

# ROY WELLS' COLLAGE OF MUSIC

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email: [rwcmsvebarbe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rwcmsvebarbe@yahoo.co.uk) website: [www.roywellscollageofmusic.org](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org)

## Tingle Factory News

Steve's own original music and videos - [www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/tf.html](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/tf.html)



Photo courtesy of Coralie Moynihan

Steve back in **THE VAULT**

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# Tingle Factory (TF)

Presenting Steve's original music....

[www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/tf.html](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/tf.html)



- Steve played two outdoor *Music Moments* (sponsored by Jersey Telecom and hosted by Black Vanilla) in Guernsey's High Street of St. Peter Port. Some of it apparently popped up live on Twitter via *Periscope TV*. Other bits were snapped, filmed and posted on the JT Facebook page. (See pics.)



Steve was completely un-amplified, (probably the only artist on the event to be so),

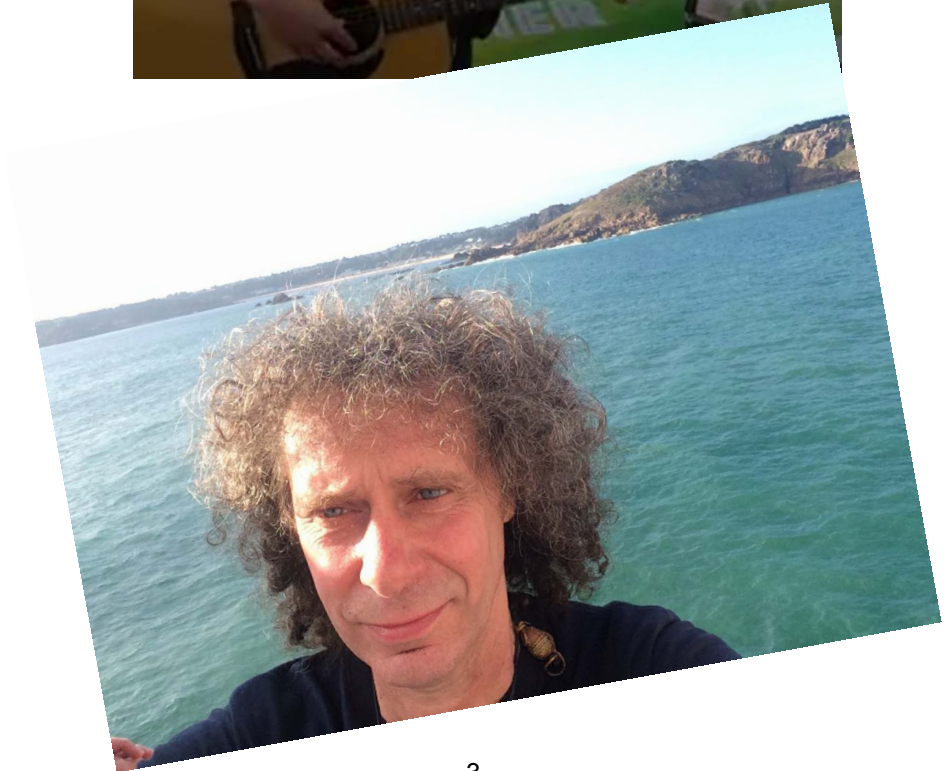
"...but my Sound of Silence could clearly be heard reverberating down the narrow street of cobbled stones" Steve insists.

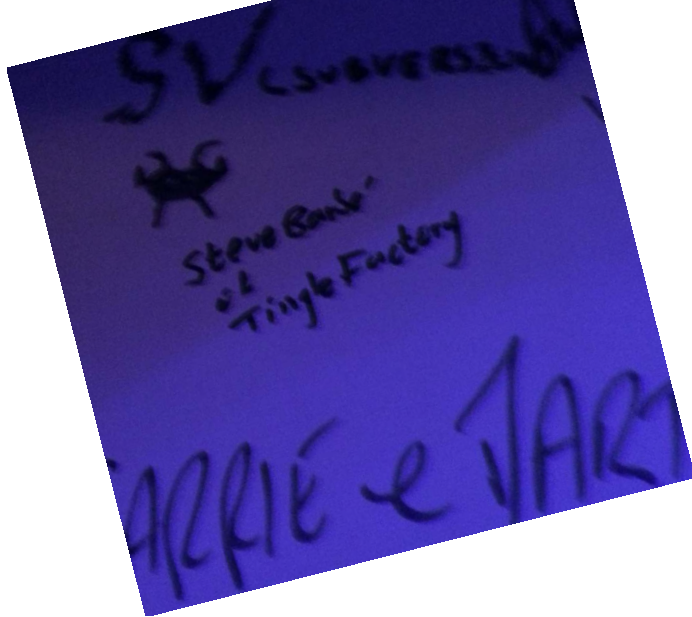
"Although it's difficult to be musically sophisticated or subtle in such conditions, playing without amplification gets me wired, which seems to connect with people on the street. Pedestrians stopped and chatted between songs, and a few kids smiled and got jiggy with the beat."



Photos courtesy of JT

Photo courtesy of JT





- Also in Guernsey, Steve returned to play at the *Cock and Bull*, and also to *The Vault* to play an extended open mic spot (see front page) He was asked to add his tag/monica on The Vault's "*Wall of Fame*", near the toilets. "Not wishing to take up too much space I kept my writing small." Steve explains. With that same sense of modesty he then photographed it and posted it on Facebook. "I went viral, but I'm feeling better now" Steve assures us.

- Back in London Steve was engaged to host the *Bonnington Centre's Friday Night Music Club* in Vauxhall for an evening of acoustic open mics, kicked off and rounded off by Steve's own offerings including original material.

- The big gig of one particular week was for the *Clean and Green* event at Steve's local Tenants Hall. Some of this was streamed live, and you can catch up with it here

[www.facebook.com/CossallTenantsAndResidentsAssociation/videos/1413144578765983/](http://www.facebook.com/CossallTenantsAndResidentsAssociation/videos/1413144578765983/)

where Steve is playing one of his own songs. Local residents turned up to take part in an art activity, enjoy snacks and a BBQ, plus help power-clean some of the external brickwork as the photo shows. "The best gigs always include an element of external brickwork cleaning" Steve observed.



**Rock Night: Friday 24th Feb  
At the Bonnington Centre**

ADMISSION FREE!  
Friday 24th Feb 8.30 to 11pm

**The Weeping Tigers**

A Club Night Special this Friday with  
the Weeping Tigers featuring sets and  
various of classic rock numbers

The Bonnington Centre,  
11, Vauxhall Grove,  
London SW8 1TD  
[www.bonningtoncentre.org.uk](http://www.bonningtoncentre.org.uk)

5 minutes walk from Vauxhall  
Tube / Bus / Bar Terminals  
Beer, wine & soft drinks  
available for BYOB  
**ADMISSION FREE**

Classic Rock, Soul, Baroque  
& Jazz influenced Bands



Photo courtesy of Tomoko

This band, with Steve on mic., go "boo hoo grrrr!" with a lot of original rock [www.soundcloud.com/user-677346983](http://www.soundcloud.com/user-677346983) between the covers. At his stage in life Steve feels it's vital to pull on tight jeans to show that he's still got his mojo. These prowling beasts played at The Bonnington Centre for another Friday night Music Club. The supportive audience were determined to prevent this species of classic hard rocker from going extinct.

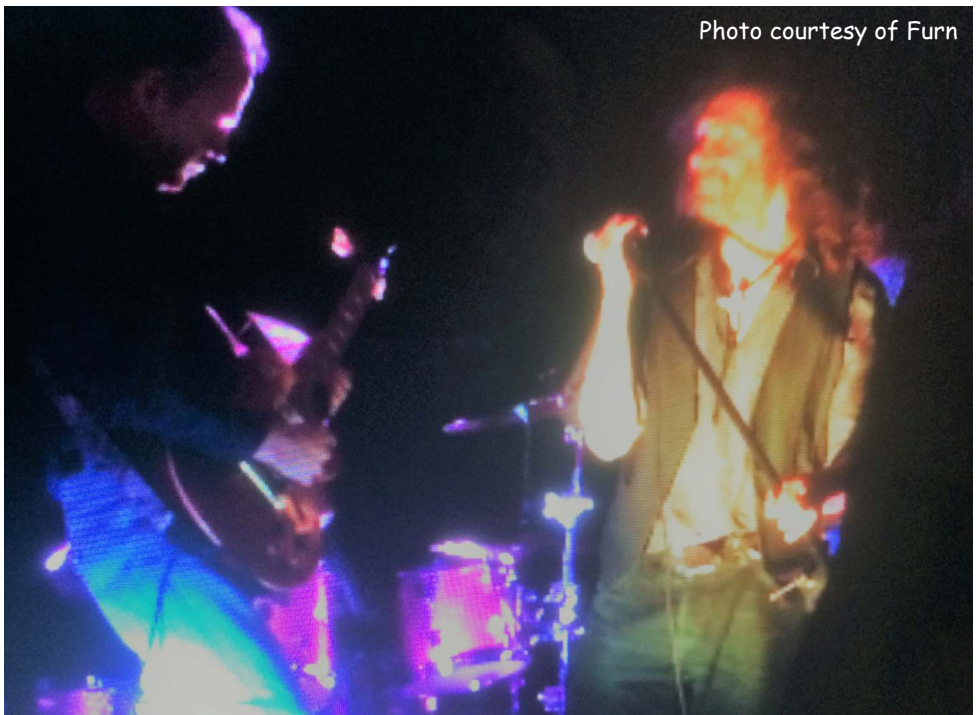


Photo courtesy of Furn

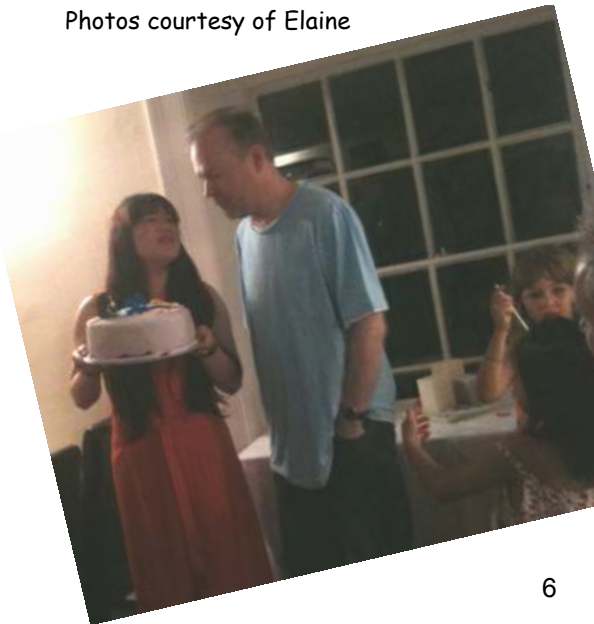
The Tigers also played a benefit Gig in aid of mental health charity *Avanti*, at *Mad Friday Music Festival* at *Tooting and Mitcham Football Club*, along with other acts such as *Birdog* and *Tru Blu Band*.



Photos courtesy of Avanti

The band also continued with their occasional appearances at the regular jams at *Jolly Farmers* in Purley. Another jolly came up in Eastbourne; a gig and a weekend to celebrate the birthday of *Furn* (represented on the cake), the wife of guitarist *Tiger Ed*. The band played their usual rock repertoire, plus other material including pop and jazz incorporating guests.

Photos courtesy of Elaine



The hotel, pictured below, is obviously one of these modern, featureless Travelodge type places, but it was nevertheless an adequate venue for a mini-break in and around Eastbourne .



Photo courtesy of Furn



There was an air-show the next day, with some pretty scary f\*\*\*-off military hardware. A pyrotechnic display rounded off the show, climaxing with the detonation of a small nuclear device which took out the pier along with a large portion of the town. We're lucky to have these pics, taken before all this carnage. Apart from that, the musicians had quite a relaxing time, away from the hurly burly of London life and conducive to quiet contemplation. "It's important to have some down time, which helps to get things in perspective, in a life otherwise packed with busy schedules" Steve says, and he recalls;



"It was during one particularly reflective hour, for example, that I came to the profound realisation that my right forearm is just the right length to reach from my elbow to my wrist. This enables me to carry out such tasks as eating watermelons and waving small pieces of lettuce around with relative ease. Nature is truly a mysterious and wondrous thing which we often take for granted."



# green candle dance company

Steve continued to provide music for movement sessions which this organisation provides for people living with dementia. This is the door entry button at one of the care-homes where they worked. "The button goes 'Boop', which is how "Bupa Homes" got their name" Steve informs us reliably.



Photo courtesy of Danielle Teale

He and the dance leaders planned the songs to use in advance, but as Steve reported;

"Often during a groove we find that there ain't no stopping us. So while the residents keep on dancing. I'll bring in other songs; more, more, more, bumper to bumper like some disco inferno on a love train to funky town. We sing we shout, we shake our bodies down to the ground, and then we have a nice cup of tea."

This funkydom once included a seated Morris Dance. The choreographer first gave out handkerchiefs for the participants to wave around, one of whom immediately blew her nose very loudly into hers. "It's important that residents feel free to express themselves artistically in this way" Steve maintains. During a hand jive activity, one elderly resident, famous for her Can Can kicks, decided to hand jive with her feet. She was often very animated by the music, and gave Steve stern instructions not to go off anywhere. "It was like the opposite of being told to piss off, and very gratifying" Steve said.

The participants and dance leaders were often so complimentary about the music that Steve's head was in danger of expanding to a size which was neither safe nor in proportion to the rest of him, despite his big hair.

"It's a good job I made the occasional gaff," Steve said, "just so that all those present were not completely overawed. Like when, during 'English Country Garden', instead of singing 'How many gentle flowers grow' I sang 'How jenny mental flowers grow..'"

Or the time he suffered a "horrific workplace injury", and experienced a "near death experience" as a result. (We're sorry if some people find this all a bit harrowing, but he insists on highlighting this particular danger, for the public good.) The "horrendous pump accident" happened when some heavy industrial machinery, designed for inflating a beach ball used in musical games, disintegrated in Steve's hand as he was using it,

"The resulting lacerating wound narrowly missed my *vistibulous inceritops*." Steve insists. "I very nearly died!"



We've spared you some of the more gruesome photos, but as these show, he was lucky enough to have the presence of mind to quickly grab his iPad, and photograph the hideous incident as it occurred, providing valuable evidence to support his compensation claim.

# Singing in the Community

## The National Citizenship Service (NCS) powered by The Challenge

This important aspect of Steve's work included three days of music leadership on a NCS Wave (that's a thing, a bit like the better known *Duke of Edinburgh Scheme*) in Surrey . This involved working with young people on Samba and songs in Guildford, which they then shared on two visits to a care home in Leatherhead and at a final showcase event at *Redhill Methodist Church*.

The suggested NCS repertoire was all vibrant Samba drumming, but some of the care home residents put their hands over their ears on the first visit! So the group switched to a song-based programme, accompanied by Steve's guitar, for the second visit, with only a morning to select and rehearse a programme of popular songs.

Steve was pleased that the young people had noticed the negative response from many residents, and that they were concerned about it enough to change track so readily.



## Other singing in the community included...

- Four street performing trips to Guernsey, playing in the town centre of St Peter Port. This official busking was mostly under license of the *Guernsey Arts Commission*, but some of this was through *Guernsey Town Centre Partnership* at the *Christmas Market*.

"My Easter themed chicken call resounded up and down the streets during renditions of Chic Chic Chicken!" Steve remembers proudly. "Three things have changed the nature of my Guernsey visits substantially. The first is my busking permit, the second is my ipad which enables me to keep on top of admin., social networking etc, while away, and the third is a shiny pelican which gets me into town for about 50p. Not a pelican.... a puffin.... I mean a Puffin Pass (a smart card for the bus)."

As well as busking there, he met up with some old musical friends, with whom he rehearsed, recorded, and discussed another re-union gig while spending his busking money on the local ale.



## Work through Music in Hospitals (MiH) [www.musicinhospitals.org.uk/](http://www.musicinhospitals.org.uk/)

Much of Steve's other song-based work is done through this organisation. Steve has been unusually busy with them lately playing gigs in care homes, hospitals, special schools and at events across southern England and up into the Midlands, totalling about 200 since the previous Newsletter in February 2016. [www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/RWCM-Newsletttervol2no2-WebVersion-MQ.pdf](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/RWCM-Newsletttervol2no2-WebVersion-MQ.pdf)

Much of this work is for people with dementia. Music often seems to draw them out of their own inner world. While Steve was getting ready to play at one particular care home, for example, one resident was evidently pre-occupied with her own repetitive and apparently obsessive task of cleaning her coffee table and talking to herself (or to an imaginary other). As soon as the music started her eyes lit up and she was in the room. This is the kind of reaction we would normally hope for after at least 30 mins. of music in these contexts. Such concerts Steve sometimes performed along with other members of the band LETSwing, plus occasional guest *Marcus Hill* on keyboards. [www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/letswing](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/letswing)

*We are sad to report though that **Ross Anderson**, another occasional LETSwing guest guitarist and very talented jazz musician, died since the last edition of this Newsletter. We are often reminded by the media of how tragic was the year 2016, in which many highly regarded performers left the world's stage. It is our opinion that Ross Anderson has rightfully joined that stellar role call. Ross was also a very skilled instrument repairer and was often hired by Steve to work on his guitar, which got constantly bashed about whilst travelling.*



As Steve often travelled on foot, whatever the weather, his guitar "gig bag" developed a certain on-the-road smell for a time, having soaked up a good bit of wet during successive hikes through rain and not drying out properly.

In Brentwood, for example, staff had bravely scheduled an event to happen in the garden, being that the gazebo, awning and patio umbrellas were all still up following a festive weekend. These various pieces of shelter overlapped to make quite a large covered area, save for a small gap in the middle, in which Steve "cleverly" left his guitar bag, just so that it could get another good drenching. Residents braved it out while sitting in their coats and blankets, and there was a slight World War One "in the trenches" vibe. The songs, though, were mostly from a later period and included "Singing in the Rain" (which the gardener danced to in no man's land beyond our shelter) and also "Great Balls of Fire" - which one resident suggested should have been "Great Balls of Wet".

They all enjoyed the afternoon, while keeping an eye on the large ornamental pirate ship a few yards away, pondering on whether or not it was large enough to take all of them in the event of the weather getting any worse.



While down in *Costa Del Hove* on a rainy day for another gig, it was £2.50 for a cup of Rosie Lee at a seafront cafe! "You avin' a larf! Well I s'pose it's the only place open along 'ere with such a spectaculaaar view!"

As many of these gigs were in care homes for Veterans, Steve thought it appropriate to include a march in the programme, in order to inject an air of pomp and pageantry. So he and LETSwing guitarist *Hanna Heissenbuettel* played a strident version of Teddy Bears' Picnic in the form of a military tattoo across the room. "I'm glad to report this as a success" remarked Steve. "This was despite us having been criticised in the past for inappropriately performing this same "childish" song to other groups of older people. Those levelling this criticism were evidently unaware of the repertoire for the 2017 Trooping the Colour in St. James' Park. (In case you're not sure, this is an event a bit like Glastonbury). I have it on good authority that just before the mighty Red Arrows display, the Queen's own troops flexed their military muscles, parading in their bear skins to this same tune, performed by the Massed Bands, along with other ceremonial marches such as I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside, the Monty Python theme tune and Nellie the Elephant. This stately occasion, to mark the Queen's birthday, was rounded off with Bobo the clown making balloon animals."

On other occasions Steve tried to conjure up images of warmer climes, and he sang calypsos in a vaguely Caribbean accent on four visits to an *African/ Caribbean Day Centre* in the Midlands . He explains. "Luckily for me the attendees seem to find my Jafaikin accent acceptable (if amusing). I explained that I felt I could not sing calypso and other Caribbean styles in any other way. Similarly when I sing American tunes I do them in a faux American accent, London songs are in a dodgy cockney accent and so on. It's not so much that I try and do the accents; it's more that I find it hard not to. I even used to sing Rolf Harris songs in a faux Australian accent, but not recently." Anyway, the regular visitors and staff make Steve feel very welcome, and do him the honour of singing along and dancing, especially to "Hot Hot Hot" which rocked.

Steve travels a lot on public transport, which was often "hot hot hot" indeed through the summer. On buses there's often plenty of room upstairs, which Steve takes advantage of. "It's often worse on the Underground" Steve says. "Part of the problem is that the stairs are far too difficult to find on trains." Steve says. "If they could only show the public how to get to the upper deck I'm sure this would relieve much of the problem."



He played a jolly St Patrick's Day gig in a Bupa care home in Battersea.

"Straight after, we were all served with a deliciously dark, bitter and foaming liquid which had a transformative effect. But I managed to get through the day without any Irish stereotyping at all at all."

Steve hoped all his friends had a great time over both Spring holidays, whatever their particular observance, or none. We may have been under the intoxicating influence of the pagan goddess of Easter.





Something drove Steve to decorate this beautiful bonnet. The pride on his little face says it all, and he wore it for his seasonal renditions of Easter Parade (which was the inspiration for the bonnet) plus a "Chic Chic Chicken/Hey Little Hen" medley.

Still on birds, Steve met a parrot at a sheltered house in Southsea. This was a banged up for life parrot, doubtless convicted for accessory to piracy. No parole for this parrot, but at least he has the odd visitor from outside, such as Steve, hired on a freelance basis to sing to him some old sea shanties. There were also seven human ex navy personal present, on permanent placement to keep an eye on him and to take joint responsibility for the safety of visitors. These formed Steve's backing group on this particular visit.

During all this the parrot thus recalled the raging ocean and provided special effects, such as ringing his bell, whistling along and splashing the water from his bowl all over the place.



It is the moments that often become all important. On another occasion an elderly resident made fine accompanying percussive sounds with her dentures.

People often seem to be "in the zone", for example by making every effort to remember all they can of the words of a song to keep up in real time.

The physical exercise is important to. It can be surprising what energy some residents and patients seem to get from music, and they'll sing along and dance to a wide range of songs. One even got a bit of extra exercise in the bargain, with successive (and mostly successful) attempts to grab at Steve's hind quarters as he was playing.

"So while I was intent on delivering my programme to those around me, with such classics as Return to Sender, she had her own intents and succeeded several times in nipping round the back to make unsolicited deliveries by hand" Steve said. "The nurses weren't much use either. They mainly pi...d themselves laughing, and one even videoed it. I'm now seeking counselling. It'll be a long hard road but I'm determined to get to the other side of this."

The music is often good for staff and visitors too. One visitor became emotional when I met her particular musical request, the Birdy Song, which Steve performed with whistling and kazoo, resulting in her both laughing and crying. Steve sensed that the irony of being moved to tears by this particularly daft music was not lost on her, but it no doubt connected with fond memories of fun times spent with her elderly relative whose bedside she was at.

Some staff get dancing too, while others got on with routine tasks. "I've just put some of that temporary toilet roll in the toilets" Steve heard one nurse say. Up until that point he had been living with the assumption that all toilet roll was in fact temporary. "I'll now be on the look out for something called "permanent toilet roll" with the intention of avoiding it at all costs as it sounds very wrong" Steve said. "...or maybe I misheard and the nurse in fact said "contemporary toilet roll," as in "contemporary art", which could mean toilet roll with all kinds of sh.. printed all over it."

Even patients who are confined to bed sometimes manage to dance. It is a good job hospital beds are made of stern stuff!

But on an overnight trip in Gloucestershire Steve, plus two other LETSwingers, had their own encounter with a modern cheap bed which seemed to be made out of short-bread pegged together with bread-sticks. "Maybe in this case the bed is also the breakfast" mused Steve, "but in hindsight trying to move it was bound to end in crumbs". During the ensuing discussions with the landlord, the band suggested that instead of replacing it, he might consider repairing it, perhaps adding some re-enforcement with a stronger material such as Rye Vita. The upshot of all this, shockingly, was the landlord giving the band a bad guest review on Air B+B, which got in the way of them finding further accommodation so easily via that site.

So for the next trip they had to fall back on Travelodge for their beds. "Falling back on the beds at Travelodge has no immediate effect on their integrity" observed Steve, "as they are of very sound construction. This was disappointing, and earned Travelodge a bad review from me. It is, after all, a rock star's solemn duty to give a hotel room a good trashing. But as one gets older, the destruction of such soundly built furniture becomes almost impossible. In effect, Travelodge were being discriminatory against the older rock star."

But these ageing rockers play for younger audiences too. At special schools for example, Steve, sometimes with other musicians, gets booked in to play for whole schools at a time, from aged 2-19 years in the main hall. Many of the kids get jiggy in their chairs immediately they start playing. After about half an hour they get tired of this, and get jiggy on the floor around the musicians instead. They then have to be mindful and try to avoid collisions with instruments and electricals, not always successfully. "Everyone survives though" Steve is happy to report.

The musicians very often do far better than survive. They are often well "hospitalised" - by which we mean "shown fine hospitality".

In fact there are often dangerous amounts of nom nom coming their way. At one event there was such a hefty buffet thrown in, including a fine ripe Camembert, that Steve remarked ""I'm glad my two injured colleagues managed not to fall over. Hanna was recovering from a bad back and Hugh from a skateboarding injury. (It was his first time on a skateboard - he is after all only 77 - but he's already showing a lot of promise at this sport.)"





If they play particularly well they are sometimes rewarded with other treats. At a home for retired Navy folk near the south coast in the summer, staff kept serving everyone sangria which kept evaporating (as one resident put it.)



On tour around the historic Naval towns of Portsmouth, Southsea and Gosport.



Photo courtesy of Hanna Heissenbuettel

Another time there was some clear sherry which Steve mistook for white wine, and poured himself a massive glass right before the eyes of an event manager. When he realised what he had done, he just told her that it was for Hanna (guitarist) who needs a high dose to feel any effect at all these days (we jest).

"I've been stuffing birthday cake, chocolate fudge cake and all sorts of other stodge down my greedy cake-hole this last week." Steve once eloquently observed. "I suppose we are all evolved to take advantage of rich foods when they come our way. I seem to be an unusually highly evolved individual in that regard. If I travelled back in time, my survival would be assured on the ancient plains, along with my Palaeolithic ancestors in the Horn of Africa. They never passed up an iced doughnut when they found one. Now put me in a buffet situation today and my instinct is to assume it's the last food I'll see for weeks."

Presumably being in a permanently precarious job situation doesn't help. Add to that Steve's aversion to seeing any food wasted then it becomes a wonder that he's not needing bigger trousers. "This is a cautionary tale" warns Steve, "Fast release carbs are not a very cool addiction for a rock star, but arguably just as bad for you as any other."

On further reflection, Steve admits that his stone-age ancestors would probably have been nonplussed by the site of an iced doughnut (or, ironically, even a rock bun). Their idea of a treat would have been something like a tiger-nut (pictured), which is a small shrivelled testicle of a thing with the texture of a wood chip. If you manage to bite into one though, it's mildly sweet.



Steve carries them for emergencies these days, in case Southern Rail leaves him stranded in some remote region.

Other times he turns to his trusty Milky Bar, such as when he found himself in this empty bit of prairie. Steve's horse was to blame for the bad navigation this occasion. Other brands of white chocolate are available e.g. Green and Blacks.

[www.greenandblacks.co.uk](http://www.greenandblacks.co.uk)





More drastic survival techniques are sometimes called for.

Then towards the end of the year, there was, inevitably, some of this.



Photo courtesy of Holy Cross Hospital



## Parkinsons UK

Steve continued to run monthly voice exercise classes for that leafy branch of Parkinson's UK . We don't wish to give away exactly which leafy branch of that organisation that was, in order to protect its members, but suffice it to say it's that rather grimy place on the Thames, which rhymes with Kenley and famous for its regatta, (as opposed to Kingston, which is famous for it's reggae.) The July 2016 session coincided with one of the days of this event.



This luxury raft- garden was one of the more impressive ships Steve saw. Plants in containers require a fair amount of watering. "I hope they bore this in mind and carried some" Steve said.

"We spend some time exploring and using our various voice generators, processors and effects. I'm not referring to electronic gizmos here, but instead to the variety of hard-ware and wet-ware we have at our disposal in our own bodies; including of course the diaphragm and larynx but also epiglottis, twanger (yes!), nasal port, tongue, teeth and lips" explains Steve.

## Three Cs

Sessions got bumped up from once a month to once every two weeks at a small care home in Southwark run by this housing charity. Steve finds it gratifying to see anyone smile there who would normally sit expressionless.

## Thames Reach

Bi-weekly sessions continued at a "wet house" (alcohol use allowed/controlled) hostel for otherwise street homeless adults with challenging behaviour, run by this organisation. One picked up a broom handle one time, but only to use it as a microphone. Once, between Steve's visits, someone had evidently had an equally creative turn, and thrown a heavy object at the TV. Instead of the normal picture, the screen was displaying an interesting flickering tartan type pattern.

Steve walked into the office once to hear the staff discussing tablets for the washing machine. It seems even the electrical goods need medication here.

### Life celebration for Juliet

Steve shared some music at *The Stepping Stones* at Boxhill for a social to commemorate Juliet, who is now sadly missed. He was accompanied by *Nelson* (from *Prognosis* [www.theprognosis.co.uk](http://www.theprognosis.co.uk)) for a couple of songs.



### Other miscellaneous song-based gigs in the community

- Three rare LETSwing four-piece gigs, with Hanna and Steve joined by *Mark Treasure* on bass and *Hugh Harris* on sax, giving Steve a chance to play his mini drum kit. One of these was for Hanna's charity *Alanouwaly Salifou Sylla's* 9th annual *Salifest*. [www.alanouwaly.com](http://www.alanouwaly.com)

After that the crowd got jiggy to pop music from *Patrick*, before shaking to *Djely Fode Kouyate* and his scratch band who rounded off the event superbly. Thanks to all the organisers and volunteers, including *Lawrence* for the domoda and jollof rice. NB next *Salifest* 30th Sept. 2017. [www.alanouwaly.com/salif-fest](http://www.alanouwaly.com/salif-fest)

Another was for the birthday party of *Ama* (also involved with Alanouwaly) and a lot of her Nigerian friends and relatives at *The Barn* near Catford.



The third gig was on a return to *Rushey Green Festival* for a third year.

[www.facebook.com/rusheygreenfestival/](http://www.facebook.com/rusheygreenfestival/)

Photo courtesy of Ruth

- One children's singing workshop for a *Strings Club* "Holiday Camp".



- Steve played some songs accompanied by the renowned harmonica player *Alan Glen* at local Kirkwood Nature Park's "*Com-muniTea*" party.

Photos courtesy of The Friends...

- One Wassail in the Nature Garden for *Friends of Cossall Park and Kirkwood Nature Garden* in conjunction with *Peckham Coal Line*. The expected community choir didn't show, so Steve was willingly roped in to lead the attendees in song, assisted by Alan Glen again on Harmonica.



- Another Wassail for the *Woodcraft Folk* in Cossall Park, where the throng sang an apple tree wassail to a pear tree as they couldn't find an apple one. If it bears apples instead of pears this year then we'll know why.

- He also played a few times for his supper at *Food Hub (Foodcycle) in Peckham*.  
[www.foodcycle.org.uk/location/peckham-hub/](http://www.foodcycle.org.uk/location/peckham-hub/)

One of these was for a Christmas sing-song with guests and volunteers. Steve also accompanied a young harmonica player there one time. You don't need to sing for your supper there. You don't even have to applaud those who do, but Steve thanks those who did.



Photos courtesy of Foodcycle Peckham Hub

### A few other community Christmas engagements including...

- One Christmas sing-song for *Disability Action Group*.
- LETSwing duos with Hanna for a couple of *City of London Sheltered Housing* Christmas gigs as, winning the audience's attention in a noisy environment without microphones.
- Two rehearsals and one performance for the *Hourbank* (Peckham's time bank) Christmas Party.

### More general miscellany

- Two outdoor sets of songs for a *Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival* event at Northfield House.
- Two solo interactive song sessions for the *Happy Mondays over 60s Social Group* at *Time and Talents*, which went down a storm. [www.timeandtalents.org.uk](http://www.timeandtalents.org.uk)

### Other solo work involved...

- Two "vicars tea parties" (actually barbecues, but we like saying "vicars tea parties") amongst the trees and bluebells of the vicarage garden of *Christchurch in Clapham*. Members of the congregation had just before been singing hymns at an al fresco service there on both occasions, but were game to rock out to Steve's acoustic offerings.
- Accompanying some hymns on guitar for two more years running for the same church at al fresco Pentecost services.
- Playing for *Christchurch in Barry Road's* AGM.
- One gig for a *Memory Cafe* (for people with Alzheimer's) near The Barbican.
- One singalong for a friend Laurie's birthday party.
- An impromptu set of songs for coffee on the decking outside at the front of a café.
- Four impromptu mini gigs at micro-pubs in Wellingborough for beer.
- Giggled informally with the admirable Nelson again at *Jane Turnbull's* tasty and veggy friendly BBQ. The entertainment was curtailed by a neighbour, complaining loudly about the "noise". It was evident that the neighbours could indeed hear Major Tom, loud and clear, even as he drifted off into the frozen

void of space.....





# Tutoring



As Steve creeps ever closer towards maturity, he finds himself resembling more and more that famous scientist; yes that's right, Brian Cox. I think you agree "it's amazing!"

Like his friend Brian, Steve was fortunate in being awarded a generous research grant; enough to cover a return bus fair for him and his new moustache, all the way from Peckham to Croydon, to observe and take part in a music session with young refugees through *Sound Connections*.

Steve was impressed as to how the facilitators and participants had adapted to working in a noisy cramped space. The work included one-to-one instrumental teaching, involving several participants simultaneously in the same room, and he did his best to knuckle down with the rest, tutoring one keen student in guitar finger picking style.

Afterwards at the pub with the other facilitators, another famous scientist came up in conversation; namely, Albert Einstein. Unfortunately though, Steve's grant wasn't quite enough to help their space elevator design lift off from the drawing board. Steve regards this as short-sighted.

"In a city facing many crises, space-elevators are surely the way forward... or at least upward, and I urge Sound Connections to review their funding priorities immediately and forthwith, or at least fifthwith and relatively soon, or in the none-too-distant future; just as soon as is convenient and at their leisure; really no hurry guys; just put it on the back-burner for now if you like. OK just forget it" Steve asserts.

[www.sound-connections.org.uk/what-we-do/challenging-circumstances](http://www.sound-connections.org.uk/what-we-do/challenging-circumstances)

- While Steve was in Henley for Parkinson's UK he popped round to give one of their members a guitar lesson.

# Rhythm Work in and out of Schools

Three days of music leadership in Summer 2016 on a National Citizenship Service. Steve was a bit short on sleep by the end, especially after he accidentally set his alarm on the second night for 11.45 pm just before crashing at 11pm. "I arose, bleary eyed, wondering how the night could have rushed by so quickly, and started getting ready for work." The final realisation as to what had happened was such a relief and great psychology. "I'd recommend anyone to try this for themselves, at least once in their lives" Steve said. "If you're already short on sleep, set your alarm for three quarters of an hour after you go to bed. You won't regret it."

As already mentioned under "Singing in the Community", the group switched to a song-based repertoire, accompanied by Steve's guitar, for the second care home visit. Ironically, the dry acoustics in the home suited the drumming far more, which did at least get one elderly resident dancing, and a few others smiling.

Two of the young people deserved a special award for their efforts in winding Steve up directly after their slot at the final showcase. Steve suspected he was missing two egg shakers, and that they were lurking in someone's pocket. For the next hour he was haunted by occasional faint shaker sounds coming from various points in the room, in which his group had dispersed amongst the audience.



After an hour of this, with him casting accusatory glances around the room, the culprits 'fessed up and returned the shakers to him in gleeful triumph. Steve was relieved, at least, that they put a greater gloating value on coming clean, than they did in walking away with tiny illicit items of extra luggage.

Steve also gave a performance/workshop, including participatory storytelling, at *Battersea Arts Centre* for the *Pan African Book Foundation* for an audience of all ages.

Pan African Book Foundation presents  
**Celebration of Africa!**  
Saturday 8th October 2016  
2pm-6pm  
Showcase of music & storytelling: 3pm



Photo courtesy of PABF

Some cover work also came his way, running drumming workshops for Alanouwaly Salifou Sylla. One of these was for an after-school club at Holbeach Primary School . There were also two sessions with children afternoon at *James Dixon Primary School* in Bromley, where Steve broke his toe with one of the drums simply by plonking it down in a haphazard manner.

This little piggy should have stayed at home. Now it looks like a pig in a blanket and this little pinky ain't too perky.



"Sorry if you're squeamish. But I nearly did squeal and squeam, and although I didn't go 'wee wee!' I did go shit" Steve 'fesses! "I must make a note to myself not to drop heavy wooden African drums on my toes just before facing twenty kids. It's going to be weeks before I can drop things on it again. I very nearly died!"

## Community Scrapbands (CS)



[www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/communityscrapbands.html](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org/communityscrapbands.html)

Steve ran the following junk percussion playing activities, bashing stuff to save the world with old chop sticks and other salvaged beaters to create sustainable rhythms, under the banner "Community Scrapband; it does what it says WITH the tin"....

### Work through "Street Style Surgery"

- A Sound Experience Composing and Creating Workshop - incorporating junk, school instruments and student's instruments for KS3 students after school in Sutton.
- Day of junk percussion workshops with Years 4 to 6 at *Willington School* in Wimbledon , for their Arts Festival Week.
- Four workshops including singing, movement and junk drumming in the open air, with about 60 "Rainbows" (tiny Girl Guides) in total, at a holiday camp in Croydon.
- A morning of activity for teenagers with challenging behaviour at a Girls School in London E5.

### Work through The Strings Club

- Two workshops for children at a half-term holiday camp in Brockley...

### Festivals and events

...and while on vegetables, there were two growing events in Cossall Park , with young children from the estate and beyond.



Photos courtesy of Alan Glen



- Two growing events in Cossall Park , with young children from the estate and beyond. Visitors were invited to plant vegetables into the raised beds. Steve (known for many years here as the "Music Man") became "Aubergine Dog Man" (a name provided by one of the children). He ran a kind of side show; a diversion for people who needed a break from gardening and some more spiritual food.

They could seek him out in his "yurt" where he sat like a shaman. He would then invite them to join in some drumming, and as he and about fifteen children beat, they found their roots amidst the beetroots. Their aim was to call up the ancient ones, so they bashed on their biscuit tins to summon the ancestor of the Jammy Dodger, (known as "Jammy Face"), assisted by the mind altering properties of organic parsley. It's not certain if they reached their forebears, but they did reach at least three of their bears, and as far as the ancients go, they won the attention of someone from the sheltered housing unit who shouted at them out of the window to "shut that bloody noise!" (Joke!)

As well as African, Latin and bangin' bhangra rhythms, they included some that were completely home grown, as well as a lot of free-play noise adventure. The children enjoyed it, got some drumming practice in and some experience at interacting musically in a group.

- Two outdoor junk playing activities at *The Albany* (Arts Centre) in Deptford at open events to promote and celebrate the transformation of the garden there.

This also incorporated the deafening sounds of vegetables. You'd be surprised at the volume of sound produced by percussion instruments made from fresh aubergines and carrots! Actually you wouldn't, they're very quiet, as you might expect.

Steve's shamanic potency was confirmed when he succeeded in summoning the Thunder Gods. Some participants were looking a bit chilly so he suggested they all do a massive drum rumble to warm up. The sky immediately replied with its own (frankly more impressive) drum roll. The timing was uncanny, especially as it was the only thunder they heard all afternoon.

[www.thealbany.org.uk/event\\_detail/1793/Events/Help-Us-Transform-the-Albany-Garden](http://www.thealbany.org.uk/event_detail/1793/Events/Help-Us-Transform-the-Albany-Garden)

- Steve provided a hands-on activity at two STAG doos. (PIC) This may not be what you're thinking. These events were *Southwark Travellers Action Group* (STAG) family days for *Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month*, two years running, paid for in Time Credits through Hourbank in Peckham.

Steve was outside within a ring of tree stumps, and people from very bijou size upwards joined in, and/or danced wiggly around the stumps to his "Bhangra" banged out on coffee cans. "Astonishing", as one ten-year-old participant put it.

Photo courtesy of STAG



[www.facebook.com/events/541973149338358](https://www.facebook.com/events/541973149338358)

- Two hour Community Scrapband session, with people from tots upwards joining in, at *Brimmington Park*. [www.facebook.com/events/139038803311894/](https://www.facebook.com/events/139038803311894/)

- Much further afield, Steve involved passers by in interactive street junk percussion for an afternoon in *Brighouse* in West Yorkshire for their *Arts Festival*.

[www.a-n.co.uk/events/brighouse-festival-unbalanced-sculpture-trail](http://www.a-n.co.uk/events/brighouse-festival-unbalanced-sculpture-trail)

[www.a-n.co.uk/events/brighouse-festival-community-scrapbands](http://www.a-n.co.uk/events/brighouse-festival-community-scrapbands)

Steve travelled first class for the first time there and back, and also enjoyed two nights in the town, with entertainment, thanks to the generosity of the Festival organisers. The guard treated him suspiciously when he arrived to board the first class carriage at St Pancras, with his unusual ticket and large ramshackle case, rattling with pots and cans.



- Back home; one Rhythm and sound workshop using junk and drums for Hourbank at *All Saints Church* in Peckham.

## Wroken and Spitten Word

Steve performed at the *Poetry Club* at *La Villette Hotel* in Guernsey, reading from the previous Newts Letter and therefore taking a huge liberty in the context of a poetry evening, but he thinks he got away with it.

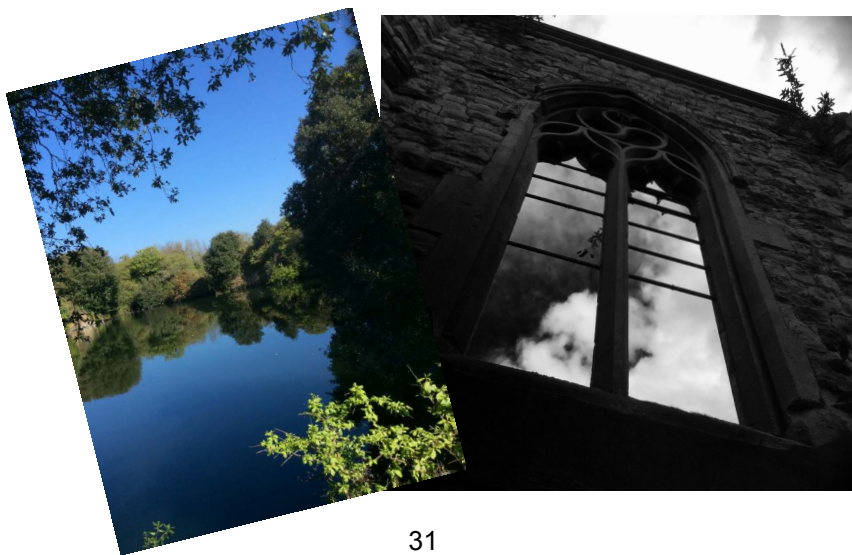
He also represented Hourbank (for Time Credits) along with another member, at a *Peckham Citizens' Alliance* event where we spoke to about 300 people. Other speakers included my MP Harriet Harman (obviously a bit further down the bill) and there were musical performances from local school-children. Here's a link to the campaign to work with developers to ensure that the needs (affordable housing, jobs...) of people in Peckham are addressed.

[www.twitter.com/hashtag/peckham1000faces](http://www.twitter.com/hashtag/peckham1000faces)

He was also the "*My Story*" feature in this month's Hourbank *Exchange List*.

## Have Guitar Will Travel

The uncertainties of travel compel Steve to set off from home at least an hour earlier than normal in order to reach engagements on time. Ironically he therefore often gets there way ahead of schedule, and as a result has time to avail himself of local refreshment. This enriches his life no end, especially as these locations are often by the sea or otherwise highly desirable with chocolate box scenery. Steve sincerely hopes that a certain rail company in particular will continue to provide the inconsistently shit service we've come to not rely on. Here and overleaf are some of the most photogenic moments.







Contact - tel: 0207 732 7782    mob: 07788 668930  
email: [rwcstevebarbe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rwcstevebarbe@yahoo.co.uk)    website: [www.roywellscollageofmusic.org](http://www.roywellscollageofmusic.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/steve.barbe.12](http://www.facebook.com/steve.barbe.12)

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