90s · 3:09 · rec. self-recorded

A DJ recording himself mid-set on an ordinary Thursday in 1997: birthday shout-outs, strippers promised for the Friday, no bottles on the dance floor.

Play next: *Inside Blueberries, Burnt and Empty* - the same room, alive and then gutted. (Page 138)

Well, it came back strong at the end. Guys, keep up practicing. Right. Get the practice in and we'll do it again a little later on this evening. It's a Thursday night session, right? We're open all the weekend, Blueberries wi' Jacko and quick message for you tomorrow night...

[music: Candi Staton 'You've Got the Love']

- *Sometimes I feel like throwing my hands up in the air* -

Male and female strippers will be live on the stage at Blueberries tomorrow night

- *Sometimes...* -

And don't forget it's a big night for the ladies tomorrow, Friday. Ladies drink free ...

- *love I need to see me through...* -

... all night long. Friday.

- *Sometimes it seems ...* -

Kicking off the weekend Thursday night session. Don't forget it you are celebrating tonight, right, if it's your birthday or wedding anniversary or anything all you're celebrating tonight. Come see Jacko at the DJ booth and I'll give you a little mention over the airwaves of Blueberries this Thursday night, okay?

[music: No Mercy 'Where Do You Go']

- *Where do you go?* -

No Mercy. Special request.

- *My lovely* -

Where do you go when it goes dark?

- *Where do you go...* -

Hmmm

- *I wanna know ... where do you go ...* -

When the night draws in, I'll tell you where we go. Okay? Well I've been asked to play this one. Well, one of my favourites, Funky Green Dogs. And a track called Fired Up. Fired up for the weekend. Thursday night. Blueberries. She said if you play this one, I love you forever and ever and ever. Can I have a fag break? Can I have a cup of tea in between, can I? In between ... Sex! Messages on the way for Thursday nights actually gets funky. Funky Green Dogs brand new release. And massive in the holiday destinations in Ibiza, Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Jamaica, wherever. Big tunes on the way for a Thursday night session still to come this evening Party BBE and Passion and Sash and all the favourites tonight, all right?

Kicking off the weekend Thursday night session, Blueberries, this is Jacko. Good to have you with us. Rocking through two. Don't forget a quick message as well. Don't forget playing out tomorrow. Ladies, you drink free all night tomorrow Friday night at blueberries. Right. And don't forget, we got male and female strippers on the stage. Live at Blueberries Friday night. Quick reminder. Can we have no drinks on the dance floor, please? No bottles, no glasses on the dance floor tonight. Ta very much!.

[music: Dance track with a vocal sample of James Brown from 'Get Up I Feel Like Being a Sex Machine']

- Fellas, I'm ready to get up and do my thing. I want to get into it...-

Aidy! He's celebrating his 31st birthday this Thursday evening into Friday morning? Blueberries with Jacko taking you through 'til two. Top tune brand new NTrance 'D.I.S.C.O'. To all the people who don't think this sounds right. Who did the original to this 1977.

[music: NTrance 'D.I.S.C.O']

- *Gimme a D* -

- *D!* -

- *Gimme a I* -

- *!!* -

- Gimme a S -

Ottawan.

- S! -

- Gimme a C -

D, I ...

- C! -

- Gimme a O -

Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

- Back up in your face To make the party rock, we're posting up the ace In case you cannot comprehend NTrance in a killer whip, we'll be dropping bombs again. It's amazing how we do The funkyd up flavour... -

From Stilettos and Miniskirts to Trainers and Dancing

LN · 80s/90s · 3:37 · rec. DM

The shift from heels and a cattle market to trainers and dancing all night, and the dawn police came into the Nelson warehouse with cattle prods.

Play next: *The Barrow Boy* – dancing instead of pulling, and a man who sang for his supper.
(Page 80)

It went from stilettos and miniskirts to trainers and dancing, all night. I just felt this freedom. Okay, yeah, there are drugs, as well. And then so it went from that, and the whole acid house thing exploded. That was the Angels in Burnley, where Paul Taylor used to play. Was quite a famous DJ and still is. He does quite a lot of DJ now still, but I think there was a license to how long these places could stay open. The DJ's started breaking into warehouses, empty warehouses and so we could stay there all night.

And one of the empty warehouses happened to be Nelson. So we ended up on the Nelson Industrial Estate in this big new warehouse where 808 State DJ recorded their Hardcore Uproar to all of us cheering as they came on. And that's on the record now. But the police came and used cattle prods to prod us to get us out of the rave because this was like five in the morning. We've been up all night and the next thing we know, people are getting electric shocks and it's sending everyone to the back of the warehouse where we had one door to get out of with probably a lot of us nearly got crushed to death.

And as we came out into the open, it was bright sunshine. And there was police everywhere on horses who then started fighting. Everyone started fighting with them. Yeah. So. Oh, yeah. So every week we went to a different warehouse and we, the police started raiding them. We. We got clever and the welders and bring their welding equipment and weld us into the warehouse so they couldn't get in. Did it get harder and harder because that's when the everyone, you know, became quite, lots of people. So you you'd be on the motorway trying to find these raves. And there'd be thousands and thousands of cars meeting up waiting for the... No one had phones then, by the way. So every someone in a phone box going, right, it's here. And then at the end you just followed everyone. But then the police cottoned on it and started, they probably got undercover police involved who could then get to the warehouse and stop it before it happened. So it did die a death. But from there it went on to, the traveller scene. So this is a whole different story.

So this is going out of Nelson. So I had actually gotten to the point where I'd got a bit fed up with it and decided to go and visit my brother, who was a new age traveler. And that's when a lot of the rave parties from all over the country descended on travellers sites. And this is where Castle Morton happened, the biggest festival ever. And that's where the Criminal Justice Bill got brought in, where gatherings became illegal. Oh, that was the end of that.

The Earlies at The Good Night Club

CM · 90s · 3:12 · rec. MP

A club owner who would give young bands a Monday night on a door split, and a house drum kit so you could turn up with nothing.

Play next: *From Stalin's Lost People to a Weaving Shed on Nights* - a room that let anyone in, and a family welcomed into the town. (Page 78)

So I went to Nelson and Colne College, which there's quite a crop of us who ended up being sort of session players and things like that. Different people in signed bands all went to Nelson and Colne College, they did the Music Foundation course. And so the first time I ever went to a Nelson gig was through that, because they used to use the nightclub for their college big band gigs. And Martin Sharrock, who run the Good Night Club, you could always approach him if you were starting a young band and you wanted to put an evening on and he would give you like, you know, you'd just do a door take or whatever. So we'd do Monday or Tuesday nights, whatever during the school holidays in particular. So we all started doing that in there. We used to have a band called Au Fait - a covers band, which we actually still do from time to time, but we always used to play in the Good Night Club there. Other bands like Cornerstones and The Turn who went on to be Cosmos. They all used to play in there as well and they all just put their own evenings on. So that was my main Nelson gig, and I actually, and I ended up seeing Denny Laine in there from Wings, and that was my first session job was probably playing with him. I ended up on that because Martin from the Good Night Club recommended me for a job with him. That got me into the session world as well. And so sort of all the way through, from being 15 to being about certainly right up until The Earlies, I just kept going with covers gigs around Burnley, Nelson, Colne. So they're always pubs, working men's clubs that you could go and play in. Nelson had a bunch of them, I suppose, but it was already thinning out in terms of a town with any nightlife by the time I was in my 20s.

By the time we got around to doing The Earlies, we actually used it, I think, on the week of our album launch for the first album, I think we did a gig at the Good Night Club again, just a door take. That's the warm up for going down and playing in London at the ICA. And then we did a Band on the Wall in Manchester. But like, yeah, most things I started, I started at the Good Night Club, so that was pretty important to me. It was a proper, proper cabaret club, you know, it had curtains around the stage and it had a, it actually had a dressing room full of like, you know, full of photographic sort of promotional cards for all these rubbish clubland acts that were on in there all the time.

But it also had like a backline, you could use a drum kit there. They had a bass amp in, which was really rare by the 90s because nobody was equipped to put bands on. He actually had a system, monitors and stuff like that. It was all basic, but you could use it. You could turn up and do a gig with what was there. So it was a great place and it probably if it was absolutely rammed, it would hold maybe 220 or something like that. But if it wasn't rammed, it still felt good because it was sort of dark and it was carpeted and curtained and all that. So you got a good sound, whatever was going on.

The Attic Facing the El Trop

FA · 80s · 2:17 · rec. DM

Watching the El Tropicano from an attic bedroom directly opposite and never once going in: two in the morning, people staggering out, blue lights at three.

Play next: *Working Class People Never Get Credit For Knowing About Music* - watching a club and deciding against it, and a front room where everyone did a turn. (Page 114)

And at the time, people didn't buy big houses they thought were only here temporarily, I'm going to go back. So people came to the house saying, why have you bought such a big house for? Why are you spending so much money on it? And then I think the neighbour a few years later was selling the one next door, number 56 Hibson Road. And again, people are saying you're not going to stay in this country even in the 80s. People thought they were going to go back. And then from the 80s onwards, I've noticed that people have bought nice big houses, there's like they're permanently going to stay here and then. So when we were on Hibson Road the El Tropicano clubs, this is in the 80s, I think that's the heart of when it was really busy at the El Trop and like obviously my bedroom was in the attic facing the El Trop like in my teens heading towards going to university, I think. And I just used to remember, like, you know, two o'clock in the morning, there's like people coming out and it woke me up. You know, a lot of rowdy behaviour, whatever, loud.

But obviously, you know, people having fun. I assumed, and then. But obviously we're living right there. You know, it was you saw everyone, so you couldn't help but peep, like, seeing what they were up to, and they were staggering out, and you were thinking like, why would people put themselves through that? They don't know what they're doing. So I think it sort of solidified my view that maybe drinking wasn't a good idea. So in a way, it's a positive. So I've never even been tempted to have a drink in my life because I saw that and I thought, look like, you know, people are carrying them, they're being sick and all that sort of thing.

So they might have had a good time, but they're coming out, you know, in a really and there's like little fights happening. And sometimes the police would turn up. So you've got the blue lights going, you know, like three or four o'clock in the morning. I went to University of Lancaster. My dad picked me up most of the time, but sometimes I'd come on the train and stuff late Friday evening so I could see them all there.

Home Before the Streetlights Came On

3B · 90s · 3:11 · rec. RSJ

Victoria Park, the tunnel between the two parks, and the White Lady story that kept a generation of Nelson children indoors after dark.

Play next: *Anybody that Was Anybody Played the Imp* – sent home at dusk, while the biggest names in the country played up the road. (Page 13)

Some of the stories that I was thinking of telling, which was around Victoria Park, which is somewhere we used to go that was quite dark and eerie at times, and especially walking through the tunnel. I don't know if anybody knows the tunnel between the two parks. It's really scary to walk through. I think they put a couple of lights in there now to make it a bit easier to walk through. But yeah, we also had all of these kind of scary stories about not to go there at night because of the white lady and the yeah, we all know this story, right? It's like a common theme throughout Nelson. Yeah.

And there was all sorts of like. So yeah, we when we were young, maybe the the Mums 2 Mums group did tell you about this, but, you know, we had stories about witches walking through with their feet backwards and, yeah. I mean, these were the common themes. So yeah, we spent a lot of time. I haven't. I have a different experience than maybe some people around the table because I spent my childhood in Nelson, and then I left and I came back as a 32 year old. So I have this big gap that I didn't really experience Nelson. So most of my nighttime memories are from when I was younger, and I had to come home like when the streetlights came off. That was the rule, wasn't it? When the street lights came on, sorry.

Is it the fourth salat? Fourth prayer. So you would have to be in before the sun? Yeah, that was a thing, wasn't it? We couldn't be out in the dark. It wasn't a question, was it? Especially females. I don't know why though, Ajaz, you should have been out then.

Well, I was very young. And, you know, when I left when I was 16. So by the time I came into a moment of like, this is what I want to do this, I'm going to go do this. It was this cloud kind of figure that we were it was just like a continuous ghost story that we used to tell each other. Like, you know, if you go to Victoria Park, you will get attacked or followed home or possessed. Yeah. No, no, it didn't stop anybody going because everybody wanted... and everybody saw it at some point. Everybody had some kind of story about meeting the white lady or something, but it was all just, it was all just rumors, what can you say? And so people making stuff up that that went in circles. Yeah.

There were stories where parents wouldn't want the children to be out late in the evening. And it was kind of – it's a cultural – Yeah, it's a cultural thing, but but things like they said, things like that do exist where there be parks and trees and like, they do exist like that spiritual world, I would say,

or, you know, but it was mainly, you know, for us, probably ways of our parents keeping us safe and then but, but I kind of understand that now, like why they've done that. Because I've got children. I would say the same. Like with me, like there's a certain time, like I would like to be at home, like even now, like, say like in wintertime when it gets darker earlier. I don't want to be out after six. Like, you know, there's certain times like for me, it's warmth that draws you in.

The Haunted Ginnels and Parks

M2M · 80s/90s · 3:47 · rec. RSJ

Sitting out on Every Street after eleven, watching the park roundabout turn in the wind and agreeing, knowingly, that it was a ghost.

Play next: A Grumpy Old Men's Club (The Westfield Bowling Club) - two ways of sitting out in this town: on the wall, and in the club. (Page 130)

One of my memories when you say after dark is sitting outside 140 Every Street which was my auntie's house and staring at the park. So we used to have this thing where we say Every Street park was haunted. So we would sit there after 11 o'clock and actually watch the roundabout. And we know it was a wind moving the roundabout round. But we used to say, no, they used to be a ghost in the park.

And then there was the other lady was Catwoman, a lady called Catwoman. Catherine. Catherine. She had. Yes. So. So they were really nice when you got older. But when you were kids, they were not nice. So do you know, I don't know if you've ever seen Nelson. So we have Whitefield Bridge and it goes down to past left and right. You can't go the left way because Catwoman used to live at the bottom of that road. And we did run away. And she'd have this blue. She was very beautiful. Yeah, she was very beautiful. She looked like Catherine Zeta Jones. She did. She had this baby... And Morticia. I always, no, she reminded me of, you're right, she reminded me of Morticia. She used to have this blue jacket, red lipstick and a beret and black hair. And she used to drag this man with her. And I think it was either her brother or a relation. We don't know who he was, and she was really mean to him. And she'd drag him on what we would do because we were nasty little kids. We'll go, Catwoman, Catwoman's coming and we'd run. Why catwoman? I don't know why we called her. She maybe had lots of cats. We don't know. She used have this big sling she used to wear? We used to think that she's got some cats in there.

Yeah. And she had a sling and she had a trolley as well. Yes. It really repressed you guys, obviously the generation above us. And we used to say the exact same thing. So we knew that on the left you can't go that way because Catwoman's there. And I tell you not, I kid you not. As kids, when we used to see her, we used to run the other way. She was our arch nemesis. She was the lady that she did - *she did run after people though, she did run after people when she was young* -

You know, the guy, the old guy who was blind? He was a friend. She used to carry him everywhere. She used to drag him. - *Drag him, drag him literally yeah* - He was very, very old. She used to drag him everywhere. And she [imitates gruff voice] 'hairooo' - you know, the way she used to talk? She was one of those people, you know, we were really bad. You the woman, the evil woman? *Cruella Deville?* Yeah. She reminded me of her.

So that's, so where that mortuary was, and this tunnel that my auntie walked through. These little

garages that we used to walk past. We used to love them garages. - *Through the garages it was an easy access* - through it was our shortcut. - *Shortcut, it was.* - So now that where those garages are that's now where the school's being built. And my house was where the school has been built as well. So even until today, my mum says if the kids are walking that way, you feel something because the spirits, of them spirits are still there. - *Still there, yeah* - Like I still remember when you're not on our house. So, you know, with all the kids... - *everything's been taken away from them* - Yeah, but we literally. So where the school is, my house used to be there, and we used to tell scary stories at nighttime. We used to love this. We used to have a wall and we'd all, all of the we'd sit on that wall, and we tell scary stories deliberately. We tell them about White Lady. Do you remember White Lady - *White Lady, yeah* - in the mirror? So you'd call in the mirror, White Lady, White Lady or something? Oh yeah, Bloody Mary as well. And there was a White Lady, and there were so many different things we did as childhood, but it was because obviously we weren't allowed to go out at nighttime. There was only that one time we went out at nighttime. Do you remember when it was it Findel's or Bunney's had that sale on - *Bunney's* - or Daft Don's they had a sale on a really late at nighttime, and we all know how we all walked there at night. I remember it being pitch black and we're walking. Which we never did.

80s and 90s. No, we didn't really have a, there was no mobile, so we couldn't contact anyone. So if your child went out or you couldn't instantly get hold of him. It was all, it was all through trust. We were a really tiny community. So for example, if I was out, I knew that someone would come and say to my mum. It was the old typical you shout the name like Sabba says, and you come home.

So really most of us lived in one area of Every Street and, what? The street. Yeah. All that area we had. So we did have a fantastic childhood. But the thing is, we weren't really allowed out after night, after a certain time.

Catwoman and Dogman

JO · 80s · 3:22 · rec. self-recorded

Two figures who patrolled the town centre as the light went, and the audience that always gathered outside the Lord Nelson.

Play next: *The Lord Nelson: A Town's Pub Closes - the crowd that gathered outside the pub, and the story of its closure. (Page 139)*

Of all the characters that would emerge. There was two which used to have patrol around the town centre. Just as dusk was beginning to fall, Kathleen Catwoman and her oppo Douglas Dogman, as they were commonly known by the town's inhabitants, were often seen loitering around the middle of the town centre, later on in the evenings. They would emerge somewhere around the labyrinth of backstreets and myriads of mazes that had comprised the old Lamberts open market. And they made their way around to, it would always be an audience, that being the pissheads outside of the Lord Nelson, also known as the Zoo.

Always there, somebody will be stupid enough under inebriation to utter the words 'Catwoman' just as she was walking past and ensure their wrath. She was always the same in a blue long length mac, with about seven or eight handbags around her shoulders and wearing a vivid green beret. Her hair, long and black, was always plaited and had scarlet ribbons in which match the color of her garish lipstick. But boy, could that woman move. She must have been in her 70s, but she was sprightly, and if she caught hold of whoever called her that name, she floored them, whether it was a uniformed police officer brought in to control the melee, or whether it was the piss artist themselves. Whether there were six foot four or four foot, she could level them. And she certainly knew how to launch an attack. Her oppo used to have a little flat cap and pushed a push bike around. And if he had been wearing a string of onions around his neck, the pair of him would have passed for something out of World War Two's French Resistance. They both lived down Woodside Terrace. She was supposedly his home carer, as some would have it, or his cousin as others would have it, or that she owned a load of houses in Brierfield and the handbags were there to collect the rent door to door everyday.

True old Mr. Metcalfe, which was his real name, had owned vast amounts of rented houses in Nelson during the years gone by. Where she came into the equation, nobody knows. Particularly when I was a teacher, I used to see them walking past the gates of Lomeshaye school when I was on yard duty, and she would ferociously hiss and spit through the gates at all the children that came up shouting "Catwoman, Catwoman" and "Douglas Dogman" through the gates at them. She had no preferential treatment for anybody, and we were all effing white trash for bothering with them.

I've since learned that she passed away her days in the Stella Maris care home near Reedley, and that she'd had a team of carers going into the house down Woodside Terrace. Altogether, there were two very, very colorful characters in what has now become an increasingly beige world.

Perfume Attracts the Ghosts

M2M · 90s · 3:09 · rec. RSJ

*A warning handed down through a family:
never wear perfume walking past the funeral
home, because it attracts ghosts.*

**Play next: Blending In / Shut Down Within an
Hour** – a warning passed through a family, and a
name shortened to fit in. (Page 84)

The story that I was told when I was a child was that where we used to live, there was old garages. I don't know if you remember the garages? So the route was to go through the garages, and if you take a right, you end up just where the new school Whitefield is. And there used to be Iqbal Funeral Centre there. Now, the story was that my auntie had perfume on that day and my grandma said, don't ever wear perfume on because it would attract the ghosts or whatever it is. And she walked through that path and she walked past a funeral home, and something must have attracted her.

he went into the park. The park was next to a church. There used to be a church there, Every Street church. So she walked around this route. She went into the park. She went onto the swing. She was pushed off that swing. She fell off that swing and she collapsed.

From what my dad told me was he was called by the priest of the church and they said to my dad, "Come, your niece has just fallen." My auntie was very popular back then because she was my cousin, actually, her and my auntie, her and my dad's younger sister looked like twins. So they used to have the same outfits. One was the auntie, one was the niece, and they said one of the twins has just fallen. So they knew exactly who the house was and which house to go to. So my dad rushed out and I think he picked up and brought to her home and he gave her CPR, but she was dead on the scene.

Now, since that day, I remember it clearly because we would be too scared to go to the park, and when we'd go they'd always say 786 on the walls, they were printed on the walls. And that was because 786 in Islamic culture means Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim. It's just like karma, which is, you know, it was... yeah, it was the name of Allah. So we'd say that. And from this day, we always remembered this story.

And that's just one of many instances that have happened because I remembered going through, you know, where one foot, where Dusty's house is, there's a little ginnel. And you'd walk through that ginnel, that was our shortcut. So we didn't have... yeah, we didn't have phones back in the day. So the way that our parents would call us was they'd shout. So if I was in a park place, you'd say, "Sabha, come home, it's time for roti, it's time for food time."

So we'd run past this path and I don't know why. I remember this scene with Apa Kalsoom. And do you remember that Aisha? Do you remember Aisha or the Dajjal, the witch? Whoever she was called, there was this tunnel. I remember something, I think my auntie was picking something up. And I

remember the scene like it was yesterday.

So me and Ambreen and my two aunties were in a small little car. She had an iron in the back of a car and Apa Kalsoom remembers this, and I don't know if it was a nightmare, but I always thought it was a nightmare and then Ambreen remembers the same thing, so it must have definitely happened if she's. .. we're both remembering the same things. So Apa Kalsoom had people, must have been about seven or eight at the time, but Apa Kalsoom had this small car, so my auntie had a small car. There was an iron in the back of the car in the back seat, for some reason I don't know why she had it there.

And they were looking for someone in the back streets, so they had gone running in and me and Ambreen... the iron fell down in the back of the car. Me and my sister ran out of the car. Now we're running out for something, I remembered the ginnel having steps. I don't know if I'm dreaming this, but there were steps or there was. We were running down this and I fell down. And Aisha's mum's, whatever her name was, Kalsoom's grandma... she basically poked me here and I've got a scar here, and it's the weirdest thing ever, so I've got a scar.

So she must have done that and Ambreen grabbed hold of me and we ran. "There's a witch, she's there." And that's all we remember. But me and her have this same fear and it was all around that area. So it was like after dark, you don't go and you don't go here. *Was that Aisha a ghost?*

Ramadan Nights

AQ · Now · 1:00 · rec. RSJ

The night in Ramadan when nobody sleeps, extra prayers running through the dark, and the mosque as the fullest room in town.

Play next: *The Imp, Up Close - the fullest room in town now, and the fullest room in town in the 60s. (Page 9)*

I think for a lot of Muslims, I think a good portion of the night was during Ramadan as well, especially for the men. You know, in one of the nights in the Ramadan, we stay awake all night, you know, and everybody gathers in the mosque and it sort of party like sometimes. Yeah, because everybody is gathering.

But and especially in Ramadan, all of the prayers get put. Not all of the prayers. We keep our normal praise, but we have extra prayers that are through the night. So a lot of people are out using Ramadan. Only on one of the nights can you should you really pray the whole night.

But we have something called. So normally we pray five prayers every day, but in Ramadan we have an extra prayer that we do in the middle of the fourth and the fifth one, which lasts like two hours. Yeah, it's like a two hour prayer. Yeah. It's long. No, no, it's not mandatory, but it's just something we do.

Yeah. So I think a lot of people are out at night and especially Ramadan. And now we have so many takeaways and stuff like, you know it's just it's just extra, you know.

Epilogue: Quaker Nights

DE · Now · 1:52 · rec. RSJ

Nelson Quakers, the residential epilogue, and a town noted as one of the very few in England named after a pub.

Play next: *Cafes, Crawls and Dancing - sitting in silence, and a crawl down Scotland Road. (Page 33)*

What is essentially The Nelson Quakers is Marsden Quaker meeting because it was at Marsden. You know Nelson's a late comer really as a name. There can't be many towns that are named after a pub that was named after an admiral, but we are one of them.

So yeah, Quakers have been around and about, I think because Ecroyd's still a big local name, really, in terms of its history and prominent local history, and now it's a quieter voice and more muted. But I'm encouraged that we're still there, and we still have a space and something to offer, albeit in a different way.

Quakerism after dark. It does at residential Quaker youth events, because the last thing that happens before bed is something called Epilogue, which is generally a period of quiet, and it's used for people to have space to centre and calm, because some of the daytime events are crazed.

And but part of that is also about people expressing thankfulness for things that have happened in that day, and personal appreciations of connections that they've made, that have nourished them.

But yeah, most Quaker activities are like Sunday mornings at meeting, but residential Quaker events tend to have that character. People don't want to break the thing up and go to bed. They want to keep that vibe going because it's a nourishing thing, you know? And if it's not widely available in your world, when you get a chance, you want to, you know, drink it to the dregs really.

What Happens in the Dark Stays in the Dark

YH · Now · 3:30 · rec. RSJ

The graveyard behind the house, the parks with no cameras, and the feeling of being watched from the other side.

Play next: Ska at a Working Men's Club in Nelson – the town at night now, and six clubs to choose from. (Page 40)

Obviously at nighttime when you go to, like, parks and stuff, you know, some people might want to do laps around the park at nighttime. There is hardly any cameras. And, you know, there could be someone watching you from the other side. And obviously, you might feel it in your mind that there's somebody watching you, but you really don't want to turn back in case they might just stop following you.

Okay. I agree with what he's saying, but even in the light, – even in the light – things happen in daylight in I'm, I'm talking like because I used to live there used to be a graveyard behind my house. Now at night, that graveyard used to go pitch black. The only lights. You're going to see the lights on the graves.

Now, I still remember during the day I had to go through the, I had to go through it to go to school. And there was this weird, weird house. It was, it was an abandoned house. At the same time, I always had this thing that, you know what my best safety is whenever I go past, through the graveyard at FaceTime, my father or my, like my friends, and if they're on FaceTime with me, anything happens, there with me. So I guess anything can happen at any time. It does not matter about, like day or night. It's most likely to happen at night because people don't want to get caught, but especially in nature. And when you're like, obviously with the graveyard, there was like a whole woods. And there was a lot of, I guess, stories you can say about those specific woods, about women going into the graveyard, to see family or you know what I mean, and then just disappearing.

So this is going to be taken into a little bit of a cultural aspect of it. So for example, in the Pakistani culture, we have the obviously saying that men are men, like they're going to be men. And for the women, they are advised that once it gets a bit dark, so don't be leaving because you don't. And no offense to any man like, you don't know what you're going to be kind of walking into now. You're going to be in a dark place. You're walking down like, say, an alley, right? You don't know what the other person is thinking. They can come from behind. They can do whatever.

Now, I guess in that fear of women growing up, in that fear that anything can happen in the dark, you don't know and you can't say anything. Especially because the cultural thing as well is like, you say something about it, it's going to be technically your fault. Do you know what I mean? Like it's you can't even say anything because of, like, cultural respect and your father's respect or your family's respect.

I think things that happen in the dark, they kind of just stay in the dark, especially in, like the, like the Lancashire area that we live in. It's a lot of Pakistani like people in the community, and they kind of still have that mentality of if anything happens to one of our daughters or mothers or sisters, it's not something we can tell anybody because what others are going to say. Now, I think that's, that's awful. I'm not for it at all. I'm like, I'm such a feminist type person. I'm like, you need to tell somebody who gave them the right, this and that. But I guess because the cultural difference, it's just it matters that things that happen in the dark stay in the dark.

Boy Racers and Helicopters

YH · Now · 1:22 · rec. RSJ

What Nelson sounds like now after midnight: birdsong, then boy racers, then a police helicopter overhead for an hour.

Play next: Bingo, Crooners and a Meat Raffle – the town at two in the morning now, and a Saturday night at the club. (Page 108)

You know my nights are, you know, if it's nice I sit out in my garden. I live on one of them walks. It's like quiet, you hear all the birds tweeting and everything. Yeah.

And then you hear: [imitates motorbike engine roading past being followed by police siren].

Oh, yeah, I hear that every night.

There is the peace gone. That is the sound of boy racers and the police following them.

Yeah. That's what has replaced the Imp.

I had on, like, 2 a.m. I could just see the light just go by. No sound of course, but, you know.

Like the other night, helicopter was out flying over, so you just had that for about an hour or something. Just flying over.

There's not a lot for kids or like, young people to do.

It sounds like the Imp was sort of pro-social, whereas now it's just everyone's in and then they just hear sirens going, passing like, "oh, sirens again. Helicopters again." It's not. They can't escape from that and then go to a club and drown it out.

But yeah, anti-social like I wouldn't want to go out. I'd rather just stay in and game.

No, that's why I like just sitting in my garden. Yeah. Just at blue hour, just as sun's gone down. I might sit with me apple tree and just chill out. Listening to the, you know, the evening birds. And just especially when it's just about to rain and you get that petrichor.

Everyone Wants to Be A Gangster These Days

YH · Now · 1:37 · rec. RSJ

The town centre at night now, and what it would take to feel safe enough to be in it.

Play next: *My Mum and Dad Met at El Trop - the streets now, & the club where two people met. (Page 29)*

It always used to be good, yeah, it used to be calm and relaxed, yeah. But since Burnley is going worse, innit, and Nelson as well, yeah, and at nighttime you see drunk people, you see people on drugs and everything. You see people selling drugs on the street. This guy got approached once from this white guy, yeah, asking if he wants to try some cocaine. Yeah, when it's dark it gets kind of weird and worse, dangerous, you can call it, yeah. For food, yeah, because everyone needs some food and like, some junk food, like, sometimes on the weekends, yeah. Besides that, I don't want to come to town.

Yeah, but because nighttime is going worse, every time I'm saying worse and worse. Unsafe like. Yeah. And it's paranoid as well because people come out from nowhere. Backstreets here. You don't know who's the guy behind backstreets. Because anyone wants to be a gangster these days and wants to be street. Because social media people think they want to be gangsters, rule the streets, all that stuff. It's just stupidity. So basically, our most street lights here, where we go on a proper dark, no street lights like main town, it's fair enough there's enough street lights around main town innit there's no streetlights, yeah.

And I want, like police. Not police like, you know, the support ones. They are in the daytime, at night time, no one's there. Daytime is always support police working around and looking at stuff here. But night time there's nothing going on like that. Like in Blackburn they do at nighttime and in Blackburn there's like a support police officer, not a police officer but support ones, innit, to go around town, yeah, make sure everything's safe and clean. And other thing is they're trashing Nelson, yeah. Like where we go it stinks really bad. The trash is everywhere.

Not as Safe as It Was

DM · Now · 0:59 · rec. RSJ

Daughters having a completely different night out, and a drug scene that has always been around in one form or another.

Play next: *Looking in the Mirror / Finding My People in Bowie* – a mother worrying about her daughters, and a girl who found her people in a record. (Page 82)

I mean, it's just sad for the young people growing up. It's like, I suppose, like with my daughters, they had a completely different experience to me. My older daughter, maybe she had more experience going out in the pubs. It's still in Burnley, you can in Burnley, but I think also it's not as safe as it was when we went out. You get that distinct, that distinct feeling. Things have changed, maybe with the drug scene and what have you. Okay, the drug scene was there, when we went out, but it wasn't as prevalent. It wasn't in your face.

And I actually never tried drugs, and I don't particularly want to. I'd like to be high on life rather than drugs, but, it's a definite problem at the moment. It's sad because maybe because they haven't got things to do, that they rely on drugs for a high rather than going out and enjoying themselves, which is a sad situation.

Driving the Lads in the Bedford Van

SN · 70s · 1:36 · rec. RSJ

Seventeen years old, borrowing her dad's works van, and spending Saturday nights driving half of Nelson around in the back of it.

Play next: *A Town Waiting To Find Its Identity - a van full of people going out, and a town wondering where they all went. (Page 141)*

I was 17 and my cousin Veronica was 16. And we borrowed my dad's van. It was a Bedford van that used to take everybody to work in. And we came up to Nelson and we stopped at my aunties in Nelson on Highfield Crescent, and Matt and Doris Wilcock, who worked at Smith and Nephews, which is near where In-Situ is now. And my cousin Michael found out that we were there and we had a vehicle.

So he says, "Well, can we fit people in that van?"

I said, "oh yeah, it's got seats in it. It's got long seats at each side."

He says, "right," he says, "right. Saturday night" he says. And he had me driving around Nelson picking all his mates up. So I'm driving, Veronica's in the back with all these lads and we had such a laugh. But it, you know, it took us out to the Pack Hourse at Widdop and I was 17 year old driving around with all these people. And if you've ever been on that road... Anyway, we had a great time. Came back, dropped them all off and it just, it stuck in our memories, Veronica and mine. But then he took us to the KFC club and the Imp and yeah, we used to just, when we were on holiday, we used to go out with the lads and have a good laugh really.

From Stalin's Lost People to a Weaving Shed on Nights

RK · 50s · 2:53 · rec. DM

Parents who reached Nelson via Siberia and the Polish resettlement camps, and a mill town industry that put them straight onto nights in a weaving shed.

Play next: Northern Soul Came to Nelson - one inheritance carried from Siberia, another out of a father's record box. (Page 17)

My parents are Polish. They came over during the Second World War, or as it ended. They'd been in Siberia as part of what they call Stalin's lost people, you know. He took a lot of Poles and put them in the labour camps. From the camps there, they were freed because the Polish government in exile campaigned very hard to Stalin and Russia to let them go. Stalin denied having them, but of course, there they were. Eventually he just, what he did wasn't let them go officially, he just opened the camp gates and said, "go", not him personally.

So my mom, who hadn't met my dad then, she said, "we didn't where we were even, you know, I think somewhere in Siberia, as far as we knew." Anyway, so, they made their way to the nearest station. So there's a train pulled in, it was full of Polish lads who also had the same done to them, just let go. They got on the train and that was the start of their journey down through Persia, or Iran now, Egypt, Iraq. And they mobilised formed their Polish units.

My dad fought at Monte Cassino he was injured. My mom was a nurse. She nursed him and that's why they got married. They then couldn't really go back to Poland because they were in danger. They were viewed on this, instead of heroes, they were traitors because they'd been with the West, you know. Whilst Stalin was going to see him off, you know.

So they ended up in the Polish Army camp, in a place called Diddington. So I was born there. So I was born on Polish soil because it's a Polish Army camp.

Meanwhile, a friend of my dad's, my mom's rather. Yeah. He met, he was in the Polish Air Force, and he met a young lady from Nelson in Blackpool, where he was stationed at that time, at the end. And they got together and they got married and everything.

Her parents had a shop in Nelson. Yeah. Somebody will remember this. You don't hear a lot about this. It was called the British India Rubber Company. It was a shop, right? I think it was on Forest Street first. And then she moved to Scotland Road, near where Butlers used to be. CDs. And then that was the end of it.

But they were very successful business people. They had at nice homes, they had good money. This Air Force Polish lad married her and said, sent a letter to me, dad, saying, come up here, there's loads of work and there's coal mining and there's weaving. My dad's a forester, spends all his life outside like this. Or he did as a young man. And a forester in Poland is a hell of a job because you had to to pass your exams. You had to spend three months living off the land, in the forest on your own.

So I've always thought, how could you come back here and work in a weaving shed on nights for all your life? And that's how I got to Nelson.

The Barrow Boy

LP · 50s · 6:56 · rec. RSJ

A Londoner who sang in Nelson's pubs and clubs from the age of fifteen and was known the length of the town as the Barrow Boy.

Play next: *Captain of Park United - known the length of the town, and getting the bus back to captain the team. (Page 101)*

You know and again that generation, the nightlife was hugely important, you know. They all worked in the mills and, yeah, spent a lot of their spare time in the evenings in the workingmen's clubs and in the pubs as well. But you know, the working men's clubs were huge at that point and very, you know, very well appointed and equipped. And so they were all, you know, they were all run by different unions. And they all had nicknames, but, you know, the Tacklers, the Dressers and then the Palatine, you know, the bigger kind of clubs.

But they were in the town centre was, is still, I mean, the buildings are still there, you know, were littered. I mean, you know, you couldn't go two minutes without coming across a pub or a club. And all the clubs had pianists and like resident pianists. And my dad came up well, was during the war. He and his family were cockneys. My granddad was a docker and they were bombed out of their houses during the Blitz. And the Greater London Council said it at that point, during the Blitz, if you know anybody outside London, just leave.

And so my dad's aunty lived in Nelson so they all moved up here. I think my dad was 12 at the time. And they were a big family like five kids and all 12 and above. And my granddad was a big drinker and very sociable. So they became very well known for having after parties at their house every Saturday night. And I've got this image of my dad and his older brother walking down the Carr Road, passed the Imp and where they lived with crates of beer on a Saturday night after the pub, and everybody would go after the pub to their house and have a proper Cockney knees up and sing all the songs. And, you know, whenever my family, they got together, my aunts and uncles, they'd always have a big sing song, like all the obvious songs, you know, like Knees Up Mother Brown. And Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner and Barrow Boy and Come Round Any Old Time. All those songs...

...to be a barrow boy

A barrow boy I always wanted to be

'Cause I earned me title, I stick to it wi' pride

I'm a costa, a costa, from over the other side

I turns me back upon the all the old society

Take me where the ripe bananas grow.

'Cause I sells 'em a dozen a shilling, that's 'ow I earn me living,

I ought to 'ave been a barrer boy years ago...

So my dad, when he got older, well, 15 from the age of 15 he started going in the pubs and clubs with my granddad. And he would sing. He'd get up on stage and sing these Cockney songs and so and he did it all his life. So by the time you know, when I was growing up, everybody knew my dad and they all called him the Barrow Boy and then, you know, people will call across the street to him and I'm sure some people didn't even really know his real name and called him the Barrow Boy.

My dad always tells the story of every pub they used to go in, him and his friends, I've got a really brilliant photograph of them, actually. Him and his friends who were looking quite dashing, actually, in a sort of 1950s way, coming out of the Lord Nelson, actually, I must dig it out. And every pub they went in and they'd do the pub crawl that everybody did around Nelson Town Centre and every pub they went in that soon as the pianist spotted my dad coming through the door, he'd start playing, playing the songs, like, Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner and everybody get, you know, asking him to get up. And he didn't take much persuading. And he always used to tell the story of his friends, like rolling their eyes in every pub they went in and his theme tune would come on. And my dad said, well, "you might roll your eyes, but you don't say no to a free pint, do you?" So they all got free pints on the back of it.

It's because... I'm a Londoner that I love London town

Oh, maybe it's because I'm a Londoner that I think of her, wherever I go

I'll get a funny feeling, inside of me just walking up and down

'Cause maybe it's because I'm a Londoner that I love London town...

Looking in the Mirror / Finding My People in Bowie

JC · 80s · 4:00 · rec. RSJ

Growing up mixed-race in an overwhelmingly white town, crying at her own reflection, and finding her people through Bowie.

Play next: *Not a Bunch of Freaky Long-Haired Hippies* - finding your people through Bowie, and a headmaster pulling the plug on another night.
(Page 26)

Because nobody really talked about race much. And both my parents, my mom and my stepfather were white and as brought up, completely white. But I do remember looking in the mirror and crying, you know, and just really that the, you know, the, the popular look then was long blond hair, sort of quite Baywatch-y. I don't think Baywatch was a bit later, but very blond, pale skin. And I do remember as I got older, like bleaching my hair, you know, people talk about Michael Jackson bleaching his skin and everything, which, yeah, no, it was due to vitiligo. But you cannot underestimate that feeling of being different in an extraordinarily white world.

And, you know, you mentioned Every Street which was very dominated by Pakistani communities. And I didn't belong to that. I had not been brought up in as an Indian person. I was completely brought up as a white person. At the weekends we'd go, I got my parents, we got to places like Skipton and trying on, you know, fur coats in Rackhams. It was just that's what it was like, you know. Or we'd go up to the Dales, all these really, really white places and I think, yeah, I did always feel different. And I don't think I always knew that it was because of race. I think it was just that I just didn't look like other people.

So, you know, I carried on going to Trax for several years. I remember being bullied there on one occasion by some girl, and that really spoiled it for me for a few weeks. I remember being really scared to go, but I still went. I wouldn't now, I'd probably deck them, but at the time I was really, yeah, it really put me off.

And it, it kind of underlined something because I was mixed race and in the top class at the old girls Grammar School, Burnley Grammar, Burnley, Burnley High School for girls, and I went out several nights a week. I was often disliked, if not loathed, by other girls who didn't know me very well because they couldn't put me in a box, and then that's not being bigheaded. It was just how it was.

My parents were extremely liberal, very, very liberal, and I never was told how to think or be really. So I like all sorts of different music, and I would dress in all sorts of different styles, and that wasn't really done back then, you know, you had had to be into mod or you had to be a heavy rocker, or you have to be into folk or into David Bowie. Well, I was into a lot of things.

Anyway, this growing up in East Lancashire is like the heart of what I'm talking about, really. The deeper thing, apart from all the, you know, the nice memories is this feeling that you had to put on a really hard face. You had to be really tough and very self-protective, which could make you come across as stuck up. Anyway, once people got to know me, they'd say, "oh, I thought you were really stuck up, but you're actually really nice." And I'd think, oh nice compliment backhanded compliment, you know. But thanks a lot.

Yeah, definitely music. Definitely. With people like David Bowie. You know, I was known at school as the Bowie fan, you know. They used to say things like, oh, I bet you'd love to go on a date with David Bowie. I'm thinking, no, no, it's not like that, you know. It's much, it's bigger than that. I didn't even find him that sexy. I won't say identified with him. It's just that, you know, all this opened worlds to you, like Berlin and New York and Plastic Soul and all that.

Blending In / Shut Down Within an Hour

SD · 2000s · 2:51 · rec. RSJ

Going by a shortened name in order to blend in, and a night shut down within an hour of starting.

Play next: *Northern Soul at the Central Methodist Youth Club - a night shut down, and a church hall that kept another going. (Page 31)*

Me being mixed race going out around places like Nelson, Burnley. There was always this element, you know, you kind of have to sort of puff out a little bit. And it was you know, my name is Sharif, but my nickname was Shaz. So it was kind of like you wanted to sort of blend in as much as you, you could, you know.

And it was only when going away to Leeds where, you know, conversation would spark with someone, you're like, "oh, what's your name?" - Sharif. "Oh, wow. That's an interesting name, where are you from?" And it was, it was you know, the reaction, you know, you speak. Yeah. What's your name? Oh I'm Darian. My mum's from Belarus, and, you know my dads. Are you out? Fucking hell. All right. Because they were either, you know, it was. It was pretty harsh, man.

Like, I had some situations, I remember in Colne once it was my 18th birthday and there was a place that we rented out, don't exist anymore. It was mad. We had on the ground floor, we had all my mates from like the Duke Bar and that doing the house music there and then upstairs it was a crowd pleaser, you know, Scouse house going on upstairs. But of course we made the school boy error of playing Scouse house music loud in Colne, because that's like the Pied Piper. You just had all these Colners being like, who dares play our music on our street. It was literally like that.

And I had friends from Harle Syke coming down to the party, and I remember I went and met them at the bus stop and they were all in tracksuits. And I remember I had a pair of jeans on. And one of them looked at me and went, "oh bloody hell, I didn't know it were like jeans", you know what I mean? Like. That's what he was like, you know, he's like, is it jeans or trackies sort of thing?

And I don't think that mentality is left a lot of people., you know, I think I went out for a pint a couple of months ago and I had a pair of cords on it. First thing one of my mates said, we're just like "cords, like, wow," you know, you used to go out in my school shoes and my school trousers and a fucking shirt from Burtons because you know, yeah.

But yeah, in Colne I had like, you know, some lad come up to me and it was my birthday party and all these Colners had come in and one of them were just like, you know, "are you a P?", you know, and I were like, "no". And instantly you kind of like, "no, I'm not, I'm actually..." and they were like "good, because we fucking hate them round here."

And it, was just chaos. It all just erupted. And you know we're all shut down within an hour or so of starting. So yeah it's interesting to sort of just open that trap door in my head and remember what it was like around that period.

The East Lancashire Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

DE · 90s · 4:29 · rec. RSJ

Setting up a LGBT switchboard above a travel agent because between Manchester and Leeds there was, as he puts it, a desert.

Play next: *Hendrix at The Bull* - a desert between Manchester and Leeds, and intolerance in the crowd. (Page 25)

There was no space to go in. There was you in the space, was the gay thing, in the space. A group of us, who used to be out in Burnley talked about setting up an East Lancashire lesbian and gay switchboard, because at that time there was nothing between Manchester and Leeds - Bradford. It was a desert. So I think Pete Cash, who was a social worker in Blackburn, spoke to the county council. I think we got a grant of like £2,000 to do some training and pay some rent and we rented a space above a, might have been a travel agent actually, on Manchester Road in Burnley and set up this switchboard.

We could only I think we did like three nights a week because there were no money to fund it for more than that, but it made, it had an impact really, because it was something that we were in a desert and all of a sudden there was a little bit of an oasis, quite a lot from folk who were either aware of who they were but didn't know where to go with it. We had regular wank calls, which served a function for the person on the call. Trouble was, it took up telephone line and you know, other people who didn't want to just get off talking to another gay man or a lesbian was like, so you kind of be respectful, but move them along somewhat. So you could free the telephone line up for the other stuff.

I think the most, one of the most intriguing calls I remember, and it was an enduring situation. There was a young, a young girl who phoned up with a mum's permission to talk about her dad. Her dad and her mum had separated. She'd gone to live with the dad who had a male partner. He died of Aids and she went back to her mum, but she had no way to navigate that really, and no way to talk to it to. And mum kind of got her to ring us up. So we kind of carried her along with that and listened to her and explained stuff. And for a long time she'd ring every week for months, really.

And I won't give a name. But I still think about that young woman as she, well, she won't be a young woman now. Should be a grown woman. Maybe with kids have her own. But that was like one of the most touching things that I remember where you thought, well, this is good work. It's making a difference. I think it was.

We did a bit of befriending. We'd go to Manchester with folk who were too terrified to walk into a gay space on their own, and in fact, years afterwards, sometimes people would contact you on social media and say, you won't remember me, but... And then they'd reference something about switchboard. So sometimes you don't always know the work, the good of the work that you're doing at the time you're doing it, it just comes back to you.

And then it got subsumed into a wider network of gay support organisations. So it didn't have its existence as East Lancs Lesbian and Gay Switchboard for probably more than six or seven years. And then it grew into something else. But it was good work and it was necessary work.

There were a lot of firsts, in my generation, it was the first person in my family ever to go to university. I was the first person ever to come out. You know, there were a lot of firsts, but the world was already beginning to turn, and I think and I was impatient for that, you know, I'd known I was gay since primary school, things needed to get moving really, if you're ever going to flourish. I couldn't see a way to flourish if you couldn't say who you were and be authentic and open about it, for me personally.

Well, I came out almost exactly the same time as I went, I came up before I went to uni, but it might have helped that I wasn't going to be in the family home for the next three years, navigating the early stages in a shared bedroom that might have been better. There was something that shifted because in the generation after me, like my nephews and nieces, one came out as lesbian and other as a gay man, and part of that, I think, was having an unashamed, fully functioning, well-rounded person as a gay uncle who looked like they had a decent life. So it made that something that was, well, at least possible.

Hidden Lives

DE · 90s · 3:03 · rec. RSJ

The Garden Bar in Burnley, Neverland in Blackburn, and a group of people who did things together but never had a space anyone could call theirs.

Play next: *The First Drag Artist I Ever Saw - nowhere to be gay in the town, and drag on the club stage. (Page 42)*

So there'd be the switchboard. Two or three nights a week. And then the garden bar was the place that everybody went to. That was the offering. I think the Cat's Whiskers, as was quite a tidy night. But they all died to death because there wasn't enough of us to make a go of it. And people who could travel, were by then going to Never Never Land in Blackburn, which is where I used to go, really, and stomp till it was turning out time. Get fish and chips and come home again.

There were folk who lived here and who did things together. But I can't ever remember as having an identified space where we could gravitate towards. Nelson's a small place, and it's still not a terribly progressive space. If you were to go on Grindr now, you know, you get three pages of little square faces, but probably three quarters of them will be gray because they won't have a face. They won't put a face on it because it's still not welcoming, celebratory or seen as something valued, you know.

So there is still that there, I think. If there was something exciting locally happening, I'd be thrilled. Like Burnley had its first Pride march probably only a couple of years ago. You know, it's like we have a lot of ground to cover yet. Yeah, I think in little mill towns in Lancashire, it's still a big ask to, to feel confident enough in your identity to disclose it and navigate the space. There's not a lot of that. People might do it obliquely. I suppose I did, you know, I'd dress in suits and waistcoats and I had spats at a time and a cane.

People must have thought, what on earth is he doing? But I knew what I was doing. It was a way to find expression without, without risking everything. I can think of a couple of Muslim mates from back in those days who would have a little backpack, and they'd go out in one set of togs and then get changed to go to the club and then get changed back again to go home because you couldn't. That wasn't a way you could navigate it. There were, if you liked cottaging there were places you could go on and cop off.

Victoria Park, that tunnel in the underpass between the lake and the bandstand. I have friends who would navigate that space confidently. It never interested me, frankly. But that was an option. If you got a set of wheels, you'd go at Crown Point and hang about there. There were local places you could go to if that was your thing, but I, I think that was for yet more closeted people than I ever was. But a lot of people had more than one life. They might be married with kids and be out cottaging and all that story, you know, it's people navigate their own way the best they can, really. And that's that's still going on.

Becoming Nelson Asian Lads

3B · 80s to now · 4:26 · rec. RSJ

A town once split by which park you could safely be in, and the generational shift to something described as becoming Nelsoners.

Play next: *Bluebeat Night at the George - becoming Nelsoners now, and a room upstairs the town once walked past. (Page 35)*

I think when we were younger, what was happening was the white kids had probably be in the parks with the bottles of White Lightning, whereas the Asian kids would be near the library because it was nearer town. We daren't go up towards Marsden Park when we were growing up, because you get your head kicked in. It was as simple as that. And then those kids will come down into Nelson centre because they'd get their heads kicked in. And it was that kind of atmosphere to an extent.

Yeah. And what you tend to find was from the library down to Victoria Park. You know what I mean? It used to be a lot of the Asian kids hang out. And then Charles Street and up to Marsden park it was a lot of the white kids who hang out. And as time has gone on, that has become a lot better. I think society has become more peaceful in a sense. But when we were growing up in the 80s and 90s, it was used to say, "what you looking at?" That was it that started the fight, you know, and it was just animosity between the two groups.

I just want to pick up on that point of changing the spaces. You know, one of the things that I think that area developed so well is because a lot of lads used to park in a Lidl car park. It became like a hub. And so this is one of the difference peoples. A lot of the younger generation grew up and bought cars, and a lot of people used to hang around in cars, and it became a really big thing, cars, you know, kitting up your cars, going on cruises and hanging around together. So this, this change from a lot of indoor spaces into this, you know, car like we used to travel to Manchester and back for like a fiver. You know, the fuel was really cheap, 70 pence a litre. And then it was, it was that's how much it was.

We used to have a set of friends of our lads from Colne, and we used to do our cars up here and they, they'd park where the McDonalds is now and it's still, you still get lads parked there. And that was like a youth culture. And it wasn't like all the Asian community and white community, as in young people were fighting. It was like only odd pockets and stuff. And there were, you know, that kind of happened to you. But cars like you mentioned was a big, big thing.

And I think it was our generation that started it, our Pakistani generation, our age. Because before that, my brother, he came with my dad when he was 13. And it was him and my Dad lived here and then me and my mum came with my sisters later. So that generation, all they did was leave school and go and work in the mills, whereas we were the spoiled ones because we went to school. And then we demanded, we want this, we want this, we want this. Whereas they didn't, because they were brought up in a totally different vibe and a totally different way.

So for us, we were the movers and shakers in a sense, from the Asian community, because we all went to school and we all when we grew up and college and then discovered cars and so forth and all that. So I think in Nelson, the culture, especially the Asian youth culture, was built by young people growing up in Nelson and becoming Nelsoners rather than seeing ourselves as like Asian lads, it was like Nelson Asian lads.

You talked about plotting out that graph. I think I can do it with the Asian community more, because I was really involved in them as a young age. And now that I've, I can see how they've developed and they've got these spaces that didn't actually exist before, you know. And so, yeah, there is that kind of divide in a way as well between experiences. And it's not just through generational experiences like Mash's experience is completely different than mine just because of the generation gap. But then again, you know, the white working class is completely different than my South Asian, kind of.

I found that young people had more pride in Nelson before. Yeah. I don't see young people having as much pride in Nelson now because they'll race around. And what do we buy? 1.3 cc cars or 1.6, you know, if you had money you bought a two litre, you know, but now these cars are so fast and they seem not to give an absolute hoot about anything. They just race around and it's as if they don't care who they upset or what it's about. Yeah. I remember when we used to go past the mosque, we used to turn the music down. I remember.

We still do.

It was a thing. And you used to come into the mosque and if me uncle sees me, he'll tell me dad, and me dad's gonna give me a slap. Do you know what I mean? It was that kind of thing.

Now they turn it up. Yeah.

Original Nelsoners

3B · 80s to now · 3:09 · rec. RSJ

Successive waves of arrival, and a phrase that has started going round the town: original Nelsoners.

Play next: Ramadan Nights – arriving, and the night the whole town stays awake. (Page 70)

Even though, like I said, I'm from Preston, but I'm still a proud Nelsoner. And I still talk about Nelson like it was just yesterday. And we do reminisce when I come over. There's things that me and Mash did a lot of detached youth work together and stuff, and there's still stories and we'll see young kids and sometimes he'll say "do you remember him? that such and such's father." I was like "bloody hell they've got kids now" And that kind of thing. And it's beautiful, but there's not enough.

Yeah, we call it original Nelsoners, now. There's a phrase that's come up and it's called Original Nelsoners. So I think everybody around this table are Original Nelsoners or their family, because we've got a big influx of people coming from Italy and Spain, even Pakistan. And it's diluted that community spirit because the Original Nelsoners now winge about "oh, look at them, they don't even care about the town because they'll go on the back streets and they'll be leaking out into the back streets. We see we would never have done that because we cared about Nelson too much.

In the 1950s and 60s probably people said that about us when we moved in.

So it was become like a circle, isn't it? Yeah, true. We never used to go out at night as a family, but it's really funny because on Every Street, Lomeshaye Road, Westmoreland Street, when you walk down there, you'll see families going for walks at nine, 10 o'clock at night. And we found that really bizarre because when you go to Spain, Italy, that's what their norm is, where after they've eaten, they'll go for a nice walk. But we don't do that and we find it quite weird like what they're doing.

So that was something quite weird. And I said to Mash "what they doing?" it was wrapped up. Yeah. And he's like, "no, that's the normality for them." And it was a norm for us because we wouldn't do that. We wouldn't. You know, after we had our dinner, go for a walk, we sat there. That's our time to relax. You know, after seven, eight, we come on from a hard day's work you come home, you eat, and then you just relax.

I think it's a really nice atmosphere, especially in the summer. You'll have a lot of families out and the takeaways all start moving all the chairs, when there's a big group that comes in like they did with us in Hastings. I mean, the Asian community is very accommodating anyway. And there's a lot of, you know, hospitality and all that kind of stuff. And, you know, there's a really good feel about that. And you don't get any strange, you don't get any strange looks do you from the Asian community do you? They just think it's all right. Carry on.

So in that way, but I think the saddest part of it is from me growing up in Nelson. I think it's become very Asian in a sense. And we've lost that whole. Yeah, you know, all that all aunties and uncles who were white, do you know what I mean? They used to work with my dad, who were really close to my dad. They've all gone and their kids have moved out.

And if you look on every, you know, all the streets, you'll hardly see any, you know, indigenous white people in the area. You know, if you do see a white person, they're probably Polish or Latvian or something. And it seems to be a place where people are just, you know, gathered because it's cheap to live and, you know, so it's got that sense which, which is a bit sad.

Where Are The Girls At Night?

YH · Now · 1:54 · rec. RSJ

A town centre overwhelmingly male after dark, and tunnels with no lights that you simply do not walk through.

Play next: *Trax, 1977 – nowhere safe to walk now, and always walking home safely in the 70s.*
(Page 39)

I've realised there's not many girls that are outside at night as well, because every time you go out, it's just a bunch of guys that just hang around. So it's been – very male dominated – Yeah, yeah. Really is. Even now, like when I go out alone, it's just much more guys.

It's like the town needs completely lighting up at night and sort of treating as if it's the middle of the day.

It's just dark, like where I have to go, the two ways I have to go town centre, are basically tunnels with no lights. So you just you go take a step, you just look and it's just pitch black and you're like, do you really want to go through that? Like, no.

I'm a Pakistani. So night time we go to sleep basically. Or you might just see family in like a family's house then go back. Or if there's an event going on or a birthday party, we do it after sun goes down.

And it's definitely a close knitted kind of culture, whereas you guys might go find friends and stuff. For us it's like family, pretty much and cousins. Yeah, you spend the night with your cousins or family friends and stuff like that. So I'm all close knitted, so it's hard to kind of go out.

Shared Spaces

PH · 70s/80s · 2:02 · rec. RSJ

How racism worked in the town he grew up in, and the difference between being accepted and being shared with.

Play next: *Perfume Attracts The Ghosts* - what gets shared, and what gets handed down. (Page 68)

Racism exists in different ways, doesn't it? And some people could be accepted if the black because you know, they're a soul artist or that's who they are. But then you've got a different colour of people moving into your community that is not necessarily into that either. They're bringing a different religion. And so I think it started, I guess it feels like it exists in different ways, you know, and obviously for my, when I was growing up and it was the South Asian community that were coming in, not as much in Colne, but obviously because we used to come to Nelson all the time, you know, you're for shopping and stuff, you'd see a change in community.

But yeah, like, there is this weird history as well of like, you know, the mill community supporting people in America around slavery. You know, there's those stories of, like, downing tools because of that, which is like incredible, you know, but then also you've got communities that were welcoming South Asian men coming over for the first time to work in the mills.

And I know because we have a history with a Brierfield mill, we know the stories of how they you know, how there was much more socialisation, particularly before families came in. So you would get Asian men going to the pub because that's where you'd socialise with your workmates, as it were. That all shifted when families came over, and I guess tradition had to be there or, I don't know, you know, following Islam, whatever. But it's, that's probably, maybe where things started to separate a little bit. Or I get a sense of that.

But yeah, this thing of like, yeah, if you're moving to a new country, how do you, you know, how do you start to socialise and get to know people, those same spaces where all this kind of interesting stuff happened or music, whatever is where they'd be hanging out or the pub, you know, that space, I guess.

Yeah. The only issue is alcohol's involved in that. But sometimes, if it revolves around music, in that sense, more often than not it feels more social and welcoming than just hanging about, maybe I don't, I don't know.

Never Allowed Out After Dark

AK · 2000s · 1:39 · rec. RSJ

Home before sunset every night of a childhood, and the fact that all her memories of the night are from somewhere else.

Play next: *It's Nelson, not LA - kept in, and skiving off school for tickets. (Page 6)*

But we were never allowed out once it got dark. So as soon as the sun set. It was like, you have to be back home. So any of my memories at night are never in Nelson. They're always when I've gone on holiday abroad or I'm in another city. Yeah, I'm traveling basically. There. Never a Nelson. But, that was just the culture with those growing up. We just, it was like as a young woman, there was nowhere to go outside. There's a lot of places for young boys to go, but never any place for young girls to go.

And that really hasn't changed over 20 years. But I am seeing now, like, we do a lot of youth work with young people and they are hanging out at night, specifically in like, dessert places, like Chocstop in Nelson or like Texas, which is a burger place. Freddy's, so you will see big groups of them hanging out, which is still weirdly foreign to me when I see it, because I'm like, we would not be allowed. And even if I, maybe it's a family thing, if I were seen out at night by myself, yeah, I would, I would get in trouble. So it's never Nelson.

But that doesn't mean I don't have, like, memories at night. I remember once my uncle dropped me and my cousin off to Victoria Park at night without our phones to see if we could make it out in the dark. So he dropped us off on one side of the park and he was pitch black. It was like midnight, and I was. I was scared of the dark, like really scared of the dark. And he was like, "okay, make your way out by yourself." And he moved his car as well. And then he hid behind a bush and scared us. So that was an experience.

The Devil's Workshop

SB · 70s · 6:40 · rec. self-recorded

A back-street Pakistani café the speaker's own family disapproved of: mismatched plastic chairs, a Formica counter, and a jukebox that ran on ten-pence coins.

Play next: *The Best Night of My Life and the Worst* - a café gathered around a jukebox, and ten thousand people packed into a warehouse. (Page 146)

The infamous 'Pak caff'. Now I wondered if it actually had a name. I'm not sure. Anyway, tucked away down a narrow back street, one of those forgotten lanes squeezed between shuttered cotton mills and rows of soot-blackened terraces, stood the sort of Pakistani café that only ever existed for the particular generation, in a particular place, at a particular time. It wasn't a café in any modern sense of the word. No fancy coffees, no pastries dusted with anything delicate, no decor to speak of, just a dimly lit room with mismatched plastic chairs, a Formica counter that had seen better decades, and a fryers hum that never fully, truly stopped.

The community elders, especially my dad, swore it was the devil's workshop ruining their sons. Tempting them with gambling. Maybe even alcohol. Said in the same tone one might reserve for explosives "Alcohol!" We were warned off the place in no certain terms, as if stepping inside would corrupt us forever, as though it was some den of iniquity, half casino, half nightclub, wholly unsuitable for boys with any future. All of this, of course, made it even more irresistible.

So getting out of the house was no easy task. Just popping out for a bit, mum said so casually and in a certain tone as not to ring any alarm bells. So quietly and sheepishly I'd slip out some time after 6 p.m. ish, with the sort of thrill only forbidden outings can produce. The window was small. I had to be back by eight, 8.30 at to push before dad stirred from his early evening nap in order to get ready for his ten o'clock night shift. Getting caught would have been unthinkable. Catastrophic! Timing was everything.

Yet those of us who actually spent time inside this allegedly corrupting den knew the truth. The wildest thing consumed there was a samosa or shish kebab so oily it could have run a small motorbike, but delicious nevertheless. Washed down with a can of coke, mint chutney, naturally thick, green and poured without restraint. The set menu never changed, and there wasn't much of it to begin with. We weren't delinquents. We were just bored. Utterly, spectacularly bored in 70s Nelson, where time seemed to move at half the speed and the rain refused to.

So we played pool on a table that leaned permanently to the left, hammered the buttons on Space Invaders until they stuck and tried to keep the football figures on the table football from spinning off their rods. Sometimes we managed to coax a song out of the battered Jukebox, old Rafi and Lata's classics drifting between the whirs of the fruit machines.

"Abhi na jaao chhod kar, Ke dil abhi bhara nahi" echoing of nicotine stained walls. And then there was a classic everyone's favourite *"Kabhi kabhi mere dil mein, Khayaal aata hai"* battling with the hiss of the tea boiler. Okay, I said I was good at football. I didn't say I was any good at singing. Oh, and another classic. Everyone who would sing along, everyone would sing along to this at the top of their voices, occasionally would huddle together.

Yeh dosti hum nahin todenge

Todenge dum, magar tera saath na chhodenge

Now that's a hit from one of the biggest Bollywood movies ever, Sholay. I think it was 1975 that came out, and then, because of the world in those days was gloriously uncensored, you'd hear Funky Town by Lip Sync or Ghost Town by The Specials, or Sir Duke by David, Sorry, Stevie Wonder. Mississippi by Pussycat was another big hit. All this for a ten pence in that slot. That jukebox knew no boundaries. Neither in those hours did we.

Girls, really? Oh, Carl Douglas's Kung Fu Fighting was a popular one. Yeah, that's right. Girls rarely ventured in. In fact, I can't remember even seeing a Pakistani girl there. Ever. Not once. Not in all those years. An English girl or two might wander in occasionally, usually looking mildly alone but curious enough to brave the atmosphere. Quite often accompanied by their stealth boyfriends to enjoy their day at night. For the elders, this alone confirmed the cafe's moral downfall. For some, it was simply the most exciting thing to happen that week.

Truth be told, the place could have been somewhere in the Bronx, bare, raw, stripped of any trace of warmth except for the company we found there. But it served its purpose. It gave us shelter, laughter, friendship, a soundtrack and a slice of freedom we didn't find anywhere else in our slow grey town. And looking back now, I realised that inside that shabby little cafe with our 10 pence tunes and lopsided pool games, we gathered some of the finest memories of our youth. Memories that still grow brighter than any neon sign it never had.

It Gave Women a Freedom

LN · 80s/90s · 2:04 · rec. DM

Dancing round empty warehouses till six in the morning, and a night out that stopped being about finding a partner.

Play next: *The Station Was the Launchpad* – warehouses in the nineties, and the pub the night started at in the 2000s. (Page 49)

To say it was only a small town. It was very big. Yeah. Yeah. I danced myself round in a lot of empty warehouses 'til six o'clock in the morning for quite a few years. Yeah. The freedom. The freedom of just becoming a person rather than a. Because I suppose it was a bit of a cattle market, but I mean, that's just how it is, innit? You go out. It changed the fact that you just didn't go out to find a partner or whatever. You went out to actually have a good time and dance. And so the relationship thing went out the window for me because I found something better and more exciting. Breaking into warehouses and dancing all night, I suppose.

Yeah. It was, it was just great to wear a pair of trousers and a pair of trainers and just dance.

Yeah. You weren't suddenly like people were coming up and talking to you because they're interested in you. It weren't just about trying to get off with you.

I mean, drugs, it's an 'ard one innit? because they can mess you up. But the drug scene took away the drinking, which is a drug, if you look at it like that. Because it was illegal, it was all done underground. But that gave you, women a freedom that they wouldn't have had because it was in pubs and you dressed up and you look good and that's all you were. Give us something more.

I'd got sick of raving, actually. And it's not something you can do forever, but you can't drink forever. A lot of stuff you can't do. True. So I moved to Holland in the end. Oh, wow. To escape it all. And work. And then I started travelling. But I always came back to the travelling lifestyle because I like the community. So I brought my daughter up on the travellers because I was around lots of other women.

They Were Part of the Fabric (The Stigma Came Later)

FA · 60s to 90s · 5:30 · rec. DM

South Asian men in Nelson's pubs and clubs in the 60s and 70s, smart in suits and ties, and the stigma that arrived later.

Play next: *Dream Work Pendle: The Future of Work* - a hidden history of the town's past, and teenagers imagining its future. (Page 127)

The picture at that time, you know, South Asians actually went into the clubs. A lot of the men they came in the 60s and 70s because they were trying to get, you know, because this came and worked in the mills and they did, you know, like go to the pubs, try a drink. So it's like a hidden history in a way, I think to some extent. And I think it's important to talk about it because my dad was, he came in 1961 and he was nearly 90 when he passed away. But he was one of the honest ones because he used to like, and I made him share his story that he did go to the pubs and he'd been in the El Tropicano, you know, in the 60s and 70s just to see what the wake got up to sort of thing.

And then I think my mum arrived about a year later, so obviously he had to stop. But obviously the other men still carried on going to the clubs, so they were part of the fabric of this nightlife as well. Like after work, going to the pubs, going to the club. So they sort of assimilated more in the 60s and 70s because there were so few of them. And they came with this dream of, you know, assimilating more into English life.

And the other thing from old photos I remember, they're all dressed really smart, you know, with a suit, a shirt and a tie. And I was speaking to a friend of ours, Valerie, and she said that Asian men were all very smart, good looking. So obviously she married an Asian guy. Compared to the indigenous men, they were quite scruffy in comparison. So it's nice to get a different perspective. And obviously I think, you know, she was saying that, yeah, we did go to the clubs or the pubs and stuff.

And I think as more of the women started coming, I think the men then sort of stopped, you know, going to the pubs, the nightclubs. I remember The Hawthorns as well and from stories from my dad, I think he'd been there a few times. He was saying it was really nice in there, because I think things have turned full circle, because I think it's been bought up and it's now a mosque, you know, from history. So things have sort of changed.

And obviously El Trop is owned now and it's a residential property and I've only been in it once, but I do know like they still have that bannister in the middle because you can't get rid of that can you. It would have been a big job. They've converted it. We can see how it was to some extent because it's a big job to make it residential. So if you go into it, the original features are still there. So obviously it was part of our culture growing up and the churches were busy in the evenings. They had evening

services, you had the clubs and there were lots of acts and there seemed to be a lot of money.

And I think the other thing that you've got to remember is my dad in the late 60s and 70s, brought over Pakistani acts like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, who was a famous person in Pakistan. *[ed. This was actually the 1980s]* He actually came here in the 60s and 70s because the people had money to pay for him. And he was an international star even at that time. So all the, you know, I'm not a great person who knows all these acts. But I remember Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan because he was well known. So I think he came a couple of times invited by the Pakistani community here, because I think my dad did the first Jumma prayers here, you know, started the mosque off and there was a group called Ittehad, which is a community group for Asians to support Asian men. And then my dad was from Faisalabad. So he created the Faisalabadi Welfare Association.

You know, for a small place, there were a lot of pubs, I remember in Nelson. I think they've all shut down. You've got the Lord Nelson that stayed open for a long time, but I remember there was a lot of smaller pubs that people went to and frequented. And then you also had a lot of medical professionals, doctors that came, the Pakistani doctors, and obviously the hospital was in Burnley – a lot of work there. And I think there's a pub across from the hospital that's now residential property again. I can't remember the name, but I remember actually going in there myself with my dad to meet his doctor friend, Doctor Nasser in there.

So there's no stigma about going into pubs then. But I think the stigma came as more members of the community arrived. There's a bit of a stigma, if you were seen going into a pub. Like dad loved going to Fence Gate, because obviously he'd gone in his youth and he used to take us and it's a restaurant as well as a pub, so I remember he used to meet his doctor friend there. So obviously in the evening, like South Asians, we joined in with that pub culture initially, but that died out.

The mosque took over, they had other activities, but overall, in my personal opinion in Nelson there's not really much for people to do in the evening. On Manchester Road here in Nelson now they've got numerous restaurants and I've seen all these signs. There's more restaurants and dessert places opening. Shopping wise. You've got the bazaar that opens in the evening sometimes, but I think that mixed culture has gone a bit.

Captain of Park United

SB · 70s · 5:13 · rec. self-recorded

Friday afternoons in a university lab in Manchester, and the bus back to Nelson to captain a local football team before the light went.

Play next: *What On Earth Happened to This Town? / Building from the Rubble* – twenty minutes of football before dark, and a town with little left to do. (Page 135)

So the year is 1978, 79. I'm still dreaming of becoming the first Asian professional footballer. I think I fancied myself as the Imran Khan of the football world. Football is my priority. It's my prime focus in life. As a kind of side hustle and to keep my parents pacified I managed to get to university. The first in our family to do so. My parents are very proud now. Usually on the last day of every university week, Friday afternoons are dedicated to our laboratory experiments. I'm studying electronics, by the way.

Locked away on the seventh floor at Manchester. Our assignment working in pairs is to set up the equipment, carry out the experiments, record the results, write a report including conclusions, arrange to see the tutor, have the report marked and passed satisfactory before anyone can leave. Now, the problem for me is that my focus isn't on getting the best possible grade, but on leaving as early as possible to catch the X43, which miraculously is still running to this day. So the X43 is leaving from Chorlton Street in Manchester to Nelson.

Football training will start at 7 p.m. at Nelson and Colne College. The M65 link connecting our area to the M6 and M61, it won't be completed until 1997, so that's almost another 20 years yet. So it's a long, meandering, dull, tiring journey over 2.5 hours on the A56. I'm agitated because the tutor is taking too long with other students. Eventually, I blag my responses to the teacher's questions, feign interest in their feedback, pack my bags and I'm off like a prisoner released after a lengthy incarceration. It's wonderful to be free. Off I go, running as fast as I can along Oxford Road.

Briefcase in one hand, football kit in the other, and a bag of week's worth of laundry, some empty food containers and kitchenware from my dear mother, who will be eagerly awaiting her son's arrival home after a whole week away, studying hard. Meandering through some of the back streets to save time, I just about make it onto the coach.

Who are we playing tomorrow? Away or home? Am I still the top scorer? I wonder if our center forward is still injured. Is our center half available, or has he got a few match bans as a result of that recent red card?

I know I will be late for training tonight, but as the captain of Park United, I must show up. Throughout the journey, I am preoccupied with all things football. More specifically, my beloved Park United.

Eventually, the coach arrives at Nelson Bus station. Of course, I'm the first to get off and sprint down Scotland Road towards the sports hall at Nelson and Colne College. I usually arrive with about 15, 20 minutes left. Hardly seems worthwhile. I've got to get changed yet, I do so behind the goals. The warm welcome, smiles, acknowledgments and greetings make it all worthwhile.

I don't need to warm up all that running around with the baggage I've been carrying. I've had the equivalent of a good workout already. I'm boiling, breathless and buggered. Khalid, our manager, appreciates my efforts to get there and slots me into a team so I can have a kick about. This is my stage, my home, acknowledged, embraced by all, and even revered by some. Nowhere on Earth I'd rather be. Fort ball is my drug and I need to score. Pun totally intended folks. All that effort just for a few minutes of kicking a ball around.

And all because the lady loves Milk Tray comes to mind. The famous and oft quoted slogan from a long running UK TV ad, especially in the 60s to 80s for Cadbury's Milk Tray chocolates featured the Milk Tray man performing daring cinematic feats to deliver a box of chocolates to a woman. An embodiment of his devotion, determination, quiet persistence and unwavering commitment. That was me, to my football and to Park United.

The Romany Ballroom

PA · 50s · 1:08 · rec. DM

Saturday dancing lessons above a furniture shop on Scotland Road, taught by a professional dancer who wore a full ball gown to every class.

Play next: *Bodies on the Living Room Floor - a ballroom upstairs, and a band asleep on the floor downstairs. (Page 12)*

And I do think Nelson has got some fantastic buildings, and it's a shame what they're going to do with them. And aren't they thinking of pulling that one down on Market Street next to the town hall?

Do you remember the Romany Ballroom that was on Scotland Road? I learned dancing there, went to dancing lessons on a Saturday, and they had them there. And there was the dancer Mona Petty she was called, and her husband and she taught us. And when she taught us, she was always in a ball gown, a professional ball gown. Really posh. Really nice. And yeah, that was good. And that was really busy as well because.

And she used to make us dance in lines like sequence, what they call them where you change your partners. And so you dance with everybody in the whole ballroom. It was really good. And that's above that furniture shop on Scotland Road. Upstairs the ballroom. Yeah, that was a good ballroom.

Stargazing on the Hill

AK · 2000s · 1:05 · rec. RSJ

Family nights in the garden and on the hill above the terraces: a fire, a telescope, Nelson lit below and Pendle dark above.

Play next: *The Acts at the Imp - a telescope on a dark hill, and the brightest room the town ever had. (Page 14)*

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Art in An Empty Travel Agency

AK · Now · 2:40 · rec. RSJ

An empty travel agent's taken over in the town centre, and what it meant to be visible and working in a shut precinct.

Play next: *The Good Night Club Jam Night – a shopfront lit up, and a room where anyone could get up and play. (Page 28)*

So there was this place called Althams, which is like a travel agency in Nelson town centre. And it was an old building because they had shut down a while ago. And a big part of In-Situ and This is Nelson is like taking over these, like, old abandoned places or places that are shutting down and doing work in them and just kind of like rejuvenating them and bringing life back to them. So Althams is one of those. And we did a lot of events there. It was mainly a place for us to work out of so we were more visible in the town center because we were working on This is Nelson. But we didn't have a space in Nelson for people to see us. So big, huge glass windows, lots of coloured tables thrown in there and coloured bookshelves thrown in there and everyone saw us.

But it was really interesting because when you were do an event that was like 6 to 8 with like the TIN Collective, everyone would kind of gather around and like, look at what's going on, because we were, at that time anyway, besides the rest, besides the takeaways, we were the only place lit up in the town centre. Because Pendle Rise was shutting down. Admirals Market had shut down. Every shopping place usually closes around like, I don't know, like nine, 10 o'clock. So there was nothing really going on for people to come and sit in and join with. So yeah, we had a lot of young people like knocking on the door asking what was going on, asking if there could be a part of stuff, just people like gazing, looking in. And so we got a lot of visibility for our events as well, because we had posters on the walls and stuff, but that was a place for us to go at night.

Like I said, there's not a lot of places for young people to go, besides like a takeaway for them to like, chill and relax. But we would have some really good events there. We would have, like, art exhibitions. I remember in Pendle Rise when we took over Pendle Rise, we had Agony Massive come perform for like a magazine launch. That went on there. So we've had a lot of nice things. We had a banquet after the festival that went on, and that was beautiful. So a lot of like curated places at night that a lot of people would have come to, you know, and it's a very different vibe than it being in the afternoon, I guess. It's more relaxed, it's after work, you can just chill. Yeah. And it was the best thing ever.

I think one of my favourite memories of working with In-Situ is Althams. Like it was such a nice space for, yeah, for everything really. And I remember leading up to last Festival of Culture, I was working there all night because I had to get like decor done and I would just like lock the door, cover the windows with these boards. So no one was like staring at me as I was doing the work and just work all night. And it was amazing. Like, I felt safe and because I was in the town centre. But it was so lovely.

Nowhere to Go, So We Made Somewhere

ANON · 80s/90s · 3:59 · rec. RSJ

Nights spent looking for somewhere to be: the bus station because it had shelter, derelict churches explored by candlelight, and a home too full to stay in.

Play next: *Pugilists in the Fields* – taking the bus station because it had shelter, and taking a field because it had space. (Page 54)

People ask what we got up to at night back then, and the honest answer is we went looking for somewhere to be. That was the whole of it. We were the first generation. Our mums and dads had come here to work and us lot were the ones out on the street finding our own way. No money. Hardly anybody had a car. And home was full. Full of family. Full of younger ones. Full of the telly and the rules. So you went out. Not anywhere in particular. Just out, in the Nelson everyone talks about: the Imperial, the big night, all the acts that came through. None of that filtered down to us. That was a different world. Our world was who you knew. The handful of you who had nowhere else to be.

So you'd sneak out. I had it down to a fine art, out through the little bay window, slide it shut behind you, gone. Or down the stairs in the dark. Flush the toilet to cover the noise of you creeping past, and out the door. Back in at five six in the morning, checking the window was still off the latch before you climbed through. I used to lean a couple of pans against my bedroom door. So if they'd been knocked over, I'd know if somebody had been in whilst I was out. Got away with it 90% of the time. Got collared once when the woman next door said she'd seen me.

And where do you go? With no money and no car. You went to the bus station. The old Nelson bus station. That was our second home. I'm not joking. It had a roof. It had a bit of light, had a wall you could lean on out of the wind and it had everyone else who had nowhere to go either. Same faces every night. Not waiting for a bus. The last one long gone. Waiting for each other really. The police would come through and move us on. "Have you not got homes to go to?" And we'd scatter and drift back. It's gone now. Knocked down. And I still find myself looking through it. When I drive past. The way you look for a face you used to know.

But we were teenagers. So we went poking about. And the place that stayed with me all these years was the old church, Salem Methodist. It'd been shut for years. Not used as a church anymore. Just this enormous building nobody wanted. We got in one night with a few candles, and inside it was like walking into a theater. A great organ that went up in tiers. Row above row. Climbing into the dark. He'd never seen anything like it. We'd creep about in there, play hide and seek, dare each other on. And there was a basement. Pitch black, no electric. The kind of dark that presses you. The dare was ten minutes down there on your own, with a candle or a box of matches if you had them.

The one time in my whole life had been properly knocked out cold was in that church. We were

running, somebody chasing me down some stairs onto a landing, more stairs, and I went to jump and caught a door frame, full in the dark. Out. Came round on the floor in all the dust. Not knowing how long I've been there. Frightened the life out of me, got my breath and carried on.

Here's the thing I think about now. Nobody gave us any of it. The bus station wasn't for us. The church was finished with. We weren't supposed to be in any of it. We just took the empty places of the town and made 'em ours, because there was nothing else built for us to be in. And I looked round Nelson now, and there's even less, more empty buildings, more knocked down, and still nowhere for young'uns with no money in a full house to just be.

That's the bit that gets me. We had nothing and we made something out of it. The least the town can do is give the next lot somewhere to start from.

Bingo, Crooners and a Meat Raffle

AN · 70s/80s · 3:58 · rec. MP

Taking a stepmother out to the club, a very small dance floor, and a bingo caller who doubled as the compere.

Play next: *Unlocking Spaces for Imagination - a room that worked, and what it takes to make one. (Page 142)*

I'd sit wi' me dad and me stepmom. Me stepmom wasn't really good on her feet, so she'd always sit near the front 'cause there was like a small, but a very small dance floor. So it give her an opportunity. Actually, she could get up quite easily and go there, and obviously it was backed by the bingo caller. And so that obviously came in handy.

Well, it wasn't the music of the day. I've written poems about this - Go Save the Last Dance and it's kind of 'bout, me dad's illness, me dad had a stroke later on. And it's about, you know, how did we not notice that he was obviously drinking a lot and that kind of thing. His health was deteriorating. And I thought, I can always remember that the tunes like The Drifters, Save the Last Dance and that kind of thing, it was very much like mid 70s rock of the age, which didn't really appeal to me. There was nothing of the modern age, but obviously the clientele on the whole was very, very old. Not well, not very, very old. But they was older, you know, the previous generation so obviously it fitted in with them.

It were things like, you know, a lot of crooner stuff. So you had Frank Sinatra and that kind of thing. And ABBA, the more pop end, A lot of disco, 'cause obviously disco was, you know, of the past, but it was still popular at the time. So it tended to be like that. It tended to be like you'd have like a, he'd have like a turn so that they do sort of one session and then they have a break. And then they come back and the second bit was more of like a dance orientated, and I would say that it was mixed in with sort of like a meat raffle and all the things that excited people back then and bingo, raffles for all the prizes. So there's a lot in the photos. There's a lot of me mum holding things up big cuddly toys or the kettle, or if she got lucky, it'd be a bottle of whiskey and that kind of thing, so.

Well, it's obviously quite strange. In fact, you need to have a look because no one else took photos, no one took a camera out back then, and it was back in the day before mobile cameras. So it's quite interesting to have them and sort of like to look back on them a lot of that period really. So yeah, yeah, she took thousands over the years. She'd have sort of like the old flash camera. But most of the time it was like a disposable camera. And she'd obviously do that. And then yeah, you got lucky sometimes, most of them turned out. Other times, you know, there was the odd thumb in front of the camera or they're out of focus. But I guess that's what interests me as an artist as well, you know. There's about pictures not always having to be perfect, and that. And they just end up recording their sort of a moment in time, really.

Saturdays we tended to go down to Nelson Legion, mainly because, my friend Paul, he liked Northern Soul back then that was more of a DJ rather than a turn playing out. But he always played like Northern Soul numbers like The Chiffons, you know, and that kind of thing. So which is still it's still my scene, you know, some, what are we, 30 years later, you know.

Trax, Thatcherism, White Working Class

JC · 80s · 2:46 · rec. RSJ

A nightclub read through Thatcherism and class, and arriving at a London college to find almost nobody else from outside the south east.

Play next: *Shared Spaces* – class read off a dance floor, and race read off the same streets. (Page 94)

Yeah, maybe like the time I was going is the rise of Thatcherism. And she, you know, Nelson didn't really fit into that aesthetic because, you know, how could you, you know, I mean, I went on to the London College of Printing, which is now part of the University of the Arts. And I thought in my innocence that I would go and there would be people from all over the country on this course, because it was the only periodical journalism course in the country. And I got there and there were very few of us from outside London, and the Home Counties.

Do you know the term Sloane Ranger? Yeah. It was. Hooray Henry's and Sloane Rangers. Like wall to wall. Absolutely, wall to wall. And that was not going on in Nelson, you know. Like with David was a solicitor and he was, and Allison was the bank manager's secretary. And there was a lot of that kind of Rotary Club level stuff going on, and the Masons and things like that. So it's not that it didn't exist. And you've got places like Carr Hall Road and, you know, big mansions round about, you know, but even back then, you know, Barrowford was just a mill village. It wasn't like it is now. It was just very workaday. So maybe that, it just didn't fit into that.

Yeah. Maybe that's where Trax fits in because, you know, you wouldn't get dressed up as such to go there. It would be jeans, floaty tops, caftans. Maybe, you know, stick a scarf in your hair if you were, you know, that kind of thing. It wasn't, yeah, it wasn't what you'd get at the angels later on, which was very, you know, Miami Vice, Don Johnson sleeves rolled up, you know, espadrilles, George Michael that look, you know.

I don't know whether it was that bohemian. I mean, I think it was quite, I think it was quite rigid really thinking about it. The Trax bit was. The Angels wasn't later on because they used to have this night, it's Wednesday night. This is taking it away from Nelson. But that was really creative. And that was like emulating the Blitz Club in London. And people would turn up in the most outrageous costumes, you know. And you just didn't really get that at Trax. A little bit. But it was, yeah, I think it was just rooted in that white working class.

Short Homers Pigeon Club

BE · 20th C · 2:15 · rec. DM

A pigeon club founded in 1889 in a room above a butcher's, which bought its own land in 1919 and is still going.

Play next: *Boy Racers and Helicopters* - pigeons coming home, and helicopters overhead. (Page 74)

The club was originally formed across the road there. As you walk up the street on your right hand side, that big building there, that used to be a butcher's. And they rented a room above the butchers. And they were there from 1890, 1889 till 1919, when they'd raised enough money to buy this piece of land. And the row of terraced houses at the front. So this building has been since 1919, but the original club started 1889 above the butchers. I've been a member since I was in me mid 20s, but I've been steward for the last 16 years.

About 170 active members.

That's pretty decent for a club, isn't it?

It is very decent, yeah.

Yeah, oh nice.

Because demographically, we're right out of the way. Nobody's walking past. They come here because they want to be in here. So the original lads were all pigeon fanciers. Short-homing birds, not long distance. And every Sunday there was a big arrow on the ceiling there that they used to spin on a Sunday morning. Whichever way it pointed, yeah, they took the birds out that way and then flew them back home.

There's only one lad who keeps pigeons now, Charlie, that I know of. Because we're men only. The only real time we have an event is if somebody wants to have a do in here. Christmas Do's are always fantastic. We have a live band.

And is that still men only as well?

Yes, yes. Everything's men only. Apparently, back in the day, the harvest festival, they used to open the door on the Sunday morning before they went to church with the spoils of the allotment from April, they boarded the table out and they'd let the wives come in, walk round and walk back out. They could have a look at what they created for the church. Apparently, I don't know. It were long before my time. There is a curiosity, and when most women come in they're pleasantly surprised at how clean and tidy we keep it. Yes, it's all men. It's all the men that do the cleaning, me and Alec. He's the secretary. We do all the cleaning.

Little Moscow / The Donkey in the Club

BH · 60s · 3:47 · rec. DM

Why a town this size had so many clubs, the nickname Little Moscow, and a gambling club with a secret knock.

Play next: *The Last Night of the Tacklers Club - a club for every trade, and the night one of them closed. (Page 132)*

I got told they used to call it, well, just after t'war, well Nelson were called Little Moscow because there were a lot of communists about, and they had they had a downer on pubs, you know, but working men's clubs, you're all together and you're all in it together. And that's the reason I got told there were so many clubs. And there still is a few clubs open like, well, every factory G Plan. I mean that was a cracking club in Nelson, can you remember G Plan furniture firm?

I can remember that, yeah.

That were a bloody gambling club were the Rouse. That were, if you went in there, you were really taking your life in your hands there because it was, you got some, I mean, there were some right dossers in Nelson, but you got some lower than dossers in there and I won't trust any of them in there, you know. Brag were all they played in there and they'd be 20 or 30 games on Saturday afternoon. And you'd look round and you think, well, am I going to get out of here all right, you know. Honestly that were a dump that were Rouse. We'd only go up there Saturday afternoon because, to play cards. But you just be right careful who you played cards wi', you know, one or two we're just waiting for somebody to come in, and they were going to rip them off, you know. Oh, there were some bad'uns in here, yeah. And there were in Bull's Saturday afternoon, you'd get some right clowns in Bulls Saturday afternoon, you know. Yeah.

Well there were a club up here, Fierce Winds. The Fierce Winds, it was, a pigeon races club. And that were nicknamed Fierce Winds. It were called Newhall Street Working Men's Club, it real name. And what you went to there, you went to window, and windows were all frosted. You couldn't see inside it. Every window were double frosted and you banged, and then you put your hand up onto window like that, and then somebody would come and let you in. Now me and a mate of mine called Fred, he comes down here, is a photographer, and he's always photographing birdlife down here. So me and Fred goes in one Saturday. And they used to get all t'gypsies in, all dossers around here that you did rabbiting and shooting. So there was always guns lying about and running dogs under t'seats all way around.

And one Saturday we goes in about two o'clock and bloody dogs started fighting. And they were biting everybody. Dogs were biting anybody that moved, you know, and everybody were jumping on seats just laughing and throwing bloody ale all over 'em. And there were about 12 dogs in so. Week after it were Ian Bennett were landlord then. And he put a right big sign on the door. No dogs

allowed. Ian, and he were a real handy lad Ian Bennett, one of the hardest blokes in Burnley. So week after I think it were a bloke called Tommy Botton went in with a donkey! And he leads donkey to the bar and he gets up to the bar and donkey's having a crap in front of bar. And he went bloody berserk did Ian. He grabbed hold of Tommy Botton, wi' back of head. And he run him straight out the club. Bloody donkey, honestly. Aye, it's true is that, yeah, a donkey.

And once they used to do, they used to, if you were intending been a landlord that were one of your first venues, Fierce Winds. And then you learned trade a bit and then from there you'd either go down to Coach and Horses, or you'd know enough to run a pub. And when Ian were learning he were a big bloke about 22 stone and they reckon he were hardest bloke in Burnley.

The cellar were under floor. So you lifted a trap, behind bar, and then you went down the steps. And he'd lifted the trap, served somebody and forgot bloody trap were open, walked back and fell right downstairs and nobody dare laugh. He'd hurt himself and nobody dare laugh, they were going out to laugh. It would bloody kill you.

Working Class People Never Get Credit For Knowing About Music

SN · 60s · 2:47 · rec. RSJ

A grandmother's front room at Christmas where everyone did a turn, and a generation who knew operatic arias by heart and got no credit for it.

Play next: *Fear Grows in Isolation* – learning through association, and what happens when people don't anymore. (Page 134)

Working class people never get credit for knowing about music, you know? And when we were very small, at Christmas, we always went to my grandma's and everybody had a sing. I played the guitar. Everybody did something. But you believe the knowledge amongst that generation of classical music and opera and how they learnt all the words. They could sing operatic arias and stuff like this, you know, they were amazing. And it was so lovely to, even though it was a bit at the time, do you think, oh gosh, here they go again singing. But it was lovely to see and to listen to them and acknowledge their skill that they'd learn just by picking it up with each other, you know, learning from each other.

Yeah, yeah. And that's proper working class history, which people very often don't acknowledge. They think that that sort of stuff is for people who can go to the opera and stuff like that, but actually it was part of everyday culture at one time.

Yeah, especially not just in music. It's learning a skill, a trade and carrying that on through, as that's your way you learnt your living. And also I think reading and libraries and people taught themselves about history and their local history. And, I'm really involved with the Clarion House at Roughlee, but that evolved from the Socialist Sunday School in Nelson, and there were libraries there, and people supported each other. And they learned through association, really. And yeah, the working class education, like you say, it comes from within, but it's very valid.

Because it was a new town, Nelson and it's all based on weaving, you see. The Weavers Institute, which Sydney Silverman Hall now was the Weavers Institute and the Socialist Sunday School. Everybody who worked in a mill, particularly the women – who all went to work here because they were weavers – they were collective and they talked to each other at work.

And then on a Saturday night, they'd all get dressed up and go out. And it was a collective thing. And going out together on a Saturday night was quite common in northern towns, I think really. Wigan Casino type thing, you know? So let's all go out, Saturday night we've got to go out, you know.

The Last Clarion House / The Unity Hall

SN · 20th C · 3:06 · rec. RSJ

The last Clarion House in England, built because Nelson's ILP borrowed £350 from the weavers' union and bought the field, open more or less every Sunday since.

Play next: *Squid Rave* - the same hall, eighty years apart, both times run by the people using it. (Page 48)

Well, it's the last one in the country now, and there was a series of them obviously, throughout mostly the northwest. So it's the last Clarion House, and it's somewhere that was set up for people who worked in mills and factories and iron foundries who had a really hard life, and they just had one day off a week and they needed somewhere to meet up. So the ILP in Nelson, at Vernon Street, decided they needed to have some ways for everyone to meet up. So they rented a small cottage in Roughlee.

But it was so popular it wasn't big enough. So okay, they rented another farmhouse. Same thing that went on for quite a few years, and they realised that this was something that people wanted to do. They needed to get out in the fresh air because they lived in such appalling conditions. Smoke. I mean, if you came, if you were at the top of Pasture Lane where I now live, you couldn't see Nelson. All you saw was the chimneys sticking out of the smog and the smoke. So, this was obviously something that people wanted to do.

So they borrowed £350 from the weavers union in Nelson, and they bought the field, which the Clarion House in Roughlee is now still there. And then they built it. And really what we do, what Stan was doing and all the previous people involved and people that moved on from that, and lots of people have been involved over the years. We were determined to keep that vision that they had about why they built it. That vision of working class people being able to get out into the countryside, meet up with fellow workers, ramblers, cyclists and enjoy their life and make the day that they had off worthwhile, really, and discuss all sorts of things.

Politics. Not always politics, but the weather and how did you get here? Which path did you come on? Who did you come with? So yeah, it's a very social collective thing to do, to come to the Clarion. And that's what it was set up for. Well, we used to hold our meetings, our Labour Party meetings there. I mean, we used to have, there was a lovely dance floor there with a stage and everything, which is not there anymore, but, yeah. We had always had speakers that would come. And Silverman lecture was, was held there, Sydney Silverman lecture, which used to be an annual event. We have social events, dances and stuff there, fundraisers for the Labour Party. Yeah, but it was a sprung floor. That's what they used to use to put on shows there years and years ago. Upstairs. Yeah. But, yeah, but the memories are there. People's memories of it. Yeah.

Campfire Conversations

PW · Now · 4:37 · rec. RSJ

A mental health project for 14 to 25 year olds that works best round a fire, and chopping wood as a way into talking.

Play next: Club El Tropicano -
a fire to talk round, and a club built like a cave.
 (Page 32)

So we ran a project called Telling Positive Stories, which you'll relate to because, yeah, the power of storytelling. And it was getting hard to engage teenagers to explore approaches to improving mental wellbeing, exploring the solution rather than exploring the problem kind of stuff. A lot of nature, engagement and exercise stuff. And what we found during that project was the thing that was just the most successful was having a fire and chopping wood 'cause you know who doesn't like swinging a big axe? So this project was for 14 to 25 year olds, because we wanted to bridge the gap between the younger end of adult services and the older end of youth services, because that's where a lot of people really get lost.

Slip through the net. Yeah.

Slip through the net in between the two. Yes. We run this campfire conversation group and young people come along and we have a fire. And we toast marshmallows and have a hot chocolate and talk about things. And there's bits of, you know, like exploring. So we'll collect wood and chop wood and light fire using flint and steel and getting more natural with it. Sort of explore using like parabolic mirrors to get something to light and things like that. You know, the young people that are attending it, they're just getting more and more comfortable in the environment and talking to each other and supporting each other.

It's working, innit?

It is working. And we're starting to look at developing the area. And there's been an interest, some of the youngsters are taking an interest in whittling. So we've just bought like the spoon carving knives and whittling kits and stuff. And starting to explore those and make things and create things. And underlying all of this is like conversations about, like personal safety and knife crime. And what's the purpose of this.

It surprises you probably every day that you have a campfire, cookout or whatever, the conversations that crop up and then it off-shoot from that main conversation. Oh, well. So and so, so and so and that's what gets people talking. And I think that's what's the important thing. Because like you said, a story triggers and you think, well I'll hang back on that and then add to it and it all brings the group closer, you know.

It does, and it's just a lovely model and it's really nice to see it developing in some of the like some of the characters sort of building. We have a young man that attends regularly. I'm going to be really vague about this because I'm really not identifying him in his language patterns, in the way he talks about stuff. There was quite a lot of racism, and it was obviously stuff to do with his experiences and well his upbringing, really.

And just over the last few months of working with him, just sort of seeing it shift from like just this realisation that what he thought that he really didn't like in Asian people actually turns out to be what he doesn't like in Asian drug dealers. And actually, that's got more to do with the fact that they're drug dealers and they're criminals than the fact that they're Asian.

And it's like the penny's dropping with him and he's understanding it, and he's making friends who are Asian. And it's like, yeah, but I can talk to you and I trust you because you're not like them. And actually you're more like me than they are like you. And we're getting these and it's breaking things down... *breaking the barriers down innit*. But in this environment, it's fast and it just drops...

Because that's how comfortable people are.

Because that's how comfortable they are.

Exactly. And the trust's there, when I say things, you know, like...

It's a perfect dynamic, in't it?

It is. And, you know, a lot of facilitators of someone like this, something like this, it'd be really concerned with risk assessment. My concern with is how do I communicate doing this safely, because doing this is really important. And the real risk is not having these experiences.

We Looked After Each Other

MS · 90s to now · 4:48 · rec. RSJ

Growing up LGBT in Nelson with nothing here, going to Burnley instead, and a theatre community that has gone too.

Play next: *The Revolving Stage* - a theatre community gone, and a band's first night on a turning stage. (Page 20)

I grew up as an LGBT person in Nelson and it wasn't anything for us here. So this would be sort of, late 90s going into the early 2000, and we all just went to Burnley. And at that point, Burnley was a really thriving nightlife. It was like, you know, people coming in from uni in Preston, uni in Lancaster, coming down to Burnley to go out. We had the Garden bar and that was our sort of safe haven, but there was nothing like that in Nelson. Nelson was almost seen as like the older generations' nightlife.

But what we did have in Nelson is we had a very thriving theatre community. And I was part of Pendle Young People's Theatre, which was run by Lesley and Mel from Nelson and Colne College. I can't remember the last names.

And, we practiced at the Salvation Army and we performed at the Good Night Club, on Stanley Street, is it Stanley Street? down there. Yeah. And it was really interesting because the people that would come to those performances were completely different to the people that would come to performances that we did at like, for example, The Muni in Colne.

You had people who were like mates with my great uncle, who used to like sit on benches smoking the day away and then they'd come and watch these weird teenage performances at the Good Night Club. And they were very surreal because we wrote them ourselves and it was that late 90s of surrealist thing going on. So, very glittery and shiny and, you know. So, yeah, that's what I remember about it. And I just loved the Good Night Club because it was like any jazz club that you'd ever seen on telly. Like it was all like the glitter curtain at the back of the stage. So the mirror and the chrome, the black. I didn't really drink at that point. So a pint of Coke was like 80p or something, it was great. I absolutely loved it. There was this really sort of like niche community feel about it. But that didn't translate as you got older.

So when I was getting older and we were going out to bars and clubs and things, there wasn't anything in Nelson. And it was quite unfortunate, really. My husband's a decade older, and he had a full nightlife in Nelson in his youth. But even then, by the time he got to his like mid to late 20s, they were going to Burnley, they were going to Accrington, they were going elsewhere.

When people are talking about the loss of Nelson's nightlife, it's been a long time. It's not something that's happened recently. It's not something that's happened quickly. It's happened very, very, very slowly. And I think it's quite natural to have ebbs and flows like this. And I think it's testament to the

community of Nelson that there is something starting back up. So for me, I'm excited to see what the young people are going, and hopefully some of it includes some kind of culture.

You'd find that people were very, I wouldn't say cliquey, but people stuck with the like was like. So on a night out and this doesn't just go for Nelson this is right across the board, I guess, you'd have the people that worked in supermarkets, they go out together. And when I got a job in the supermarket when I was 18, that's exactly what I did. And then you have the people who worked in factories, they'd go out together. And it was very, very cliquey to the point that when we were in college, we started our own rock night once a month in Burnley because it was safer. We needed an inclusive space for like the more alternative community, but mainly for LGBT. We looked after each other. Because that wasn't something that was offered anywhere, really.

If anyone's going to get it back on its feet, it's young people. And that's why I really love, like the 3B group that In-Situ does with This is Nelson. Young people having a voice, choosing what they want to do with the Yes Hub, doing stuff there. And that's how it should be. The young people are going to be the people who are running the town at some point. So they need to be involved in shaping it, really. I mean, it's a very humbling moment when you realise that your time to do that has gone. It's passed. It's now the younger generation's job to do it. But we did what we could and they'll do what they can, and eventually we'll get back there. We have the buildings, like the theatre is there. I can literally look at it right now, and there's nothing going on in it, and it just needs someone to have a little bit of vision and possibly a little bit of funding, and we could get back up and running.

The Priest Gave Us the Keys To Set Up On The Altar

CM · 90s · 3:13 · rec. MP

A priest handing a band the church keys, amps set up on the altar, and why nobody can afford to do that now.

Play next: *Dancing, Cinemas and Singing - an altar borrowed for amps, and a town with seven cinemas. (Page 30)*

When I was a college like the most economical way of making music was still to get together with other people and do it. And now it's absolutely, you know, the most economical way of doing it is sitting there on your laptop. And all those spaces that used to be free.

I mean, I think there's part of like litigation cultures probably ruined quite a few things. Like, I don't want to be the kind of person that regales against health and safety or anything because that's, you know, it's a bit of a rightwing trope, but it's like, I know when we used to rehearse for those gigs, there was a was a, there was a church, I think Blessed Trinity, it was on the way into Colne on the right hand side. And the priest from there used to just give us the keys to the church, and we'd set up on the altar and rehearse, you know. Nobody knew how many of us were in there or what we were doing. The priest just let us do it. And then all the church halls and things like that you could use for free. Back then, a lot of pubs would let you come in on a quiet night and just rehearse in a corner.

And I feel like all those different spaces that you would have had access to are gone. And then the sort of the, having a bunch of people who all buy instruments and find time to make music that sounds rubbish at first together, I think, you know, it's quite difficult to facilitate that now, I think, And it's a lot easier to sit there and just pull in loops off the internet and make something that sounds competent really quickly, you know, whether it's any good or there's any point in it is irrelevant. It sounds reassuringly well done to people as they sit there pulling it together, you know, so.

Well, if something had gone wrong, if like, you know, if somebody had bang their head or something like, I mean, we wouldn't have done anything. Now, probably he'd go to prison. Yeah, but what are you doing? Letting a load of kids in your church. And, you know, we're actually set up on the altar with amps on the altar and stuff like that. It was desecration, really, but he was alright. It was a good bloke. I don't know if he's still there or not anyway, but yeah.

There's a lot of good faith places, another place that everybody used to play at sort of end of term things was Springers. Did you hear about that? Do you know where the Thatch and Thistle is? Down by the roundabout to Barrowford. There's a building next to that. And it had an absolutely soulless, awful venue called Springers. It felt like you were in a conference center or just a sort of council building or something like that, but they would just give over rooms to kids from college to put gigs on or I mean, or have like 18th birthday parties or things like that as well. But that was another place that you could just get.

You generally didn't have to give anybody any money for these places either. They just thought if somebody came in and had a drink, then that would work, you know. I don't even know now, I don't think I don't think the mark up on beer's good enough for people to just, in good faith, say, yeah, just come in and just drink. We'll just have the bar, you know? But that's the way it used to be, didn't it?

None of Us Thought We'd Be Touring The World

CM · 60s to 90s · 3:08 · rec. MP

A father's band who played the Imp in the sixties and then Hamburg, and an ambition that went no further than a stage in a local pub.

Play next: *From Stilettos and Miniskirts to Trainers and Dancing – an ambition that stopped at the local pub, and a night that went until morning. (Page 60)*

Me Dad's generation all called that, they're called it the Zoo. I don't know if that's something you've come across. I don't think we ever played there. We never played any of those town centre ones, but there were ones a little bit further out that we would get gigs at. I did a lot of playing with my dad's band, who actually they played in The Imp in the 60s. They were one of the many local support bands. They were still going in the 90s, so me and a lot of my mates from Nelson and Colne College would end up playing with their band. We'd come in and beat up the brass section or the percussion or whatever.

And so we'd play there, Good Night Club, General Gordon. Have you heard of that one? That was up towards Mansfield School. A couple in Brierfield actually, like the Snowball, the Marsden Cross, Lane Ends. They all would periodically put covers bands on so that when you're at school and college and stuff, it's like it's just an extra whatever, 20 or 30 quid each or something like that. It would keep you going, really. So I mean, yeah.

So me dad's band was called the Uptown Band and they were called the Uptown Go-Go band in the 60s. They used to play at The Imp all the time, and then they ended up going to Hamburg in the 60s. So they sort of went down the same trail as the Beatles doing the Top Ten Club and the Star Club and all that sort of soul R&B band. Yeah, soul R&B covers band. They went out to Hamburg, did all that. They played in Czechoslovakia and stuff like that while it was still communist. So they had a good run doing interesting things. And then they all stopped and had kids and, you know, everybody put their instruments under their bed and that.

But then in the early sort of 90s, they all started up again. Yeah, they got going again. And then I ended up taking over the keyboard job in that and then bringing in more and more of my mates who I met at Nelson and Colne College. There was some like remarkably good players there who would like, have all gone on to quite illustrious session careers. There's a trumpet player, Andy Greenwood, who played with us and he ended up, he does a lot of those kind of Proms events. He was in the West End, played in Wicked for about 20 years. And then there was another guy, Jed Lynch, who went on to play with Black Grape, and then Peter Gabriel. And these people would all just come in and maybe do, you know, just come out, turn up and do a weekend gig for 20 quid with my dad or something like that. It was always chaos. There was always more people than there should be. We might have ten of us in some local pub.

None of us thought we would be touring the world or anything. We just saw people playing in covers, bands in pubs and clubs around our way and thought we can do that. And so our ambitions would have been to be on stage in a local pub, you know, and I don't think any of us ever would have thought we'd get outside of these, these hills, really, you know. So, yeah, we had very modest ambitions, I think.

The Wounds Are Still Wide Open

SD · 2000s · 3:28 · rec. RSJ

Walking a town where the scars have not been covered over, past a boarded cycling club and buildings left empty.

Play next: Hardcore Uproar on the Lomeshaye Estate – wounds still open, and the night that made the town briefly famous again. (Page 23)

Is probably the only place, more than Burnley really where, you know, I walk round and it's like, God, remember when like that was like that and that was like that. And you know, there's a lot of faded memories there. And the scars haven't been covered up. In fact, like the wounds are still wide open. I mean, I'm pretty sure the Star Cycling Club you go past. I'm sure the signs are still kind of there, but it's a bit boarded up and nothing's really happened to the building.

And just that run into the town more broadly, like the, almost like the romanticising of particular periods of like, of yesteryear, you know, that particularly, you know, that era then and then even, you know, when like you see the sort of the old clips of like people out at Marsden open air pool and things, you know, like, you know what I mean? Like it reminds me of, like, lido culture in London now, you know, and just to think, if that was here, what a different place it would be completely you know, and having all these things stripped away.

And I think that it's, it's harder for people from, you know, just speaking on my own behalf, but like my sort of age group, our age group, whatever. Where we didn't have that in Nelson at all. We had Alexandria Snooker hall and Chokers. Those were like the two places you could go to when you sort of weren't, if you weren't going to a pub. Or there was like some other place that just had a load of slot machines across the road from Alexandra that I never set foot in, and there wasn't really much else going on for us.

And it was shit. It was really shit, you know. And like, it's I think it's hard to sort of talk about it in anything that isn't predominantly a negative light when you, especially if you go away and you go to all the places and you're like, what? Like, is this? What? Do you know what I mean? Like when going to Leeds for me was like a real big sort of like, oh my god. Like because it's like, I mean, it's all well and good there being a, you know, a back room at the Station pub where there's 15 lads, you know, and you can drink 99p pints, but then, you know, after 3 or 4 you like, where are we going?

And there wasn't that next place in Nelson, whereas I think there, there used to be. People used to talk. I mean, I remember being a kid and used to see the light in the sky coming from Equinox, you know, and that was like a big thing because you'd be like, whoa, that's like a nightclub. And, my mate, he works for a demolition company, actually, and they're doing a lot of work in Nelson. And he sent me some pictures recently of him walking around Equinox at the mall, you know.

Oh, mega, really?

Yeah. And it's left as it was, you know, because obviously there was I think a lot of it was burned down, but there's still, you know, signs on the wall and, you know, the old like Thwaites taps and what have you. It's pretty much left as it was. So I mean if you can if you can access there that would probably be quite a spectacle in itself.

A Reflection of the Town's Decline

SD · 2000s · 2:20 · rec. RSJ

A night out that was both diverse and depressing at the same time, and what that said about where the town was heading.

Play next: 115 Steps to the Imp: A Ten Year Old Alone At The Wrestling - reasoning out the decline, and measuring the walk before it.
(Page 18)

You know what it was actually, it was relatively diverse going out. You did get quite a few Asian lads coming out and groups mixing, you know. It wasn't all, it was probably more like, you know, it was probably more inclusive in some ways, just because of the variety of people that were going out. But it did have this quite, I don't know how to say... It felt pretty down and out when you were going out. I found it quite depressing. And this was when I was on the cusp of going to university.

And it felt like it had a hold on some of my friends. And I could see I'm like, you guys are like, your life is here. You could see it and it wasn't, it's sad to say that, but it was like, it was quite a depressing place. And I think that that reflected the wider sort of collapse of Nelson's town centre being some sort of a hub. Because, you know, I grew up with like a lot of obviously, you know, hearing from my mum, I swear she saw Jimi Hendrix in Nelson once, like, which is, you know, that's insane.

And you know, whoever else, I mean, you'll know if you've been speaking to people about the Imp and stuff. And also I remember from other people, older, you know, they would talk about the glory days, but the days of Nelson being a proper night out, you know. It had all these pubs and... as did Brierfield, you know, so I mean the, the run... if you were to do a pub crawl from Brierfield, I mean endless pubs, whereas now, you know, there's one or two left standing which are always unfortunately sort of left standing for the wrong reasons in those areas, you know. So, I think that the sort of the nightlife was a pretty solid reflection of the sort of Nelson's decline in a sense.

Dream Work Pendle: The Future of Work

AA · Now/future · 2:56 · rec. self-recorded

A video game built with local teenagers about work in Nelson in 2050, made from characters they invented as future versions of themselves.

Play next: *Driving the Lads in the Bedford Van - imagining 2050, and a seventeen-year-old with the van keys in 1975. (Page 77)*

Dream Work Pendle is a video game created through workshops with local young people, employers and skills providers that explores the future of work in Nelson and Pendle. Between 2020 and 2025, as Associate Artist for In Situ, I spoke to hundreds of teenagers about their aspirations and desires for the future by asking them to create characters to be featured in the game. The characters they created were based on future versions of themselves, as well as thinking about what they want to be in 2050. The workshops also invited them to think about how the world of work would differ from today shaped by technological, environmental and social changes.

In the game, the player explores this co-created future version of Pendle, talking to the employers and employees to gather information that they can bring back to the present day. There is a twist ending written by students at Nelson and Colne College, that introduces a dystopian narrative about the future of education and artificial intelligence, but it has a happy ending, and if the player completes the game, they're rewarded with getting to meet all the future workers. These included electric vehicle technicians, asteroid miners, professional influencers, voice actors and content creators, architects of green developments, sustainable fashion designers and retro taxi drivers - because people will still want the human experience even when we have self-driving cars.

Key trends with the creative industries, entrepreneurship, technology and cybersecurity, healthcare and wellbeing, and sustainability and the environment. With many young people hoping for local jobs that have a global connection. We talked a lot about how if remote working becomes more commonplace and you can work anywhere in the world from home, then why not make that home Pendle? It's affordable, surrounded by nature and with a close knit, caring community that would provide the perfect antidote to a working life performed through screens and devices.

Maybe the expansion pack for Dream Work Pendle would give us an insight into what the young people of today imagine themselves doing outside of work, or in their leisure time in the future. Would this be happening after work in the evening? Or will the boundaries between work and play be blurred to the point where what people do during the day and after dark are interchangeable? Either way, spaces for real human interaction, creativity and community will be vital, and identifying where these spaces could emerge from, develop and grow in Nelson and Pendle today is an urgent task.

Let's Be Honest, There's Nothing Here

3B · Now · 3:14 · rec. RSJ

Marsden Park with a few cans, the Station Hotel, and a nightlife that has died down because staying in is cheaper.

Play next: *On the Door at Tracks / Tarmacker's Lament - nothing here, and a doorman noting what there was. (Page 52)*

I come out here, here and there into Nelson. I remember hanging around on the local park, Marsden Park, with a few friends, having a few cans of beer. Just relaxing, on a night time. And then once I got older, started going to the pub, the Station Hotel. But nightlife has just sort of died down in the area. People are sort of staying at home now because it's cheaper and it's more economical to stay at home, but to make life, nightlife better in this area, we need something that everyone can enjoy.

Somewhere that safe, somewhere that parents can know that the kids are going to be well looked after and nothing bad's going to happen to them. And somewhere like a bowling alley or somewhere that just stands out from anywhere else that kids don't have to travel far distances to go do.

I used to get kicked out quite a lot. So I remember spending a lot of time at Walverden Park because it's just like, it's like in front of us. I spent a lot of time there, and there was just this one bench where we would all just hang out, but I don't really remember much apart from that. And now I don't spend any time in Nelson, to be honest. I'm at Burnley a lot, so if I want to go out like... luckily, like I know, like some people have strict parents, but thankfully my parents aren't, they aren't backward minded, should I say, or whatever it is. They are quite chilled out, so I am allowed to go out whenever I feel like. So I don't spend any time in Nelson because, let's be honest, there's nothing here, you know? I think that's quite evident. So I spent a lot of time in either like Burnley or Manchester.

I go out like I do. I do photography like quite a lot. So whenever I'm going out, I'll just take my camera or I'll go to cinema, watch a film. But nothing now in Nelson anyway, just because there's nothing here.

When I was, I want to say when I was young, maybe Mash mentioned it before, but I used to hang around in the bus station, because it was a sheltered space that was free, right. And there's not many of these things that still exist. And it's something that I've been talking to Sue about as well, like. This is something that we need because young people don't actually...

I feel like us now would have a similar experience to you guys if it weren't for the stuff that has... if the stuff that's still here, for example, like the pubs and like the sheltered spaces and everything, like we'd have a similar experience, but because there's nothing like that here anymore, we're having to go out of town to have a good time. Obviously, like you're talking about the pubs, you're talking about the parks, talking about the shelter, the bus station, bus station now is just crap. I don't even remember the old one. I don't even...

The old one was...

They do, they throw you out now. So if you look like remotely as though you're not waiting for a bus, there's just this huge guy that just comes up to you and tells you to leave.

A Grumpy Old Men's Club (The Westfield Bowling Club)

AF · 60s to now · 2:25 · rec. DM

A club holding steady at eighty members, losing a few and gaining a few, and a secretary fed up with going to funerals.

Play next: *A Call to Garms* - a club losing members to funerals, and a dance still going on inside. (Page 45)

We've been averaging about 80 for quite a number of years now. Few dropping out, few passing away. I'm fed up with going to funerals, to be honest.

Oh no, season ticket...

Being the secretary, you always have to go to funerals, so. But people keep... keep getting some [indiscernible]. So we're averaging about 80 a year. Lose a few and gain a few sort of thing. But like I say, it's a grumpy old men's club. We've got to sign up there because it's mainly men. Yeah.

Do you never get any young ones coming in?

Some of them bring their children you know, their grandchildren, really. One bloke last week had his son in.

Well, you never know, there's hope then.

We don't have any rules and regulations that you can't bring. If it wants to come regular, then you have to become a member. Yeah. Because we insist on that. Yeah. Like you said, we don't have passing trade. You occasionally get somebody come in: "Can I get a drink?" And I say, "are you a member?", "No" I say "no, sorry members only" because if they start you say yes...

Then other ones will come...

Other ones will come with everything else. So yeah, it's it's sad, but we just feel a bit guilty about it. But you don't want to spoil the thing for the rest of the members, do yeah?

I was 16 first time I went in, sort of 1966 I think it was. And I got kicked out at the bar. I didn't get a drink. I thought, I'll try it. I got in, but, "no... no, no, no. Nope!" You didn't argue in those days, most of top stars were down. You know, they're on every week. Yeah, because it was simple.

You got four blokes on the stage. It held about 2000, I think at most. And you all stood around

watching the group and then most of the space was for dancing. So you were dancing and sort of two bars. A posh bar - they used to call it. And a rough bar, in other words, but the side bar. And it was just, everybody there to enjoy there selves. You did have some hiccups sometimes. Somebody fell out with somebody, they had a bit of a fight, but that was nothing else. There's no way to go on.

Not here there isn't, no...

I mean, you know, even all the discos and things like that have disappeared over the last ten years, 20 years, haven't they?

Yeah, absolutely.

The Last Night of the Tacklers Club

TK · 2000s · 0:56 · rec. found recording

A home-made VHS of the Tacklers Club's final evening: two hundred and fifty people in the room and a voice on the tape calling it a very sad night.

Play next: *The Nelson Railway Workers Club - the same kind of room, taken over by DIY punk.*
(Page 36)

What can I say, I mean, it's a sad moment in time.

It is a sad moment. It really is.

- *It's another era.*

IT'S A VERY SAD MOMENT!

We've had over 250 people in this club tonight, you wouldn't believe it looking at the video...

You wouldn't believe it!

But we have done.

I can't believe that I were behind bar serving...

And it's a very sad night.

And he's had to work hard this evening. And I'd just like to put that. And he's taking a worthwhile drink that he deserves... a Newky Brown ale, fair play to yeh... There you go son. Get it down you. Aaaaah.

Well, I did me best.

Hey. - Aye.

As long as I can have a copy for wife?

- Aye!

Now, then, he's here again.

- He's brought the water with eh?

If he thinks he's Phil Collins once more...

Who? Phil Coll... Is he coming? I thought it was Elvis night?

It's Elvis night!

At first it were Sunday Sport weren't it?

They're gonna cut a lot of this out. They'll probably keep the best bits... so we've no chance.

Fear Grows in Isolation

YH · Now · 2:59 · rec. RSJ

A diagnosis and a remedy arriving in the same breath: isolation makes people easy to turn against each other, and people are more similar than different.

Play next: *They Were In Their World And I Was In Mine* – isolation now, and a mother watching her children vanish into a scene. (Page 56)

Fear definitely grows in isolation when you're not given opportunities to connect with people. Yeah, definitely an issue and something that will counteract it would be more community events. There's a lot of things we can connect on. You know, just basic, maybe like cooking, outdoor events. Yeah. People usually once they are isolated, it's easy to turn people against each other and make people see amplified differences. But people are a lot more similar than they are different.

One of King James's concerns about Lancashire is that it was, in effect, lawless. There wasn't many big towns, it was little village communities. So it was essentially the Wild West. But obviously when an area has that reputation, it can be easy for the people in that community to sort of try and live up to it, which you shouldn't try and do! If your area has a bad reputation, counteract the reputation and prove that it's wrong.

So when you speak about kind of uplifting your community in a sense, building that positive image, how do you think people should go about that?

It's getting involved with the community, seeing who's actually out there. It's all right going on Facebook and saying, oh, these people are doing this, or this group is doing such, such thing. Right, get out in your community and find out for yourself. Don't take some headlines' word for it, you know. Meet the people, build those relationships and those connections and, yeah, make your community better.

- Make a change. Yeah.

Suppose that shows here how well kind of gathered together in that sense. But also the other bit I'm gonna, you know, discuss is running it back to, like, going out and having, you know, that I suppose identity of going out, like when I was like being, you know, supposed a threat in a sense, or having my guard up. So I have quite a rational fear of people in a sense, because I'm always uncertain of how people are going to behave or act. And I'm also a little agoraphobic because of it, that fear of leaving the house, in case summat happens. And it's, I suppose, building steps to getting over that fear and hopefully threats in a sense, so to speak, will not be present. But unfortunately they are. So a lot of people's fears do become quite realistic and rational too, so to speak.

What On Earth Happened to This Town? / Building from the Rubble

AHL · Now · 2:08 · rec. RSJ

The mills going and culture following them out, and taking a sledgehammer to a wall if there are no doors left to knock on.

Play next: *Mrs Hubbard Took Us to Tracks - no doors left to knock on, and a teacher who opened one. (Page 38)*

How the mighty fall. It just makes you wonder what on earth happens to this town. It's like all the mills moved out and everything else did. Everything else followed suit? Although, I guess the mills move out, there's less money coming into the town. There's less money to put on stuff like that. I keep saying to people, if there's no doors of opportunity to knock at, you've got to take a sledgehammer to a wall and put up your own lintel and open your own doors, because there's hardly anything around here.

Yeah. If you want a job doing right, you do it yourself. I mean, I'm not from Nelson. I'm from Burnley, but my mum and stepdad lived here when they were kids. My stepdad has lived here all his life. And you do hear stories about sort of the Electron record shop that Les had in the market. You know, Music Box around the corner, which is still going. It's like music seems to have been pushed out towards Burnley and Colne, but then there's hardly anything actually in Nelson now.

And so I'm sort of putting my foot down and saying, oh, bring it back, bring it back. What do you mean you don't have money? Bring it back. I'm sort of reclaiming something as a musician, as a young musician that's sort of still starting out, sort of building out my foundation and like, I've got. So Nelson is the sort of foundation that was great, but then sort of crumbled. Well, in the case of the Imp, burnt down. And I'm sort of seeing what I can bring up from the rubble and sort of reform and what I can sort of get popular again.

Yeah, I definitely say it's one of them small towns that people talk about in songs, and it's like, I left a small town and became a rock star. No, this is that small town. But instead of wanting to leave, I'm like, no, I want to bring people back.

Gaming Is My Nightlife

YH · Now · 1:59 · rec. RSJ

A nightlife that happens through a headset, and the arcade bar in Manchester she wishes existed here.

Play next: *The Jukebox in The Sunbeck - two machines people gathered round, sixty years apart. (Page 22)*

I'm into gaming, so I want to have arcades and stuff. Like, the only place I go into Manchester is this place called Pixel Bar, which is just basically they'll have these three consoles and you have a little booth for yourself for like an hour or two, and you just play with friends. So like in the mornings and afternoons, they'll have it for the kids and then in the evening they'll have the adults drink. There's also quiz nights and stuff like that. So that's kind of cool. It really is. Just nothing like the best parts of my night, which are basically sitting down online with friends and playing games.

But we always have that constant talk. If only we can hang out in real life and just play in an arcade or something. But that's all my nightlife is, just gaming with friends 'cause it's one of the best parts of the night or days. I feel like I'm the opposite to you. I'm more. I don't think of the history I think of, like what things have changed and stuff like that. Right? Because things have changed in a big way. A lot of things have moved to social media or things have moved towards this online kind of thing, and it's hard.

Yeah, but you go to places like Manchester and you see the liveliness and the people going there and it's just a big difference, right? It's still like this, but you can see that there is a difference and it's changed. There's a lot more DJs and stuff like that. So you never really hear about that stuff in Nelson. You don't hear about the DJ's, the music, you don't hear about the games, arcades, clubs or raves or anything like that. And Nelson, it's just from what I see, a lot of the development for Nelson tends to be that it used to be great and we want to go back to that, but then no one ever really talks about, well, what's changed in life with social media and everything like that.

Save the Last Dance

YH · Now · 1:59 · rec. RSJ

A poem about a father at the Star Cycling Club, and a room where nobody quite noticed a man drinking himself into trouble.

Play next: *Blueberries, Thursday Night '97 With DJ Jacko* – a poem about a room going quiet, and the same kind of room at full volume. (Page 57)

A poem called Save the Last Dance is sort of about my dad at the Star Cycling Club, and how it's sort of health deteriorated because of how much he'd drunk and really about how no one sort of seemed to notice really, so. But it's whether everyone was so trapped up in their own world about just obviously getting drunk, playing bingo, waiting for the meat raffle, like that kind of thing. So

Save the Last Dance

Why does life have to be so sickening?
Up and down and left and right
Death and what came before... life?
Some dizzying period of off and on; off and on again
Fast and Slow decline
He often looked back on the Polaroid poses
His dad's life of booze, gambling without a care and screwing around
Seemed so alien to him
He cut a bloated figure
A face scarred by late nights and crappy razors
Dancing to The Drifters or some other tune
But happy - why was he so happy?
Maybe that's why no-one told him to stop?
Told him to look in the mirror and reflect
Maybe they knew it was too late for that?
Or figured he'd change eventually?
It's what his mum feared the most
Not spiders or monsters
But that he would become him
Through gene, culture or idolisation
Through smoky back rooms and fluorescent arcades
Through Kelly's eye and the chug clunk click release of coins
Through the things that would make him come
And then want more
Always more...
Always more...
Always more.

Inside Blueberries, Burnt and Empty

DM · Now · 3:23 · rec. RSJ

Going into the arson-gutted Blueberries club with a torch: candles and salt on the floor, the optics above the bar melted, and the ghosts of people dancing.

Play next: Short Homers Pigeon Club – *a building burnt down, and a club that bought its own land. (Page 111)*

When I actually got in to have a look inside Blueberries, the old nightclub, when I found out that it had actually burnt down, it was arson in 1999. It was fascinating going back in there and just imagining... all the ghosts sort of came back. Remembering people dancing in there, and it just felt really strange. Your head sort of went back to dancing with the people there and the feeling, and it was just empty and strange. But it was fantastic to go in there and see what it was like.

Because I said to Paul, Paul Hartley, I said, "imagine if we can get in there. Imagine what it's like. Imagine if the bar's still there and it's burnt. Imagine if the night, if the dance floor is still there and that's all charred..." To cut a long story short, the council said "absolutely no, you can't get in there, 'cause we'd have to unboard it, then re-board it, and it would cost money." So, being given free range to photograph all around the actual shopping centre, before they closed it, I was walking around with this guy and he says, "oh, you can get in through the nightclub, inside the shopping centre."

So he took me down the steps and took me to the entrance, but there was no lights under anything. It was dark, so we'd just used our mobile phones for the light. And how exciting it was to actually see it, to actually be down there and all the memories. We walked in and the first entrance on the right was behind the bar, and there wasn't much evidence of fire there, but it was covered in smoke and soot. But it was so interesting. And then looking over into the nightclub and then we walked further through and shone our torches, and you could see the bar, and the optics were all burnt and it was melted and it was just amazing.

The bar itself – parts of it were burnt badly. Others weren't that bad, but it was just amazing to actually get in there and experience it and remember all the people and the dancing. And so I went in there about five times and got loads of photographs, and one time I went in, I took a torch in with me and put my camera on the tripod and taking photographs. I was controlling my camera with my phone. So behind me were these huge dark figures. It was me, of course, but it looked so scary and so and so weird. It was like, I don't know, controlling your demons. It was just amazing. So I love those photographs and I'd like to use some of those for the exhibition.

The Lord Nelson: A Town's Pub Closes

DM · Now · 4:52 · rec. RSJ

Talking a way into the empty pub the town is named after before it changed hands.

Play next: Monday Nights, Breakdancing - a pub shutting, and a precinct where people danced on the concrete. (Page 43)

It was incredible and sad. There was one guy in there and he was doing the building work, and I said to him, "is there any chance of coming in, having a look, getting some photographs before, the work you're doing?" So he said, "yeah," he says "there's only me here." He says, "I can't give you permission to come and have a look." But after talking to him for five minutes, he says, "yeah, come on then you can come and have a look." Brilliant. And one of the photographs that I had taken from the closing down party at the Lord Nelson was still above the bar.

So I said, "oh, look that's one of my photos up there" he says, "oh, did you take that?" So we got chatting about that, which was fantastic. The photos from that were just, I don't know if you came or not if you saw the exhibition we had. It was stunning. I loved it. Well, when they announced it was going to be closing, the pub. I mean, Nelson was named after the pub, which is crazy. There was no other town, so I believe, no other town in Britain that was named after the pub. So I just thought this is really important to go and photograph it.

So we were there more or less all day. We actually stopped, went out, had something to eat and then went back in. And as you can imagine, the photographs got more and more interesting as the day went on. On that day and night, there were so many people in there. I don't know if they were like me. In a way, you feel a bit of a hypocrite because you didn't go in and you didn't support it. But because it was closing, I felt it was important to document it.

And yeah, the landlady, she was visibly upset that they were closing down. And it was actually a few days later when the pubs, when the pub actually closed. And I did go in that night, the last night and I got a photograph and a video of them ringing the bell for the last orders, because I thought that was important as well. And she said to me, "I'm hoping to carry on." I'm hoping to reopen it eventually." And I thought, well, good luck to you, girl, you know. I admired her for it. Very strong lady, eh? I think you had to be, to be the landlady of the Lord Nelson. To control the people that were going in there as well. So that was that. And we had an amazing exhibition of the photographs and, then it got to, it was Christmas Day and she contacted me. It was about half passed ten at night, and I'd had a few. And she says. "Can you come and photograph it? We're actually reopening tomorrow on Boxing Day." Oh, I thought, okay, stop drinking, go home.

So I did, and I got there and they opened at half passed ten on Boxing Day morning and I got photographs of her opening the doors, went in photographed it, and they'd made a nice job of

sorting out the decor in there, the paint job and what have you, and it was all tidy. And the first punter in for a drink was John Cochrane, the local artist, a very well known local artist, which was fabulous. So I was talking to him for a while and he had a cider and yeah, that was great and it was nice to see and I wished her all the... got some photographs, wished her all the best and she did try really hard.

But recently it's permanently closed. So, I believe it's going to be flats. There was a rumour of it also being a cafe underneath, but I don't know. That remains to be seen. But then when they let me in again afterwards, to take photos or so when the builder was in there, I said to him, "is there any chance of having a look upstairs and getting photographs from upstairs?" seeing if there's like any of the original décor or whatever left? And he says, "no," he says, "there's only me, I can't." Anyway, next minute he locks all the doors and he took me upstairs and showed me round and, yeah, it was...

I will share the photographs with you. It was. It's a shame there was dead pigeons on the stairs as you walked up this wonderful staircase. Amazing wrought iron work on the staircase as well. You got upstairs and you could see the decor on the ceiling was still intact, and it was quite interesting. It was sort of gold and black and I got photographs of everything and all around, all the rooms.

A Town Waiting To Find Its Identity

DM · Now · 3:06 · rec. RSJ

Last nights as wakes: rooms rammed for a closing party by people who had not been in for years, and the question of where they all went afterwards.

Play next: It Gave Women a Freedom - *last nights as wakes, and a night that felt like freedom. (Page 98)*

I thought it was delightful because you could see the end of the night, the state of everybody but how much they had enjoyed the night. And then so many people for the last night of the Tacklers, it was absolutely rammed and so many people enjoying themselves and you think, well, where did they go? What did they do after that? Why did it close? Who knows? But yeah, just fascinating to watch things change, and of course time changes and things move on as well.

And things evolving to different ways of going out. But as for Nelson, it just feels quite sad at the moment, but hopefully... I just feel it's like it's waiting to find an identity is Nelson. It's almost like it's lost its identity and it's trying to find a new one, but I don't know what that will be. I think what really, really affected me was actually going to see, Going Down the Imp' - the presentation by Mike Smith and the Burnley filmmakers, because I sort of realised the full implications of Going Down the Imp of how people felt about it and what actually happened there.

I actually, I felt quite tearful watching it, but I felt happy that such things happened in Nelson. It was just mind blowing, really, to think about that happened in Nelson at a certain time. And now you look at it and there's nothing. But maybe I'm, I would really like the young people to see the Going Down the Imp to see what it was like, and maybe to obviously bring it forward and think maybe what it could be in the future. I don't know what that is. Obviously times change and it was of its time, but it's also very enlightening to show people that at one time, Nelson was this vibrant place that attracted all these top stars and now nothing basically.

So each decade I suppose, that people experienced, changed drastically from when I was going out, the Imp to I suppose to when my daughters went out, but they didn't go out in Nelson. There was, if anywhere they'd go out in Burnley. Because it just wasn't on offer in Nelson. So yeah, I think maybe we can learn from the past, but not in a way that we're gonna bring back what was. Maybe to just inspire us and think, yeah, it was like that. Why can't we bring it back in some way that we can be proud of again?

I think you're right. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Maybe it's being proud of your town.

Unlocking Spaces for Imagination

PH · Now · 3:58 · rec. RSJ

What it takes to make a room where somebody can get up and try something.

Play next: *They Were Part of the Fabric (The Stigma Came Later)* - making room for people, and the people who were already in the room. (Page 99)

I guess, I mean, I was lucky in the fact that because, like, I had two youth workers that did it, we also then, we had access to space. So like, this kind of came from like the Boys Brigade, as it were initially. And we had access to space like they has this, used to be called the Institute. It's like a little community cinema now, but basically we could go in there and do what we wanted, you know what I mean? So I mean, before music, I remember when we were like 11 or 12, I mean, like breakdancing had started. So we could, we got our own lino and we had a ghetto blaster and a cassette with just a set of tracks on it. And we used to, like, learn how to breakdance.

So we were lucky that space was created. And I guess for me, throughout my work, where I've ended up working with young people for the majority of my career, it's just always been like, how do you just create space for young people to do stuff? And that's one of the difficult things in terms of after dark now it's just there just isn't those spaces in the way that there were for people to be DIY or to have a go at learning something. I mean, it's a different, I mean, Colne still has this culture of like wanting to make music and there's some spaces, but it's not as accessible as it used to be.

And also it's almost like you have to be at a level before you then get an opportunity to get up on stage and do something. And I think the DIY thing has shifted the culture of bands now. And even for me, I'm playing again and I'm gigging again in places. I mean, you know, we haven't really played any gigs in Nelson because it's not really necessarily anywhere to play like there used to be. But even I'm in a covers band now, it's like people want to hear what they know and what they've heard.

It's harder going on. There's a culture, a younger culture where it's going on, and I have no idea where it's happening, but I am not seeing it in the venues like I used to do. Like even when I was in a band in my late 20s and really like trying to do it and playing Manchester and traveling around doing gigs. There was a group of other bands that we used to support each other. We used to like, you'd do your set, they did theirs, we'd swap round, would share the fee. But we're all doing our own music, few covers, but our own music and I just really just don't see that.

And I mean it's really sad because that's all we did see even on a jam night. I mean, you're just making summat up, you know. You're not trying to copy whatever. You're making stuff up. And I think I'm still kind of interested, like where that DIY spirit exists. How does it exist now? And I'd love to know it does exist, whether it's just not... I'm too old now to be connected to it, but also I'm still keen to like, I'm trying to create a space for young people to be able to do that.

And, you know, hopefully in the future, that's one thing and I'm hoping to have time to do is like it's create space where, yep, come and do something. We don't mind a few covers, but if you've got your own stuff coming, have a go and do it, you know, because I feel like there's a gap. Within an arts context and a context of where artists are the ones that are still doing the DIY, they will lock in space as they're creating opportunities for people to be imaginative and creative.

For us, we've developed this kind of, I don't know, this ethos of like, if there's an empty space, we'll try and get out of it and open it. And artists are doing that, have done for a number of years all over the country and all over the world. And we're just doing our version of that in Nelson. And it's really exciting to have an opportunity to be in the Arndale, to do a cinema, to take over a shop, to take over the old travel agents, what we're doing in 3B...

I mean, there is a spirit of that, of just having a space, whatever it looks like, allowing people to have a do it something, whatever the age they are that's really exciting. And I just hope there's more of that can happen and, and how that spirit can still exist.

Not Home, Not School

AK · Now · 3:28 · rec. RSJ

Young people who do not want a nightclub, just somewhere that is neither home nor school, and a youth-led exhibition opening as a night-time event.

Play next: *Becoming Nelson Asian Lads - somewhere to be, and belonging claimed in the present tense. (Page 89)*

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The Best Night of My Life and the Worst

SR · 90s · 5:19 · rec. MP

A wall of riot police arriving minutes after the crowd was recorded, and a record that charted from a night that ended in a raid.

Play next: The Beatles and the Blues -
a record made out of a crowd, and a crowd too loud to hear the band. (Page 11)

So we took the stuff down to the car and got it all in there. And literally whilst we were putting the kit in, we saw this wall of police just coming towards the event and we realised they're about to bust it. And we'd seen police at some of these events before, but clearly they'd been planning this for a long time and it was a major operation because they were in big, you know, hundreds, a lot of police with riot shield and police dogs. And we realised that our friends are inside and we don't know what's about to happen.

And the message they were trying to give was - we're unhappy about this. You're clearly not stopping when we ask you politely. So we're going to ask you the impolite way and bust it, literally beat people. It wasn't nice at all. And scare the hell out of these young people, me included. And as a result of that bust, we saw some quite horrible stuff. One going to all the details of that because it wasn't pleasant, but, they succeeded in scaring everyone. People didn't come back the week after. And it was pretty much the last party of its kind.

So you know what? I know it's not exactly the center of Blackburn, but it was near there, and it very much included as part of what we call the Blackburn raves. And we just happened to have recorded it. And, you know, people even for ages afterwards saying you can't have been so lucky as to record the last ever rave. And so we put it in our record and little did we know at the time, there's no way we could have predicted it was going to be as successful as it was.

The record exploded. It was over one weekend where we gave the test copies of the record to literally the 25 of the best DJs in the country. All of them reported back to us. That is a big record that you've created. It went down really well. It was the peak of the night, even though no one had heard it before. Everybody went crazy. And from then on that was around March, April, maybe April-ish of 1990. It just snowballed from then until, about August where literally the biggest labels in the country, and publishing companies were bidding over it.

And word just got around that. This record has got the actual raving, the sample from Nelson. And these records celebrating their the parties, and they ended up in the charts and even, you might remember Anthea Turner, she introduced the record on top of the pops and said, this next one, as far as I know a rave, has never been mentioned on top of the pops ever before and ever again, she said. This next record is dedicated to the Blackburn ravers' "Hardcore Uproar", which is the name of the the events and then, you know, they play the record and every week they played the record and Radio

One as well, because it had charted by this time, got to number 12 and it was in the charts for 12 weeks of the playing a slice of Nelson every week on national TV and radio.

And I didn't know that, local papers in the area were trying to contact us. I've seen the clips now, you know, the newspaper clippings. I find them quite amusing because they're claiming to trying to contact us. You often reading things people say stuff like newspapers say stuff like blah blah has been contacted, but they refused to comment. And it said that, well, we would have commented because, you know, publicity is I can't believe the fact that it turned into such a big deal. Yeah, they put it in quite a negative, portrayed it quite negatively, saying, together pop kids profit from illegal rave, something like that.

It's, you know, kind of trying to make it not as quite as a positive thing that we saw it as capturing a piece of history. And then it's in the charts and it's still, you know, it's incredible that it's still loved to this day. And that's why, for that reason, I call it the best night of my life and the worst night of my life at the same time. So, you know, I think about it and I just think, wow, it's incredible. We did. And obviously the whole thing wouldn't have happened the way it did if it wasn't a half decent record.

So we put an okay piece of music behind it and that crowd just sounds fantastic in the record and unfortunately ended the way that it did with the police bust and they successfully managed to put an end to the parties of, of those kinds. So that's kind of really, yeah, in a nutshell, what happened that evening.

The Death Of Culture and The Price of Property

CM · Now · 2:08 · rec. MP

The correlation between cheap property and culture – New York in the seventies, Manchester after Thatcher – and what that might mean for a town where houses still go for under £100,000.

Play next: *A Sea of Factory Chimneys – property prices now, and the chimneys that helped pay for everything then. (Page 16)*

I think like, the death of culture in general is really closely correlated with the price of property, you know. It's a really boring way to look at it. But like anywhere where anything exciting has ever been happening, the properties kind of been crashing around the same time. And like New York between the 70s and 80s, that period when all the punk and new wave stuff starts happening and all starts happening in art as well. But it's because you could actually live there for nothing and you could, you know, you could work part time and spend the rest of your time knocking around in a band, and you could rehearse for free in an abandoned building.

There are no abandoned buildings in New York anymore, you know. Yeah. And, Manchester was kind of like that in the 80s and into the 90s, like after it had been ravaged by the Thatcher years, you know. But it was a poor town and it meant that people were creative. And, I don't know, you could even work part time and concentrate on music now. I don't know where you could do it. Burnley might be the only place you could do it. Or Nelson. So maybe we'll have some kind of like, you know, whatever we might turn into the new Vienna or something like that.

Due to the fact that you can still get a house for under £100,000. People aren't as tied to cities as they once were because of technology. So maybe that will be the rebirth of these small towns where, I mean, they haven't really figured out what to do with the people who live in them yet. But as more and more people work online in different ways, maybe there'll be a rebirth to them because, you know, living is cheap. Definitely, innit? Nelson in particular. But if you were a 21 year old promoter thinking of putting some odd band on, you need some dingy hole where you can feel, you know, where somebody just says, oh yeah, just you keep the door. *Yeah, yeah.* We'll see what happens. You know, and that's how things get going, really.

Operation Alkali (The Sun Doesn't Shine Blue)

TD · 90s · 3:17 · rec. DM

The organiser of the Blackburn parties on the last one: 24 February 1990, on the roof of the offices at Lomeshaye, watching what he took for sunlight coming through the door.

Play next: *Art in An Empty Travel Agency* – an empty unit filled by ten thousand people, and an empty shop filled by a few. (Page 105)

Nelson, I'm afraid, was the last stand on the 24th of the second 1990. We were in there and it was again, it was a beautiful warehouse. It was a great warehouse actually and I remember it fondly. And this little dip down there, and I remember they had offices in the corner, you know, so you could put the decks and the DJ could go up there and we could get up there, you know, and you could overlook the crowd. Beautiful, beautiful thing you see actually.

Yeah. So I was on the roof of the offices they'd got in the corner over there which these beautiful warehouses overlooking, you know, the sea of bodies all beating and moving as one, a beautiful, a beautiful sight to behold. And then. And then... Oh, my God, what happened then? Oh, I remember seeing the roller shutter door opened. I didn't know at the time what was going on. I kept saying to people "close the door, just close it. You don't need it open. Just close the door. You know, it's a bit cold. February. Keep the doors shut."

And then again, the music's going, beautiful sight. There was a band there, they're quite famous now. They came to record the sound for their record, which actually is a million-seller now. They had recorded the crowd sound live and just as they recorded it I've seen this... ah, I think somebody put something in my tea, I don't know, but you know, I was seeing things. And it was a sea, beautiful blue wave coming in. The sun was shining and I thought the sun doesn't shine blue. There's something, something, you know, something clicked in my brain deep down, slowly but surely.

And I thought I realised it was police in riot helmets. Hundreds of them storming the building. So, I've jumped off the office. And went to turn to me friend, who was a great motivator for everybody and a huge, huge part of it, to say "what's going on?" But he's already gone. He's left the premises, he's seen it coming.

And I just got outta there. And within seconds they were on the roof of the offices in the Nelson building and thrashed everybody, smashed up the equipment and beat up anybody brutally that was up there. And they laid into other people just to cause panic.

And they battered a lot of people, young girls included, with truncheons, heads bust open and stuff like that and chased everybody out the building. I remember coming up the building and looked up and I was like, I don't know, it seemed like hundreds, but it was probably only about 20 or 30

horseback as well, and maybe 100 police, right? And they really laid into everybody. They were sending a big, strong message, you know, "don't come back."

The thing with the mobile phones, we were good, glad we didn't have them at the time because word of mouth spreads better and it's more trustworthy and hear it from a voice and you know than a Facebook social media crap post.

But because we didn't have phones then so people had left the event early, they seen what was round the corner. They had like two portacabins set up for Operation Alkali. You know, alkali. Do you know alkali neutralises acid? All right. So the sense of humour, they'd a sense of humour. So it was called Operation Alkali. And they were set up by about 500 metres down the road behind another building in these portacabins. So it was well planned. It was well organised, but we never seen it coming. And basically that there, right there in the Lancashire town of Nelson was where the Blackburn Hardcore Uproar parties ended as a collective. So most of them by that stage were locked up or dead, some of them, you know.

The Band's First Gig (The Spirit of the Imp)

AHL · Now · 1:53 · rec. RSJ

Guitar lessons at a youth hub turning into a band, a donated drum kit, and a first gig at the 2026 Festival of Culture.

Play next: *The Mirror and the Fire - the answer, and the question it answers, across half a century. (Page 4)*

So I first came to the Yes Hub in 2023, and I got given the chance to start teaching guitar lessons. The guitar lessons were quite popular and I had one lad join me called Lucas. We became mates and then he kept coming to lessons. Then a few months later a lad called Max came and we were sort of doing one-to-one sessions with him and he, I think, had an idea of what he wanted to play on guitar, but didn't really know where to start playing. So it's been two years working with them guys, and then we got the drum kit donated and we said "oh it'd be great if we can get someone who plays drums."

And then lo and behold Zach turned up. So I started doing some one-to-one sessions with Zach just to get him used to playing because he was teaching himself and I'm not a drummer. So I was sort of saying, "okay, these are the songs that I'd like you to look at. If you could go away and teach yourself how to play the drums for them and then come in next week and we'll go through them." And then he'd come back the next week and he were playing it, and I'm like, "mate, you're good," you know?

So after a few weeks I said to him. "Would you like to come down for a Friday? And you know, you can meet the other two lads and we can start jamming as a band." And yeah, the rest is history. So the band has been formed for about two months, three months at this point. And yeah, because I'm managing the B stage at the Festival of Culture. I've said to the lads, "if you want a set on that stage, it's yours."

