

ROY WELLS' COLLAGE OF MUSIC

Occasional News Letter - Vol.1 No.10 Apr 2014

Humdinger issue!! Featuring Roy Wells as the commentator

<http://www.ideastap.com/People/stevebarbe>

<https://soundcloud.com/steve-barbe>

Nominated and shortlisted for a SAFTA!



Candidates were asked to wear cocktail dresses or lounge suits.

The above picture shows that Steve opted for a guitar shaped codpiece.

Steve Barbe was shortlisted in the music category (won by Corsica Studios). He was also invited on stage to accompany Michelle Baharier CEO of *Cooltan Arts* to receive their "*Celebrating Diversity*" category award. Steve has been involved with Cooltan since the mid 90's, and his music was used for the film "*Innovation in Mad Culture*" (see RWCM Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 6 - Sept 2011), including a guest appearance from *Ruby Wax*.

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Roy Wells took it all very seriously of course, and is making the most of it, as it's completely "his bag", commenting: "It seems like only 40 years ago that Steve didn't make even vaguely musical noises with the Guernsey 2nd Company Boys Brigade Band, and only 30 years ago that he didn't get a major recording deal with EMI Records! This has been a dizzying climb to the heights of relative obscurity. It's all happened so quickly! Who knows, in another ten years time he might neither be awarded a Mercury prize for his CD, nor a BAFTA prize for his video. But he knows how quickly these things can pass, so he's enjoying them while they last."

Tribute to *Richard Muzira*, who was very involved in the making of "Innovation in Mad Culture", and who sadly died last year:

<http://www.cooltanarts.org.uk/2013/11/tribute-to-richard-muzira/>

**OCM presents The Industry Talks –
Earning a living in the music industry**

Oxford
Contemporary
Music



Steve spoke to thirty 6th form Oxford & Cherwell Valley College music students at this event in January about RWCM, and ways to generate income from community music while balancing it with one's own creative work.

The 10 minute talk can be heard here:

<http://www.ocmevents.org/ocm/tools/music/player?track=846>

TINGLE FACTORY NEWS...

Steve's own original music and videos

<http://stevebarbe.ideastap.com/Project/93d2faed-2c7d-460a-a8e6-a22300a3915f/tingle-factory>

and follow Steve on Facebook

It has been a busy few months, including:

- Two evenings with Lady D's "Simply the best showcase" at Camden People's Theatre
- and one at T. Chances in Tottenham.

To see Steve at the showcase:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRct59cTCA8&index=6&list=ULq7Up t2Sdg54>

Roy commented: *"Lady D's showcase was a hoot, with a diverse range of acts in a mutually supportive atmosphere. The unisex changing-room was a bit crowded and poorly lit. On one evening Steve was helping a woman find her bra and eventually it was found under his foot".*



ARTISTS FOR SHOWCASE IN JULY 2013 @ CAMDEN PEOPLE'S THEATRE, 58 - 60 HAMPESTEAD RD, LONDON NW1 3PY



Margin Kings - Poppers & Singers

Amey Knowles - Singer

Sia Allpou - Poet



Whomee Labor - Singer

Sylvan Williams - Singer

Carol Oltus - Singer



Steve Barbe - Singer

Zenele Binna Okoroale - Singer

Wafada - Sarcophagist



MC Dekey - MC

Izzy Roy - Singer

Frontier - MC

Andre as Liberos - Singer





Two evenings with Lady D's
"Simply the best showcase"
at Camden People's Theatre

Street performing

Steve played at the two open-air events below, where there were lots of smiling faces from passers by getting jiggy with the music.

St Alban's "Summer in the city" (3 days of busking from Steve)

Roy commented: *"Steve had to wrangle hard for a pitch. He was setting up, when along come a large procession of men in bright robes, drumming and chanting and playing little cymbals. He didn't mind the first few minutes, but then he felt a bit miffed, having booked this weeks ago, and having travelled up from London. Their apparent leader didn't take too kindly to Steve announcing that this was his official spot, and asked him for proof. Then the man thought he could sweet talk Steve with a complimentary piece of confection. He was damn right he could and it bought him a few extra minutes before his troupe moved on, dancing and singing something about a hairy ram and a hairy quiche or some such".*



East Dulwich "Christmas Cracker"

The acts were many and varied, including some very visual ones which must have taken some preparation.

At times Steve felt that his own act could have used some visual element, for example involving colourful hoops. He's had some practice at jumping through hoops for these council jobs, but unfortunately only bureaucratic ones.

Other gigs included:

- **"Our Big Gig"** at Harmony Hall E17
www.superact.org.uk/ourbiggig/component/obg_events/355?view=obgevent&Itemid=483
- **Southwark Arts Forum (SAF) Summer Fair.** Steve returned to Hayes Galleria for the third year in succession - this time for both days. (SAF informs Steve that his recorded music was also played at a pop-up fair at Borough Market which they ran.)
- Open-mic session at The Star in Dorking.



Photo courtesy of
Miranda Gresle-Farthing

Open mic at The Star in Dorking
(For the jam at the end of the evening Steve seized the opportunity to have a go on that drum kit, clearly demonstrating just how barely adequate his drum-kit skills are.)



Photo courtesy of
SAF

SAF Summer Fair
(A word of caution - do not stamp on your tambourine.)

"Toad in a Hole" (the pop video) - Screening

www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Upt2Sdg54

This video (about annual spawning journeys) made it's longest journey so far in September to share it's story on the screen at Onca Gallery in Brighton, alongside those of other animals. It received a warm reception, along with Steve's introduction.

Onca is run in partnership with Sussex Wildlife Trust and the film fitted the theme of "journeys" perfectly.



Keeping up with the past



Photo courtesy of
Coralie Moynihan

At the Cock and Bull in Guernsey with Nick Windsor (those are the lights of the vast metropolis of St. Peter Port shining through the window, outshone only by Steve's radioactive trousers).

A toast to



with jam

(and other old preserves)



Roy comment-
ed: "Jolly jams
at The Jolly
Farmers con-
tinue to be jolly
good fun! It's
great for Steve
to meet up with
old Slice mem-
bers Andy and
Ed again after
all these years
(and the fine
new drummer
Alan)."

Photos courtesy of
Julia Edgington

From left:
Steve, anon, Ed and Andy



It was like one of those school re-unions. Steve had nothing to fear however, as Ed is now in PR and journalism, and Andy is merely Professor of Materials Science at Imperial College London, or some such.

Steve on the other hand, has forged ahead and is now performing songs like "Hey Diddle Diddle" at community centres.

The band no longer go under the name of "Slice", but there was talk of them presenting themselves as a Slice tribute act (in a self-referential sort of way). Ed did quip however that perhaps the band should call themselves "Gratis", being that they cover so many songs by Free.

Steve is always happy to be greeted there by other old friends from deeper down in Surrey. Despite not being a dad, he's often so buoyed up that he feels moved to perform the most erotic display of dad-dancing you'll ever see.

The rutting stag of rock!



Early Years work and primary



Icarus 1

Ready for launch and positioned with the correct end pointing upwards - as far as the slightly wonky nose-cone will allow.

(Incorrect positioning in the past led to this kink in the first place.)

Duck, mouse and elephant are included in the picture to provide a sense of scale.

Tiddlers takes place at Christchurch on Barry Road, and the "worship and praise" element is entirely at participants discretion. The attendees are asked not to overdo it though, as it may go to Steve's head. Sessions are always on a Monday, and often follow Jolly Jam on a Sunday night. So Steve has to transform himself from the rutting stag of rock, to a sunny, delightful family-friendly marmoset after too little sleep. He often wears the same hat (why complicate things) but usually leaves out the erotic dancing as he simply doesn't have the energy. He maintains a cheerful disposition, even when children take an active and hands-on interest in the mechanical workings of his guitar, while he is trying to play it. He has vowed from now on to take a small decoy guitar which he will place on the floor along with the small percussion instruments. He will also play from inside a small cage of the kind used by divers when investigating sharks, or by go-go dancers in night clubs...er...apparently.

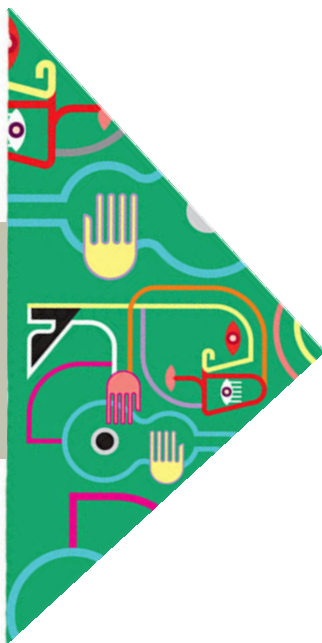
Other animals frequently feature during music sessions at Tiddlers. For example, in reference to the continued deluge during Winter, Steve ran an exciting session entitled "More Rain Becoming Sunny Later", which included "the animals went in two by two". He's also done mini-beasts (e.g. worms, spiders, insects and some of the smaller species of bison).

Steve likes to make the theme resonate with children's own experiences (like the weather, times in the calendar etc). For example, around Guy Fawkes Steve produced his space-rocket - Icarus 1 - pictured above (made from plastic bottles). After a discussion on firework rockets, this took Steve and the kids to Mars and beyond, and they sang all the way. This rocket is about 10 years old now, and scorched from successive flights too near to the sun. It is probably the only re-usable multi-stage rocket in existence. It comes with its own instructions written on the outside. For example, "This Way Up".

Then for St. Patrick's day he put on a festive hat (with the Guinness logo covered over to protect innocent young minds from product placement and the perils of drink) and sang some Irish classics, while the children tastefully embellished them by clashing cymbals together, cacophonously in random places.

Steve also played at a birthday party in the home of one of the Tiddlers, for her and her Tiddler friends.

For Autumn half-term, Steve worked with Nimble Arts for a Halloween themed song-writing day at a holiday play scheme, with horrific results fortunately.



Rhythm work in and out of schools

African drumming

Religious groups

At the same Christchurch, Steve ran a drumming activity for "Our Celebration of Africa" for Asi Munisi of the Pan-African Book Founda-



The congregational drumming group, led by Steve Barbe, continued at the other *Christchurch in Clapham*. (By this we do mean "the other Christchurch" as opposed to "The Church of the Other Christ".) They kept in time with the hymns very well, or perhaps the congregation sang in time with the drums, or the organist and pianist kept in time with the singers and drummers. Anyway the point is, it was all pretty much in time, relatively speaking and given the challenge of a large echoey space. As well as accompanying the hymns, the group normally gets a chance to do a little turn of its own. "Little turn" of course means "dazzling display of pyrotechnic brilliance". For example, the group has built up a rhythm with the words "Tell me some things you like to do? Playing with my blocks and eating lasagne." This is a compound-time contrapuntal poly-rhythm with knobs on.

Schools

There were also a few whole/half days of African drumming workshops. One was at a club for teenagers with learning difficulties in Harlow, and the other at a junior school in Norwood.

Roy commented: *"At Norwood Steve had to start his workshop before the consignment of drums arrived from the agency, so he needed to think on his feet using minimal resources as his feet are quite small.*

Then about 15 mins into the session a box about a meter cubed was pushed through the door. He was hoping that it would be bigger on the inside, to accommodate reasonable sized drums for nearly thirty junior kids (some 10/11 years old), but the drums turned out to be of Lilliputian proportions. Still he muddled through."

By the time Steve was sent to Coventry for one and a half days of similar work, he'd worked out how to get the best out of these resources. He also supplemented them with a few of his own instruments including a big drum which was literally a central feature in the drum circle for some of the activities.

Steve also stood-in as facilitator for the after school drum club at *Holbeach School* in Lewisham, through Alanouwaly (run by his colleague Hanna who plays guitar with LETSwing).

Community Scrapbands (CS)

<http://stevebarbe.ideastap.com/Project/2c902f06-e5e3-4a79-9cbc-a22300e9309a/community-scrapbands>



Community Scrapbands has an effective waste reduction strategy. It reduces waste by hitting it repeatedly with a stick.

In the Autumn they embarked on a new bi-weekly junk percussion project for housing charity "Outward". This is held at a music club in Waltham Forest for adults with learning difficulties.



Other CS work included:

- Peckham Peace Picnic (in its second year)



This bijou djembe has some damage and therefore occasionally joins Steve's junk collection

Photo courtesy of Peckham Space/John Clare Photography

Finsbury Arts Festival 2013

- Finsbury Arts Festival (for a second year)



"Spending Time, Building Community"

- Two "Bring and Fix" events for Peckham Hour Bank. (At the second of these Steve also sang some impromptu Tingle Factory songs, as well as being re-cycling monitor for the day.)

**BRING
>ND
F-X**



Work in Schools

There were also three days in schools. One close to home in Lewisham, one in Hendon, and one in Wootton (Northants).

At a networking event Steve attended last year, someone remembered him from a Community Scrapband project at *Sacred Heart Secondary School* (around 2005), where he joined in as a 6th form student. He told Steve that it had inspired him to continue with drumming, and he now facilitates with a youth project group *Kinetica Bloco*.

Community Scrapbands has the slogan "Bash stuff and save the world - beats re-cycling!". It has been running since 1999 and it seems to be working in that the world - thus far at least - has survived.

Work in health and social care...

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

Goodbye to music sessions for Equinox.

Equinox

2013 unfortunately saw an end to weekly music sessions at Brook Drive (a short-stay drug detox unit) after several years, due to funding restrictions.

Sessions were organised roughly on a rotation basis using:

1. Rhythm based activities with drums
2. Open tuning drone based "Indianesque" sessions
3. John Stevens/Rod Paton type approaches with various instruments
4. Song based and lyric writing sessions




The residents really got into it, with some free spirited improvisation and drug-free highs.

All sessions would usually at least finish with a sing-song, but the lyric writing became important and used more often, with a focus on providing opportunities for service users to present their individual life stories. The group would take an existing song, with members contributing their own lines, to form a complete lyric which would then be sung by the group.


Errol Dixon's "Midnight Train" was a staple for this, and they must have generated at least a hundred versions. The original song is about longing for someone to return. Once residents had re-worked it, it usually ended up being about their own journeys.

Keen and able musicians often attended, especially guitarists, who would often mistake Steve for another guitarist when they spotted the (rather tatty) house guitar he was holding.



Music at Brook Drive

"I thought that it was going to be rubbish, but I had such a great time. I'm so surprised."
- feedback from a service user



why attend???

- To express your own feelings and stories, especially in song writing sessions
- To have fun in a friendly atmosphere...
- To work and play music together co-operatively in a group.
- To have a taster of something new or rekindle your love of music

Everyone welcome regardless of musical experience

Fridays @ 3pm



What happens in a music group?

Activities can include:

- rhythmic percussion games,
- creating melody and harmony together on easy-to-play instruments,
- enjoying some popular songs (and, yes...singing along. Many do!)
- writing a song together.

- Participants own contributions to the sessions are most welcome.

So please come along and join us

They would ask him technical questions like: "What kind of guitar do you have at home?". If they had restricted their queries to matters of overall shape and colour, he would have answered them with confidence and authority.

They sometimes ended up teaching songs to Steve, such as, on one occasion, Comfortably Numb. One even had the cheek to bring his own flash guitar down, after eye-balling Steve's and deciding it wasn't up to spec.

Wanting a blues jam, he played some mean licks over Steve's rather basic 12 bar strumming. Steve commented: "This made me look bad and simply wont do".

Steve wishes all the people who took part over the years the best with their music, and with their lives in general.

Regular work

Monthly sessions continue for Thames Reach and Three Cs

Steve sometimes includes a few of his own songs which keep them worked in.

Staff often seem to get as much from the music sessions as the residents do, which is a positive result as happy staff help make a happy care environment.

Roy commented: *"It's great for Steve to be able to negotiate when he has his monthlies. These centres obligingly allow him to schedule sessions to fit around his other work"*.

Other work nearly got postponed once however, when he accidentally locked himself in the toilet at the centre.

One of the residents at Robertson Street Project wanted an additional session at her birthday party in December. She paid for it out of her own budget and specifically requested some rock music, so he learned "Living on a Prayer" by Bon Jovi. When it came to the key-change he hoped that it didn't really matter if he made it or not.

Green Candle Dance Company

Steve took on three new projects (*"Uplift"*, *"Having a Ball"* and *"Remember to Dance"*) providing live music for movement based sessions for people with dementia. Green Candle Dance Company is based at *Oxford House*.

(The photograph to the right shows Steve at Oxford House for Cooltan's "Nutty Professors" exhibition. See RWCM Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 3 - July 2010.)



Photo courtesy of Emma Thatcher

Green Candle has long believed that dance is one of the best prevention measures for dementia and has significant benefits for people already living with the condition. Researchers from the *Sidney de Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health* at *Christchurch University*, Canterbury, are evaluating "Remember to Dance" to ascertain how the sessions impact the health and well-being of the participants. Steve got this work partly on the strength of his involvement with LETSwing, whose repertoire he is using and extending in this work.

A lot of the songs he has been adding are from musical theatre and films, which previously were a bit lacking in his repertoire. He is therefore pleased with this new "camper" material or "tarpaulin" as he is calling it.

LETSwing

<http://stevebarbe.ideastap.com/Project/ebbd871b-def6-4550-9092-a22300e97647/letswing>

Since the last newsletter in April 2013 LETSwing have performed about 40 concerts in southern England, much of this is in the health and social care sector, mostly through Music in Hospitals (MiH). Sometimes it is the band who need healthcare. At one venue Steve slammed his finger in a door straight after having an alcohol-free pub lunch with the band just before the show. Steve see this as conclusive proof that alcohol prevents accidents.

When concerts begin it can be a struggle to get focus, but the audience are gradually won over, and by the end the place is rocking.

LETSwing provide anything from one (usually Steve) to four players, or even more with guests, as when Gabrielle Gad joined them for a public jam at the *Hill Station Cafe* in Telegraph Hill in February 2014.

Many songs have been
about rain lately

REMEMBER TO DANCE!



Photo courtesy of
Tim Sutton and
Green Candle

Steve had an opportunity in Autumn 2013 to talk about LETSwing at *"Tales of Transformation"* (a benefit concert for MiH) at *Kings Place* in Camden. His ambassador role was to talk and inspire audience members with stories and anecdotes from his time working for MiH. MiH do sterling work, providing entertainment for people in long term care, the vital enrichment to what can otherwise be a dull existence.



Given his poor sales technique, it was good that his story was included in the program along with that of other artists, as this was far better than his patter.

Steve commented in the program: *"MiH has provided me with hundreds of concerts to perform in health and care situations over the last fifteen years. I am extremely grateful to the MiH team, who to my mind have worked with consistent efficiency and friendliness over all this time. Some my performances have been solo, but more often they have been with the group LETSwing. All of this experience has certainly furthered my development as a performer. This has been, for example, in terms of increasing my vocal stamina, informing me as to how to engage with an audience, expanding my repertoire, and teaching me how to program a set of familiar songs to form a concert which has variety, contrast, balance and overall structure. This is an ongoing process, and we are continually learning songs."*

In no small measure we have had to up-date our song lists because more of the older people we play to now (and who form a substantial proportion of our audience) will have been young through the 1950s. So now we include an even wider range of styles, from traditional folk and Georgian Music Hall through to jazz, rock 'n' roll and Motown. This has in turn helped my wider community music career immensely, and more specifically has helped me find other opportunities to engage with people musically in the health and care sectors. But it is the work I do through MiH which has provided memories which have proved to be some of the most enduring ones for me. For example, I remember once playing at an elderly care ward in London. In one of the bays was a very elderly lady lying on her front, silent and motionless, on her bed. Her head was turned away from me, and she was past engaging with the outside world... or so I thought. Then quietly and unexpectedly she started singing along with me. The song I was singing must have been familiar to her. It is small moments like that which confirm for me the value of this work that we do".

Here are some examples of concerts throughout the last year..

Solo work

As a soloist Steve can respond quickly to job offers, which sometimes come at two hours notice. The main challenge is to make himself look smart.

After

Before



Steve's solo concerts included:

- a rest home in Southampton , where Steve was described as "A very old street performer style that they enjoyed". Steve assumes that "old" referred to his style not his age, as he insists that he is only 25.
- a Royal British Legion home for ex-service personnel starting at eleven hundred hours sharp.
- at Time and Talents' Summer Celebration Party, where Steve arrived in plenty of time to start playing at 5pm, to find they had put him on at 6pm after the deputy Mayor. So he had to pass some time chatting, eating at the buffet and drinking red wine. Steve takes such minor inconveniences in his professional stride.
- at Time and Talents' Stroke Club, with people from their 50s up to 70s. Some of the oldest members joined in with "Get Off My Cloud" which he thought was a disgrace. Old people just aren't what they used to be.
- at *St. Albans Cathedral gardens* for the Christmas Market, with some cute dancing from some tiny children. This was as the council's official busker.
- at a seniors' lunch club in Peckham he accepted the fish, chips and mushy peas (or "Northern hummus") which they provided for him before the show. (He's normally veggie, but as they had catered for him that was one fish he didn't want to see get away.)

Ensemble work - Steve also recruits players from the LETSwing pool when more than one player is required.

For example Mark Treasure seen here on the left.

Photo courtesy of Bankside Open Spaces Trust - BOST.



Duos:

- at "*Fresh Mint Fun Day*" in August 2013 - a great day, with cute kids dancing cutely to LETSwing's Jungle Book song, at Mint Street Park, Bankside. This celebrated the opening of the new stage space with the local community.
- at the "Caring Cafe" in Richmond for people aged 60+ with Alzheimers/Dementia and their carers. The duo were asked not to mention the war and they think they got away with it. One guest said "The best ever of all our performers".

That's Mark and Steve in the background on the right under the gazebo. You'll just have to take our word for it.

Photo courtesy of BOST.



Trios: E.g. a care home near Tunbridge Wells, with a spirited Okey Kokey, which won maximum points from the judges, with all the knee bending and flailing limbs (still attached to bodies mostly) and a free-style movement section for the improvised kazoo verse and chorus. In all we were very glad to have brought some culture to this disadvantaged area of leafy E. Sussex).

Four pieces: E.g. at a 90th birthday celebration in Eltham. They all fitted quite comfortably into and on top of one Volvo, with all PA and instruments, including Steve's dinky-drum-kit.

It was a real mixed-age event from babies upwards, and the dance floor became full towards the end. Straight after the gig Steve's fridge was crammed with doggy-bag food, and his bank account was more healthy by several tens of pounds.

If you want a very reasonably priced beat combo who play songs ranging from Lambeth Walk to Three Little Birds, then you could do worse than to book LETSwing. They'll even take away your left over food for you at no extra charge.

Miscellaneous

BOOTLEG BEEGEEES: The day after the gig Steve's breakfast included left-overs from the night before's take-away. (Cold and congealed curry sauce, mushy peas which were less than mushy - cos they too had congealed - were both eaten with reduced-to-clear stale bread.) This was on the car ride back from Blackpool, after the 2nd gig with the Bootleg BeeGees on a bank holiday weekend. These are the vertiginous heights the band have reached, playing caravan camps in Wales and Lancashire.

Talking of vertiginous heights, they had a good view of Blackpool Tower wrapped in it's neon glow.

Following their final set the DJ made the crowd get jiggy with holiday pop music so moronic that in retrospect it made our tribute covers sound like art.

Community Choirs: John Donne Community Choir - Summer 2013
Steve joined the choir for "*Wishes, Lies and Dreams*" - a new work by Kate Whitley at *Bold Tendencies* in Peckham.

Sounding Board features: Steve covered the *Music Education Expo* 20-21 March 2013 (<http://www.musiceducationexpo.co.uk/>) along with *Catherine Pestano* for the national journal of community music - "*Sounding Board*" (2013 Issue 1 - pages 7 & 8) giving it a qualified thumbs up.

He also spoke up in the same journal (issue 2 page 8) for training vs accreditation, in response to an *Artworks* Platform "Do Participatory Artists Benefit from Accreditation?" at the *Barbican*.



See the main RWCM webpages: <http://www.ideastap.com/People/stevebarbe>
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