

T.H.S. "Can you remember any of the bands' names?"

M.R. "Yeh, there was Solstice (featuring Geoff Wilde), Orpheus (featuring Geoff Hill who later recorded solo for Chiswick Records), there was Black Cat Bone (who later became Legend), Five-Year Shoes (who became Billy Moon), Berlin Airlift (featuring me), Polsker, Free Speech, Blue Eyed Toad and Iron Maiden (no relation)."

T.H.S. "Would you say there was a Bolton scene then?"

M.R. "Oh there was, but there never seemed to be any strong contenders who seemed like they were going to break out of it, it was a very insular thing."

T.H.S. "Were there any local music magazines then?"

M.R. "Not really, the only thing I can remember was a thing called 'The Bolton Alternative Press' which used to follow the local music scene."

T.H.S. "Which was like?"

M.R. "Well there was a feeling of comradeship, everybody borrowing off everybody else. You must also remember the only music that seemed to mean anything at that time was heavy rock, so anybody under 25 really didn't get a fair chance, I remember the band I was in had a really rough time because we were only youngsters in comparison. Punk came and flushed that mentality away, giving anyone the chance to have a go."

T.H.S. "Looking back, would it have been easier for any of these bands to succeed had they lived nearer, say, London?"

M.R. "Possibly, although it didn't seem so at the time. Most of those bands were really naff! And most of the stuff they played were cover versions (especially Sabbath), but if there had been a band good enough, that band could have made it. I honestly don't feel that it's quite as important now to be based in a city, although it does help."

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T.H.S. "Do you feel that stations like Piccadilly Radio have helped enough to promote local music?"

M.R. "I think it's done more than a lot of people realise. The station gives me a virtual free hand on my show, and even though I will not air anything I don't personally like, without shows like 'Transmission' and 'Cures for Insomnia', things would be a lot worse."

In fact, we are shortly starting to do sessions again. Not like John Peel does, we plan to record the bands live here in Manchester, possibly at The Gallery, and put out the results on my show over a period of weeks. This doesn't mean that it's restricted to Manchester bands, all tapes sent to us will be listened to, and any we like, we'll book for a session. They will then get a gig at the M.U. rate and we'll get the tape."

FOOTNOTE: Seems like a good idea methinks, with perhaps just one small drawback. Mark Radcliffe's taste in musical values could be described as "new wave", which leaves many up and coming Heavy Metal merchants in the lurch once again. Still, the world is far from perfect, and if it's all kinds of demo tapes he wants, then perhaps that's just what he'll get. I only hope that when he's dragging his tortured lugholes through them, he recalls his own long hair and leathered past, because even if hard rock failed to give him the international stardom he dreamed of, we know for a fact there are many "heavy bands" who don't intend to give up quite so easily (Hello Demetrius, Deadly Embrace, and Wolfpack!)

BIRO SMYTHE.

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