

Pomona Backlist – Winter 2010

The Celestial Café

Stuart Murdoch

£8.99

“When are we going to get a string of number ones, like Abba?” I asked.

“When you grow a pair of tits,” said Bob.

Stuart Murdoch considers himself to be ‘26% a rock star’. He may be exaggerating. Few rock stars spend time compiling lists of their favourite mathematicians or buy extra-soft slippers so they don’t disturb neighbours living in the flat below. The Belle and Sebastian singer reveals more of these non-debauched tales of life on the road and back home in his native Glasgow. Murdoch, a born-writer, stares out from metaphorical celestial cafés throughout the world, presenting a unique and engaging take on herb tea, Felt, sunsets, church choirs, John Peel, acupuncture, and, of course, catastrophic waitresses.

Throughout, he runs at life fast and true, reminding us all that an empty minute is a minute wasted.

Weirdo. Mosher. Freak.

(if only they’d stopped at name calling) –

The Murder of Sophie Lancaster

Catherine Smyth

£7.99

Twenty-year-old Sophie Lancaster was kicked to death by a pack of ‘feral’ youths at her local park in Bacup, Lancashire. Her boyfriend, Rob Maltby, was also set upon and received life-threatening injuries. Their only ‘crime’ was to dress differently, as ‘goths’ or ‘moshers’ in the easy shorthand of the media, which cited the killing as another example of Broken Britain.

Catherine Smyth was the first reporter on the scene and remained at the heart of the story throughout. A mother herself, she writes evocatively of the impact it had on both the Lancaster family and Bacup itself.

Smyth has unearthed several anomalies: the police admitted initially attending the wrong park and the ambulance took 14 minutes to travel a distance of a mile in reaching the scene.

While relating the horrific nature of the attack, Smyth also focuses on the good to rise from evil – a town rallying in support of a stricken family, a mother showing incredibly dignity and, most important of all, a campaign launched to inform the world of the grave dangers of intolerance. As one banner carried at a parade in memory of Sophie proclaimed: ‘Hate is easy – love takes courage’.

Spotland: The Sun Also Rises

Mark Hodgkinson

£7.99

At last, it’s up the Dale. After a record 36 years in the basement division of the Football League, Rochdale AFC finally won promotion in the 2009/10 season. The underdog of English football had their day in the sun and with them at every kick was lifelong fan and acclaimed writer, Mark Hodgkinson.

Devotees endured years of defeats and jibes and misery until the management team of Keith Hill and David Flitcroft built their promotion-winning squad. Hodgkinson brings wry and penetrating insights into a momentous season, while pondering on family ties and loyalty, the passion and philosophy of football support.

Other matters football – from Hodgkinson’s pieces first published in The Times – include interviews with Paul Gascoigne; Colin Bell and Mike Doyle of Manchester City; the irrepressible Stuart Hall; the late-comic Bernard Manning; Barry Hines of Kes fame, plus a range of topics from cortisone use to racism in football, from sport finance to the perils of being a football reporter. And, of course, Subbuteo.

My Improper Mother and Me

Ester Fairfar

£7.99

‘We would be lying on our backs on the floor while she exhorted us to, “Squeeze, squeeze, make like fucky-fucky. More, more, squeeze, tighter, tighter, think of your lover as a string bean: he is getting away, hold on to him, squeeze.” All this delivered in a heavy German accent, while she, 70 if she was a day, pranced around like a demented teenager. Trying to obey while trying not to laugh added to the agony.’ – Prue Leith

Lotte Berk was one of the most extraordinary women of our times. She became world famous as the deviser of the Lotte Berk Technique, a revolutionary fitness programme that led her to great fame and wealth during the 1960s and 1970s.

Among her students were a swathe of movers and shakers – Britt Ekland, Maureen Lipman, Geraldine McEwan, Zoe Wanamaker, Shirley Conran, Edna O’Brien, Prue Leith and Sian Phillips. This is a compelling portrait of the outrageous German émigré by her daughter, Esther Fairfax. It reveals the inner workings of a Bohemian life lived to the extreme. Cajoled to dance naked in Paris at the age of 16, Fairfax’s remarkable story embraces drug addiction, sexual liberation, poverty, isolation, fame and, finally, hope.

J.D. Salinger: A Life Raised High

Kenneth Slawenski

NOW ONLY £10

J.D. Salinger died in January 2010, almost 50 years after the publication of his last book. All the same, his face stared down from television screens and newspaper front pages across the globe, proving that interest in Salinger had never waned. As the author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, the seminal work on youth disaffection, Salinger became embedded in the American psyche. The book has sold more than 65 million copies and readers still identify with its anti-hero, the arch Holden Caulfield.

Kenneth Slawenski is a world-renowned expert on Salinger. He runs the definitive Salinger website ‘Dead Caulfields’ and has devoted seven years to researching and writing *J.D. Salinger: A Life Raised High*. Until now, little has been known about Salinger – the writer and the enigma – but Slawenski provides a detailed and passionate account of the famously reclusive author who last spoke to the press nearly 30 years ago.

In addition to conducting numerous interviews, Slawenski toured libraries for letters, birth certificates, marriage licences and work records. The result is a comprehensive biography looking not only at Salinger’s work in forensic detail, but also his family background and personal life.

Down The Figure 7

Trevor Hoyle

NOW ONLY £5

They say the past is another country, with its own strange customs and mysterious rituals. None stranger and more mysterious than the secret world of childhood. Take a time trip back to the black-and-white 1950s, to a northern cotton town struggling to emerge from a decade of shortages and rationing, of make-do-and-mend.

But the war and its aftermath cast a long shadow. Gangs of feral youth, inflamed by the exploits of Hollywood tough guys, fed on Movietone News and the tales of dads and uncles who served in the Forces, are still fighting the Nazis and the Nips – and each other – in the bits of wasteland between the streets and houses. It all seems very innocent (even the fumbling exploration of sex behind the garages) and indeed it is. Until Terry Webb's uncle turns up, ex-Desert Rats, and brings a piece of the war home with him.

The Last Mad Surge of Youth

Mark Hodgkinson

NOW ONLY £5

“A good group isn't about everyone being able to play well. You need people to shape it, give it heart. The best bands, the ones that matter, are a group of people singing about their lives, their mams and dads, the streets they came from, the crap jobs they've had, everything. And serving it all up pure to the public, saying, ‘This is what we are – do you recognise any of it?’ All the better if you were dragged up because punters see a kind of glamour in squalor. Ideally they'd like you to have been brought up by wolves, living half wild on the streets. That's what rock 'n' roll is, why bands from these shitty estates get to be massive. And do you know why people like all this? It's because they're envious but rooting for you at the same time. Their own gang – the kids they grew up with – didn't stick together. They see you as someone who made it through and they want to be part of it. That's why they buy the records. It reminds them of what could have been.”

The Last Mad Surge of Youth is an intelligent, literate work that sidesteps the usual clichés of rock novels. Its authenticity and authority is never compromised, a viewpoint held dear by punk and newwave. It is also about growing up, friendship, fame, addiction, love. And hope.

This Artistic Life

Barry Hines

NOW ONLY £5

An anthology of essays and stories by Barry Hines. Many of the pieces were written at the same time as *A Kestrel for a Knave* and have never been published before.

They cover Hines' love of sport along with his reflections on his home town of Hoyland Common, near Barnsley, both its landscape and the colourful characters that people it.

The Not Dead

Simon Armitage

£6.99

“*The Not Dead* is uniquely impressive. In transmuting the stories of particular soldiers into the lyrical music of Simon Armitage's poems, something exceptional is achieved: the painful truth of lives damaged beyond help is made meaningful for the rest of us. We can only catch our breath and read them again and again.”

– Joan Bakewell

The Richard Matthewman Stories

Ian McMillan & Martyn Wiley

NOW ONLY £5

For a Yorkshireman who has spent half a lifetime in his native pit village, moving south is a mixed blessing and it is where Richard Matthewman's memories begin as he looks back with affection, humour, and no small measure of exasperation at 42 summers – and bitter winters. From boyhood through adolescence to marriage and a family, his stories are filled with a rich gallery of characters – the relations, friends and village notables of a vital community filled with life and incident but as brittle and unmistakably northern as the coal seams on which it was built.

Ian McMillan is a highly regarded poet, writer and performer from Barnsley. His work has led to extensive writing for Radio 1, 2, 3, 4 and Five Live as well as Yorkshire Television and BBC's *Newsnight Late Review*. He has been profiled on the *South Bank Show*.

The Richard Matthewman Stories were originally aired as a popular series on Radio 4. Co-author Martyn Wiley died in 1994.

Believe In The Sign

Mark Hodgkinson

NOW ONLY £5

Believe in the Sign is about a damp corner of England where nothing much but everything happens. It is a ‘sort of’ memoir of a normal, average boy who would have grown up happily average and normal but for a dark and perverse passion: the seductive lure of masochistic devotion to a no-hope, near-derelict football club.

But it isn't all joyously uplifting. Swimming through the murk is a swarm of snapshots that bring growing up in the 1970s and 1980s into startling focus. Mad kids and sad kids and good kids from broken homes; teenage wrecking parties; pub brawls; long existential marches along the motorway banking; the baiting of Elton John and a club chairman caught playing ‘away from home.’

Then Death bumps into Life. A girl is abducted and the town becomes a cave, the light sucked out. Meanwhile in the sunny shine outside, the future is afoot: cotton mills close down and supermarkets invade; school-leavers evolve into YOP-fodder and everyone's mum is holding Tupperware parties to get the down-payment on a colour telly.

Variouly serious and funny, steely-eyed and tender, Hodgkinson plumbs the depths but isn't afraid of the shallows. Dip a toe.

The Arms of The Infinite

Christopher Barker

NOW ONLY £5

Christopher Barker is the son of the cult writer Elizabeth Smart (*By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*) and the notorious poet, George Barker.

The Arms of the Infinite takes the reader inside the minds of both parents and, from their first fateful meeting and subsequent elopement, Barker candidly reveals their obsessive, passionate and volatile love affair.

He writes evocatively of his unconventional upbringing with his siblings in a shack in Ireland and, later, a rambling, falling-down house in Essex. Interesting and charismatic figures from the literary and art worlds are regular visitors and the book is full of fascinating cameos and anecdotes.

Barker is himself a gifted writer. An early draft of his memoir formed a cover story for the literary magazine, *Granta*.

The Second Half

Hunter Davies

NOW ONLY £5

The Second Half is another collection of personal pieces from the *New Statesman* covering three domestic seasons; the Euro Championship of 2004; and the 2006 World Cup when he unexpectedly became Wayne Rooney's top buddy.

'When a player gets sent off shouldn't we fans get some of our money back?' ponders Davies in one piece. 'I just wish he'd shave his stupid face,' he berates José Mourinho in another. And, goooaaal!, Hunt rumbles Sven early doors: 'He's a spare swede at a veggie gathering. What is the point of him?' he writes two years before England's World Cup debacle.

As ever, his outlook is fiercely that of the fan – disgruntled, bewildered and passionate – wondering what the players do with all that money, all those girls, and why match programmes are 'full of adverts or arse-licks for sponsors.'

And, finally, why did Peter Crouch? Because he saw Darren Bent, of course.

Mean With Money

Hunter Davies

NOW ONLY £5

At last, a book about money that tells it straight: put it under the bed. All of it. Sure, it makes for easy access to burglars but better them than the felons passing themselves off as financial advisors or acting as foot-soldiers for organisations with words like union, mutual, trust, alliance, equitable or assurance in their name.

Mean With Money, inspired by Hunter Davies' well-loved column in *The Sunday Times*, is wilfully short on practical advice but offers instead good humour and much-needed empathy as we face the corporate horror of high-handed and indifferent financial institutions.

Davies, one of Britain's most celebrated writers, also looks at ingenious ways to save money (cut your own hair, for starters) and what to do with it when it arrives. Along the way, he reveals details of his regular visits to McDonald's (it's free to use their toilets), the eccentric old ladies who staff his local Oxfam shop and the swim that cost him £333.

Famous for seminal works on The Beatles, football, and subjects as diverse as lottery winners and walking disused railway tracks, Davies is, once more, on top form. Go get 'em Hunt.

Kicked Into Touch (plus extra-time)

Fred Eyre

NOW ONLY £5

Fred Eyre's sporting life began full of promise when he became Manchester City's first ever apprentice. He never made their first team. In fact, he seldom made anyone's first team. Injuries played a part but limited talent was the greater curse. As he plummeted down the leagues he had something few footballers possess: a stud-sharp memory and an ability to write humorously about the sport he loves.

Originally published in 1981, *Kicked Into Touch* has become an enigma – selling more than a million copies yet still retaining cult status within the sport and among fans. This new version has been completely revised, extended and updated with a new set of photographs included.

It is set to reach a new generation of football fans looking for an antidote to the glib reportage of a sport lost to show business.

Zone of the Interior

Clancy Sigal

NOW ONLY £5

'The book they dared not print', *Zone of the Interior* is a lost classic of zonked-out, high-as-a-kite Sixties literature. It tells the story of Sid Bell, an American political fugitive in London, who falls under the spell of Dr. Willie Last (partly modelled on the radical 'anti-psychiatrist' R.D. Laing). This unlikely duo feast on LSD, mescaline, psilocybin and psycho-babble, believing that only by self-injecting themselves with schizophrenia will they become true existentialist guerrillas. Their 'purple haze' odyssey takes them into the eye of the hurricane – mental hospitals, secure units for the violent, the Harley Street cabal of the 'Sacred 7' and semi-derelict churches that come complete with an underground tank for the woman convinced she's a fish. Sigal's approach is richly sardonic and anti-establishment, of both right and left, in a jazz-influenced free-form prose, comic and serious, myth-puncturing and elegiac. Along the way Sigal, now an established Hollywood screen-writer, makes the case for a revolutionary period of mental health nursing whose task is as yet undone.

Looks & Smiles

Barry Hines

NOW ONLY £5

Looks and Smiles is a lost bulletin from the early-Eighties when the sun felt to have set permanently on hope and optimism. Unemployment was rampant, especially in the north where traditional industries were laid waste by Margaret Thatcher and her government.

Set amid this gloom, *Looks and Smiles* is an under-stated love affair between unemployed school-leaver Mick and Karen who works in a town centre shoe shop. They both want little more from life than a decent chance.

Hines never resorts to sentimentality, and hope, however slender, flickers always.

The book was originally published in 1981 and later made into a film by Ken Loach.

Diary of a Hyperdreamer

Bill Nelson

SOLD OUT

Bill Nelson is one of Britain's most respected creative forces. He came to prominence in the Seventies with *Be Bop Deluxe* and later *Red Noise*. He has collaborated with like-minds such as *Yellow Magic Orchestra*, David Sylvian, Harold Budd and Roger Eno and still releases a prolific amount of new music.

Diary of a Hyperdreamer is his day-by-day journal in which he ponders on life, art and the nation. His unique perspective is fed by a career creating and producing music, photography, painting and video.

Written from his home in a hamlet in north Yorkshire, he also includes engaging details of his family life, regular musings on mortality, along with reflections on his childhood and former life as a globe-trotting 'pop star.'

The Price of Coal

Barry Hines

NOW ONLY £5

Barry Hines is a master craftsman. While he is rightly celebrated for his classic, *A Kestrel for a Knave* (later filmed as *Kes*), his other work is equally powerful.

The Price of Coal is an uncompromising depiction of life at a colliery where beer, snooker, cricket and time spent on the allotment is the only respite from clawing coal from the earth.

A royal visit prompts the introduction of soft soap to the toilets, grass seeds scattered on the slag heap, and lashings of white paint across the site.

But when disaster strikes the superficial is forgotten as men fight for their lives in the darkness underneath collapsing seams of coal.

As ever, Hines proves himself an exemplary storyteller with a discerning eye for detail and when bolder, gaudier writing is long forgotten, his stays in the mind and nourishes it.

He has written a new foreword to the original text which was first published in 1979 and later adapted for television as two linked plays, directed by Ken Loach in the acclaimed *Play for Today* series.

Sum Total

Ray Gosling

NOW ONLY £5

Sum Total is a lost masterpiece of British literature, a restless, hungry riposte to America's finest Beat writers.

Written in 1961 when he was just 21, Gosling's itchy 'sort of' autobiography is a startlingly original take on the England of the early Sixties: rock 'n' roll, trains, dead-end jobs, drizzle, hitchhiking, jukebox cafés, trudging through hometown streets.

All the time he remains gloriously indulgent, disillusioned yet hopeful, tired but desperate for every new day.

Although now famous for hundreds of television and radio documentaries, in *Sum Total* Gosling reveals himself as a writer years ahead of his time, presenting a skew-whiff, arch and droll view of the world, both inside and out.

He has added a typically idiosyncratic and lengthy preface to the original text.

Love Songs

Crass

SOLD OUT

CRASS: a rural collective based in Essex, formed in 1977 of a diverse and eclectic group of individuals who operated for several years using music, art, literature and film as vehicles to share information and ideas. They also wanted to change the world.

This is a collection of words spanning those seven short years; a book of shock slogans and mindless token tantrums. An anthology of passionate love songs that sought to inspire a generation, and succeeded.

The Fan

Hunter Davies

SOLD OUT

Hunter Davies is one of Britain's most acclaimed writers and journalists. He has written over 30 books, among them modern classics, *The Beatles* and *A Walk Around The Lakes*. *The Glory Game*, published in 1972, is a benchmark work on football and is still in print today.

The Fan is a collection of very personal, unusual pieces about his life as a supporter. He observes football in its sovereignty of the late 1900s and early 2000s and tackles the big topics of the day: Beckham's haircuts, high finance, the price of pies, the size of match day programmes, the enormous wages, the influence of Sky TV, England's numerous managers.

Along the way, he also lets us into his home life, in London and the

Lake District, his family, his work, his tortoise, his poorly knee (caused by too much Sunday football).

Originally published in the *New Statesman* magazine, *The Fan* catches Davies at his very best and most amusing. It will appeal to supporters of any age, sex and loyalties.

Rule of Night

Trevor Hoyle

NOW ONLY £5

If the Sixties were swinging, the Seventies were the hangover – darker, nastier, uglier – especially if you lived on a council estate in the north of England.

Rule of Night was first published in 1975 and has since become a cult classic. It pre-dates the current vogue for 'hard men' and 'football hoolie' books by 25 years.

It is, however, much more than this. Trevor Hoyle creates a chillingly detailed world, where teenagers prowling rainy fluorescent-lit streets dressed as their *Clockwork Orange* anti-heroes. The backdrop is provided by Ford Cortinas, Players No.6, the factory, the relentless struggle to maintain hope.

Hoyle, who has since been published by John Calder (home to Samuel Beckett and William S. Burroughs), has added a fascinating afterword to his original book which has been out of print and highly sought-after for many years.

Footnote*

Boff Whalley

NOW ONLY £5

*Footnote** is clever, funny and irreverent – a story about a boy from the redbrick clichés of smalltown England reconciling Mormonism and punk rock, industrial courtesy and political insurrection.

He finds a guitar, anarchism and art terrorism and, after years (and years and years) of earnest, determined, honest-to-goodness slog-ging, his pop group † makes it big; that's BIG with a megaphone actually. They write a song that has the whole world singing and, funnily enough, it's an admirable summary of a life well lived – about getting knocked down and getting back up again.

Meanwhile, there's a whole world still happening: authentic lives carefully drawn, emotional but not sentimental and always with a writer's eye for detail. *Footnote* is not another plodding rock memoir but a compassionate, critical and sometimes cynical account of a life steeped in pop culture, lower division football and putting the world to rights.

* See page 293 of Boff Whalley's book.

† Boff Whalley is a member of Chumbawamba.

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