INTERNET ARCHIVE
WaybackMachine
http://trakmarx.com/2005_02/15_bybus.htm
Go
5 captures
6 May 2006 - 15 Jun 2019
JUL FEB JUL
15
2016 1996 2020
About this capture

THROUGH A LENS DARKLY

THROUGH A LENS DARKLY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN BROWTON (a.k.a. SEYMOUR BYBUSS OF THE SHAPES - 1976-80)

Part the First: Never Mind the Dog's Bollocks:

I had been taking photos since the age of nine, when I had a Kodak Brownie. I still have a lot of the prints; my family on top of a mountain in the Lake District, Hadrian's Wall, the monument at Waterloo and so on. I continued taking stuff through my teen years, and it was probably no surprise that I happened to have an Instamatic camera on my person on the evening of November 6th 1976, when a friend and I trekked to Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry to see The Clash and The Sex Pistols playing. Jean Encoule thought they would be of interest to the trakMARX readership, and so I have pleasure in sharing them with you, some twenty-nine years on (time flies like an arrow, but fruit flies like a banana). I guess it's a bit like buried treasure; these images have never been seen before. Jean Encoule reckons that that's Palmolive in the audience shot.

Later on are the images I took of the Slits at Tiffany's in Coventry, in 1977, I guess. I don't remember eff all about the gig, but I think they may have been supporting the Clash. I was not a great fan of the Slits, but the fact that they were an all-female band probably persuaded me to smuggle my camera in.

Then there are a few shots of the Banshees, again at Tiffany's in 1978. The reason for the camera this time was just that I was infatuated with the Ice Queen, and had been since I first laid eyes on her early incarnations (!). The reason she is gesturing angrily in one shot is that she was pissed off with all the gobbing being directed at her. She threatened to leave the stage if it carried on. Surprisingly for a Coventry audience, they did indeed pack in the spitting, and the gig continued. While I looked at these images again recently, I made out a male with longish blond-hair standing in the shadows to the right of Siouxsie. I remembered him doing some roadie tasks before the Banshees took to the stage. Could it be Budgie? Answers on a postcard to trakMARX H.Q. please. Needless to say, she was brilliant that night.

The Old Grey Whistle test images I took directly from the T.V. screen in 1977 (?) with regard to the above infatuation, I diligently researched the shutter speed setting needed to capture broadcast images without blurring (1/30 or slower). Come the night I set up my camera and shot a fair few frames.

Finally Billy Idol and Generation X. I think this was sometime in 1977, again at Lanchester Polytechnic. I liked their music at the time: all that Ready Steady Go and stuff. I think that at the time Billy Idol was very cute with his rocker/peroxide quiff/snarly lip look, and Gen X were extremely slick onstage. However, for me, nothing ever, ever reached the giddy heights of that mind-blowing Clash/Pistols gig (back to the top).

Banshees on tv!

Close up!

Banshees at Tiffanys, Coventry

Banshees at Tiffanys, Coventry

Banshees at Tiffanys, Coventry

Rare Pistols pic

Another rare Pistols pic

Mr J Rotton in full effect

Mr J Strummer in full effect

Joe hollers it out

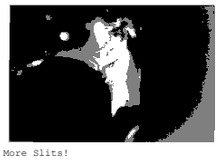
The Clash

Loverable scamp Billy Idol

Punkette!

Slits, Coventry

The fabulous Slits again!


More Slits!

Yes its an incredible bonanza of unseen Slits pics!

Sniffin Glue

Another Sniffin Glue

New Society. Punk gets disected

Old newspaper clipping!

Part the Second: "Wot's For Lunch, Mum? (Not the Shapes Again!)"

His excellency Signor Jean Encoule also kindly offered me some virtual espace in which to exhibit some unseen Shapes imagery, dating back to 1977. Obviously, I did not take many of these photographs, which should not detract from their interest, gentle reader.

Some will have been taken by the now-deceased Eric Labarthe, who was an excellent amateur photographer responsible for the infamous image that appeared in the NME of the Shapes with… well, shapes on their heads, and also the live shots at the Pump Room Gardens, Leamington that appeared in the liner notes on the "Songs For Sensible People" CD released by Overground in 1998. Other photos will have been taken by 'persons unknown' who were probably threatened with Ansell's-enemas if they did not take pictures of us at gigs.

The earliest images date from 1977 when The Shapes (pre-"Part Of The Furniture" EP line-up which at that time included Bill, a real-live bona-fide stuck-in-a-time-warp Leamington hippy (think Neil from the Young Ones) we pinched from a band called Ploog on bass, and Charlie Pullen, who went on to be FlackOff's drummer) played The Spa Centre in Leamington. The gig was noteworthy for the fact that we were banned that night from the venue because our then manager and spiv-about-town thought it would be right funny to dump a catering size can of cold baked-beans on the audience during "Wot's For Lunch Mum?" Oh how we laughed at the mess!

I took the picture of Ginny wearing an unpainted head-shape while I was living at Signor John Rivers house in Woodbine Street, Leamington and dreaming up a publicity image that would catapult us to fame and fortune (didn't work unfortunately but see. . .well, above), hence the papier-mache head-shape made from John's old copies of The Pink Paper. Also there is a fantastically spooky Close Encounters backlit shape-heads shot also featuring John River's sofa and two cats.

Also on ocular offer is a contact sheet of The Shapes playing The Crown Hotel in Leamington around the time the Part Of The Furniture E.P. was released. If you look closely, you should make out the line-up we used for the next year or so.

Other images are The Shapes at the Deadly Fun Hippodrome in Northampton circa 1978. I am sporting a sartorially excellent, if a little understated, Shapes stage-outfit with. . .well, shapes appliqued onto day-glo-dyed ex-charity shop clothes. Also, there are The Shapes at Dingwalls, London circa 1979. If you look closely you will see the famous Batman mask nailed to a column behind me.

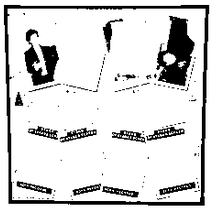
I've added in for posterity the original artwork that I designed for the never-released third Shapes single, which was to feature "Let's Go! (To Planet Skaro)", "My House Is A Satellite" and "Jennifer The Conifer". Some bastard nicked this artwork off me at the time; if they happen to read this, I'd like it back.

Finally, The Shapes travelled to Belfast for a second time in 1980 to play an outdoor festival type thing with The Membranes at Maysfield Leisure Centre at the behest of Signor Terri Hooley of Good Vibrations Records, (who appears in one of the images along with assorted Shapes and Membranes), luckily I had taken a camera with me, and remembered to put film in it! The gig shots of The Shapes also feature Harvey Jones of Birmingham band Ubik playing keyboards for us.

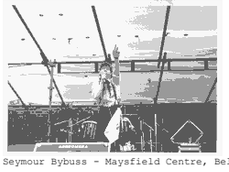
I hopest thee enjoyst the photographs, but be warned - his Excellency Count Jean Encoule XIII has threatened to give me virtual spazio in the next issue of trakMARX to show some other images from my photographic collection.

Thanks for having me, and hasta luego oh-punky-netty-people.

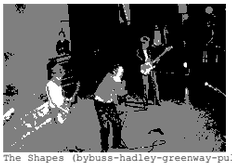
Unreleased sleeve artwork


Unreleased rear sleeve artwork

The best tea making shot ever in Trakmarx.


Seymour Bybuss - Maysfield Centre, Belfast (1980)

shape-heads - Woodbine street studios (1978)


The Shapes (bybuss-hadley-greenway-pullen)

The Shapes, Dingwalls, London 1979

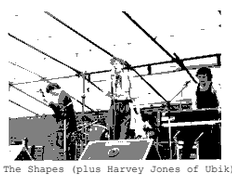
The Shapes & Membranes, Maysfield Centre, Belfast 1980

the shapes_ deadly fun hippodrome, northampton 1978

The Shapes, Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

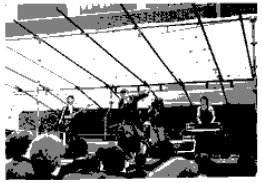
The Shapes plus Terri Hooley and Membranes, Belfast 1980

The Shapes Dingwalls, London 1979


The Shapes (plus Harvey Jones of Ubik), Maysfield Centre, Belfast

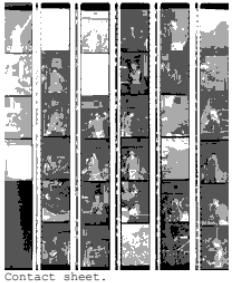
The Shapes (bybuss-hadley-greenway-pullen)

The Shapes, Dingwalls, London 1979



The Shapes (plus Harvey Jones of Ubik), Maysfield Centre, Belfast

The Shapes (plus Harvey Jones of Ubik), Maysfield Centre, Belfast



Contact sheet.

bbrowton@yahoo.co.uk

Ben Browton - NeverEverEverEverLand - tMx 19 - 04/05

Links
Check:

contact wastebin@trakMARX.com **trakMARX.com - Punk Rock and Roll**