

ROY WELLS' COLLAGE OF MUSIC

Occasional Newts Letter - Vol.1 No.9 April 2013

Extra large issue - packed with goodness, and introducing for the first time, the use of the first person plural "We!" www.myspace.com/rwcmstevebarbe

TINGLE FACTORY NEWS...

www.myspace.com/tinglefactory

and follow Steve on Facebook



...with "Toad" screening at Tight Shorts Film Festival

www.tightshortsclub.com

All kinds of shorts feature at this monthly event at **Wenlock and Essex**, but only a maximum of one pop video per month. Tingle Factory were therefore pleased to have "**Toad in a Hole - The Pop Video**" selected for November 2012, along with short films of other genres. There is no doubt that the sheer variety of shorts worn in Steve's video helped win its selection. www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7Upt2Sdg54

Important message from the editor

I've hit a quiet spell again work-wise. There was a bit of congenial networking last night at my local TRA, and today at a very pleasant coffee morning with buns AND macaroons. It's at times like this I start to take on the tones of Alan Bennett. I vow to stop this sort of thing forthwith, or even sooner.

I've also started repeating myself. I've also started repeating myself. Did I mention I had macaroons?

Live Music



Steve was hired to play "Tingle Factory" material and covers at **Southwark Arts Conference 2012** in December, organised by [Southwark Arts Forum](#), at **47/49 Tanner Street**.



(Photo by Liz Gorman)



Photo by Julia Edgington (pictured below with Steve)



He also took the mic. again at **The Cock and Bull** in Guernsey, and at [The Star](#) in Dorking. This latter appearance coincided with **Julia Edgington's** stunning art exhibition at that venue.



Emily with "Pink" by Julia Edgington

Log in to Facebook first and see more of her art by clicking www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151638118824180.1073741829.717839179&type=1&l=500f90a621

(or copy this link into your browser.)

A toast to



with jam

(and other old preserves)



Photo by Pete Newland

Many will remember "Slice" from Reigate circa 1981, who feature, with Steve singing, on the **Rockworks** album. Please see previous Newsletter <http://www.scribd.com/doc/102922381>

Members, including Steve, now re-unite regularly for jams at [The Jolly Farmers](#) pub in Purley, Surrey. At these "Jolly Jams" they have performed some of the old Slice repertoire, plus other fruity numbers, of the kind offered by Jimi Hendrix and Deep Purple, while enjoying a little light refreshment. The bass player Andy Bushby and guitarist Ed Holden had re-connected with Steve after 30 years, after finding his "Toad" video on youtube. They also provided him with copies of that "**Rockworks**" album, which he had heard so much about, but never seen. Steve then had a corking time, hawking the album around Dorking, getting it on the playlist at "**Vinyl Night**" at The Star, and raising money for "[FareShare](#)".



ALL
WE
ONCE
WERE...



Photo by Julia Edgington

Another fine old preserve is included on the double CD compilation "All we once were" by another collaborator from around that time - Marcus Armstrong. The track is Pranayama (Breath of Life) by Ara, with Steve on lead vocal and flute, and Marcus on keyboards.

LETSSwing <http://www.myspace.com/letsswingband>

MAKE WAY! I'M A MUSIC PROVIDER FOR THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SECTOR!

99% of LETSSwing concerts are for elderly people, typically through [Music in Hospitals](#). Residents are occasionally bemused at first when this odd looking band invade their sitting room, but these musicians proceed to put the residents at ease by playing familiar music. The group can tell they've made a difference, when an audience which started out withdrawn, ends up dancing, hand-jiving, conducting, laughing, singing and playing along. "Better than any pill" was how one resident at **Heathland Court Care Centre**, Wimbledon, in February described the experience.

Reminiscence is often one objective. So LETSSwing ring those bells and let melodies bring memories, while trying (but not too hard) to go easy with the cheesy. "So well thought out and cleverly put together" was how one client described a LETSSwing programme. While some of the repertoire is pre-1950s, they usually also play some rock 'n' roll and later material, and often include "**Crocodile Gonzales**". This is a two-song medley of the bands own devising, melding Elton John's Crocodile Rock with Pat Boone's Speedy Gonzales " (they have a similar "naa naa naa.." chorus.) The band wear sombreros for this, just in case the idea is not quite naff enough already. The words of "Croc Rock" seem very appropriate though, as they are *about* musical reminiscences.



Photo by
Julia Edgington

Since the previous Newtsletter last August the group have done about 50 such gigs. Many of these were single concerts, but they are often asked back. LETSwing enjoy this mix of adventure and familiarity.

Variety

It's refreshing occasionally to have gigs for a more mixed age range, where the music selection can be even broader. At Waterloo Green Winter Fair, and also Red Cross Garden Christmas Fayre (both through [Bankside Open Spaces Trust](#) - BOST) kids and grown-ups alike were having a great time despite chilly conditions.

Mark Treasure (left) with Steve



Images
thanks
to
BOST

The beautifully located **Chipstead Lake Home** in Sevenoaks (for disabled adults of mixed ages) with Hanna and LETSwing bassist Mark Treasure, was another example. Here they played a few songs they hardly ever get to perform otherwise, such as Rolling Stones "Get Off my Cloud."

Reggae featured heavily, on request, on a return to the **Park Royal Centre for Mental Health**, with Hanna and LETSwing sax player **Hugh Harris**. This was a New Year's gig in late February in the **Tamarind Centre**. The group felt that the theme of the event also gave them license to include a couple of Xmas songs, however untimely.

The venue provided Valentine Day cup cakes, just to save any confusion, and patients linked arms for Auld Lang Syne at the end.

(The song "Let it Snow" also featured later on in gigs throughout March, never sounding anachronistic that icy month.)

Another event for all ages was the annual "Salifest" last September, in aid of [Alanouwoy Salifou Sylla](#). This is the charity set up and run by guitarist and LETSwing member **Hanna Heissenbutell**. All four core LETSwingers got together for this one, along with a stunning line up of other musicians.



Hanna's "mulled wine morning", with friends and neighbours around at her home in December, was another gig for all four players, who don't often get the chance to all play together.

Flexing and breaking

A degree of flexibility, in terms of both repertoire and line-up, has been useful over the years. When Steve appears as a solo musician, he usually self-accompanies on guitar. However this guitar inconveniently suffered a sudden reduction in size, just before the start of a second solo concert on one day in Southampton. The technical explanation for this was that the end with the twiddly bits had fallen off. He had intelligently left the guitar leaning in a corridor against a movable trolley, which moved. The guitar toppled over, and lost an essential part of itself (i.e. the "head stock").



So the patients were spared his rudimentary guitar playing, as he had to sing unaccompanied, except by other voices on the ward. Thanks to staff, volunteers and patients for rallying round and making the best of what was nearly a complete disaster of a gig (but instead was rated by staff/volunteers as in the top ten!). The shrinkage of the instrument helped it to fit neatly into the boot of the car, when the kind volunteer Garry at **Southampton General Hospital** returned Steve to the train station. It was later fixed by occasional guest [Ross Anderson](#), who, conveniently, is also a skilled instrument repairer.

At least Steve had a voice to fall back on for that occasion. But on the opening of a new Mental Health Unit at **Northwick Park Hospital** in December - he found he had lost most of his range, and sang right down in his boots. He soon concluded though that boots are no use for amplifying the voice, and vowed to try using a microphone next time. He was also in strange voice in October at **Kingsclear, Camberley**. He woke up very hoarse, and thought his normal voice would return to him by 2.30pm for the gig, but he was left instead with the one of a cow.

The audience looked confused at first by the odd sound, until they realised that it was a man trying to sing. And still on he went, never admitting defeat. Residents even clapped at the end of songs, but perhaps they were applauding the fact that the noise had stopped.

The bits where he played flute sounded ok, but the best thing about these interludes were that they were moments of blessed respite from the painful mooing.

In all though, the audience endured the concert with true British stoicism. Luckily Mark was on hand at this one to take lead voice for some of the songs on both of those occasions.

Near and far

That was in Surrey, but occasionally LETWing play at care centres in their own 'hood. For example Steve was solo at **Southwark Healthy Ageing Cafe** run by **Alzheimer's Society** near Millwall in March.

He was prepared for a tough crowd given the area's reputation, but this turned out to be undeserved, and they recognised him as a home-boy and fed him egg sandwiches.



For the last few years the band haven't been getting the tours they used to enjoy (presumably at least partly down to tighter budgets). These have included jolly jaunts to the north of England as well as Jersey. However, following a recent gig Steve did at **Harts House** in Essex with guests Chris Reeds (drums) and Ross (guitar), they did at least take the Woolwich Ferry on the way back. There were no cabins available, but it did feel like the nearest thing the band had had that summer to being together on a cruise.

LETSwing were also on the South coast on a few occasions, and Steve had a few solo engagements way out of town, including two up in Birmingham (one of these at **Acorns Children's Hospice**) and one at **Willen Hospice** by the lake. This latter visit bought reminiscences for the singer himself, for this area was where he made two of the "Toad Videos". It is also home of **The Well**, where he has played at numerous events with friends. He also recorded much of his CD "**Roy Wells' Collage of Music**" there, and launched it with old time colleague **Marcus Armstrong**. He popped in to say hello, and got lost on the way back. He wandered, carrying his baggage up and down the Red-Way, through woods and along canal paths in his evening-wear, with the sole of his shoe flapping.

The Well at Willen where much of "Toad" was filmed



He's played in so many different and the same places over the many years, that he's not sometime always sure when he first arrives on the previous occasion, whether or not he's been there before or since. It's quite disorientating, and he may end up one day not never leaving. This nearly not didn't happened, when he accidentally walked into wet cement, on the kitchen floor of one home undergoing ceiling refurbishment. He also sang in Bath. (Insert you own joke here.....)

Mental Health: Other song-based work which Steve has carried out solo in this sphere included the following.

- **Stroke Club and Over 60s Club** at [Time and Talents](#).
- **Mental Well-Being Marketplace Fair** at [Copleston Centre](#), through **Southwark Arts Forum**. Steve played where the buffet was (which suited him fine - easy pickings). This event was to inform mental health service users of the various ways in which they could spend their personal budgets (which can - and has - included hiring Steve as a musician where it can be shown to enhance well-being).
- **A World Mental Health Day** spot at [Cooltan Arts](#) celebration BBQ.
www.linksouthwark.org

(See site for Cooltan's new premises. They admirably stuck it out through all those years in a cold draughty warehouse, with one outside portaloo. Steve has played gigs and ran many a drum workshop there - in the warehouse, not the portaloo. Now they must feel like they're lording it in a space just over the Walworth Road.)

- **Regular monthlies**. Steve regards himself as lucky to still be getting these so late in his career. We refer to sessions for housing charities [Three C's](#) and [ThamesReach](#). Residents request songs (some of which he can actually play) and they sometimes sing along, dance and play percussion.
- **Regular weekly** sessions at a drug detox centre run by [Equinox](#). These sometimes function as taster sessions for people who have seldom engaged actively in music before. At other times these sessions are a chance for more experienced musicians to demonstrate their skills, or re-awaken an enthusiasm which hopefully they will maintain after leaving the centre.

Community Scrapbands (CS)

<http://www.myspace.com/communityscrapbands>



The Bridge in Ore August 2012

Following **Danson** in the rain (last issue) the weather was a bit kinder for three engagements down on the Sussex coast, again through **Parrabbola**. This included a whole day at **Eight Foot Square** in Hastings, where the public were invited to come and make some artful noise, or at least some noise, bashing junk. Children also made some awesome sounds in Ore.

Then it was back home for a session in the Town Square for **Peckham Peace**

Festival with **Peckham Space**. There was also a whole day of junk percussion workshops at **Langford Primary School** in Fulham.

Early Years work

It was good for Steve to give his leaves an airing. These are of various shapes and autumn colours, cut out from material from broken umbrellas, and are used for musical interaction activity. Eg. we sing

...we throw the leaves in the air

while we all throw the leaves in the air. (It's all very highly technical, and we wouldn't really expect you to understand.) These leaves were blown around at children's birthday parties. One of these was at **Vauxhall City Farm**. A buffet with vegetarian options was provided, so the children and animals were spared.

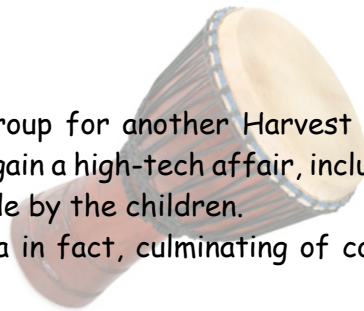
Steve was also able to give his voice a rest for a job accompanying **Young and Smart Nursery's** nativity play with guitar, through **Theatre Tots**. Steve emerged straight after in a red cloak and white beard, bearing gifts.

Monthly sessions continued at [Tiddlers](#). Steve arrived for the first one in Spring determined to make his little light shine, despite a previous late night at Jolly Jam. With an optimistic theme of "Sunshine", he included "Incy Wincy Spider", "Here Comes the Sun", "Sun Arise", "I Can Sing a Rainbow", "You are my Sunshine", and "This Little Light of Mine".

Drumming

Steve ran the drumming group for another Harvest at [Christchurch](#), Clapham. This service was again a high-tech affair, including a slide show about bees, and a video made by the children.

A multi-media extravaganza in fact, culminating of course, with lunch (the medium of food).



Laurie's Valentine Birthday Party at Museum Mansions

After squeezing his way through the crowded hallway one last time to get his ...th and final glass of wine, he decided he would join the rowdy throng in the music room, and rock the party goers' socks off with some frantic djembe playing. In hindsight he realises that he should have asked permission from the drum's guardian, but hey, this was Bloomsbury!

Joy of Sound



Eventpictures by Ana Proud, Fiona Allison, Francesca Pratt, Giulia Pizzi, Pragya Kumar

Steve joined a participatory open music session in Peckham Town Square, with [Joy of Sound](#) at [Boundless Arts Festival](#). He met up with some old friends and colleagues from the community music field.

The square has seen all sorts by now, with the number of arts events going on in recent years, which surely can only be a good thing if it brings people together to interact.

Community Choirs

[John Donne Community Choir \(JDCC\)](#). Steve sang again with JDCC led by **Alice Grant**, for a staff exchange event at the school where the choir is based. **Caribbean Community Choir (CCC)** also performed with Steve at **Crofton Park Library**, and also at a cute and cuddly little place known as the **Financial Services Authority (FSA)** in Canary Wharf. Both events were part of **Black History Month**. We don't know if the FSA was a kind of QUANGO. Really we don't mind, we just like saying "QUANGO". But it was definitely a watchdog (which is another good word) and that's about all we know about the world of finance. We were led by **Jacqueline Grant** in our repertoire of Caribbean folk songs, including one appropriately entitled "Cyan Fine' no Money-o". We've never mentioned before that Steve is black have we? That's because it SHOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE!

Out and About

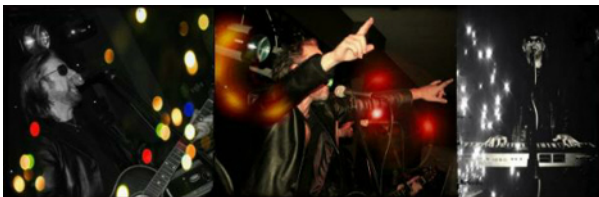
Steve is always attending network and professional development events. Occasionally he has extra responsibilities at these, such as repping for [HourBank](#) at a local business network meeting at **Gardens Cafe**, and also at **Mental Well-Being Marketplace**, this one at [The Dragon Cafe](#).

He was also asked to write an article for "Sounding Board" on his experiences of [music education expo](#).



"Spending Time, Building Community"

"Bjorn to be Wild"



The [Bootleg BeeGees](#) appeared in Farnborough for an "Abba Night Fever" (tribute gig) at **The Village Hotel**. First Steve was "Barry Gibb", and then he transformed himself magically by the power of costume and backing CD, to Björn, where his big moment was to sing "Does your Mother Know?" (Well she did 'cos he had told her).

As a teenager and young rocker he had never rated ABBA. In retrospect this was probably an opinion formed more by testosterone than by purely musical appreciation. They were, after all, just a TOUCH camp weren't they? Now he realises that's no basis for forming an opinion. OK, they were pure pop, but they were perfect, and some of their songs really rock. Check out the bridge 37 secs in to "Voulez Vous" and imagine it by Black Sabbath fronted by Dio.

The following morning Steve was sifting through the carnage and rubble of the blitzed out ballroom for uneaten Xmas puddings, gold rings, false teeth and the like, when he came upon a very sinister object indeed - an unexploded party popper! (Da Duh Daaaa!) Luckily, being that he was in Farnborough, a bomb-disposal squad was on hand nearby to defuse the situation.

The whole extravaganza was repeated two days later in Hull, where Barry again just about managed stayin' alive, despite feeling like crap.



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