



Ruefrex grew out of the Protestant working class stronghold of Belfast's Shankill Road, eventually establishing a line-up of Allan Clarke (vocals), Tom Coulter (bass), Jackie Forgie (guitar) and Paul Burgess (drums). Burgess and Coulter had formed Roofwrecks at the end of 1977 at the Boys Model School on Ballysillan Road, rehearsing in the evenings in the cellar of the Coulter family home in Deerpark Road. Originally Coulter tried out as singer, but when that didn't work out Ivan Kelly stepped in. "Like most people our age and at that time," Paul



Burgess remembers, "we were completely immersed in music and had been from about 13 or 14 years old. It was a badge of honour that identified you as in or out of the gang. Coulter and I were pretty precious about all of this. I think the Glam period was probably our time. We were crazy about Bowie, Lou Reed, Alice Cooper, Roxy Music, Mott the Hoople. However, punk meant that we were free to actually emulate what would have otherwise been just a fantasy. Also, the energy of the music, the immediacy of it, the political rebellion and the accessibility of three chords, all made for a unique catalyst. In summary, it wouldn't have happened without punk."

They rehearsed at the Glenbryn Community Centre, which hosted most of their early gigs. Soon afterwards Roofwrecks supported Stiff Little Fingers at the Trident in Bangor. As well as encouragement, SLF's Brian Falloon offered Burgess a spare bass drum. It's worth pointing out that while SLF were routinely painted as Northern Ireland's "political punk band", the reality was that Ruefrex were far more explicit and their focus more sustained. Burgess: "Much has been made of the explosive nature of punk rock in the unique crucible of Belfast, and I largely agree with this. I think many people felt that we were uniquely qualified to integrate into the 'No future' generation. A key difference between London punks and their Belfast counterparts was the sheer belief and commitment in the political force for change. I've read that many in the capital were more propelled by the fashionista side of it. I believe in hindsight that punk was the last truly genuine fusion of politics, rebellion and music in a popular culture mass movement."

They concurrently ran a fanzine, titled Complete Control after the Clash song, which would be illicitly run off the photocopier by Kelly's mother at the office she cleaned at. And while



Burgess worked on turning his poems into lyrics, their set list included at least three Wire songs, plus the Hot Rods' 'Do Anything You Wanna Do', the Adverts' 'Gary Gilmore's Eyes', Sham 69's 'Ulster Boy' - an interesting choice - and the Monkees' 'Last Train To Clarksville'. Original songs that did survive included 'One By One', based in part on the James Plunkett novel Strumpet City, and 'The Ruah', its title taken from the Hebrew for the Holy Ghost.

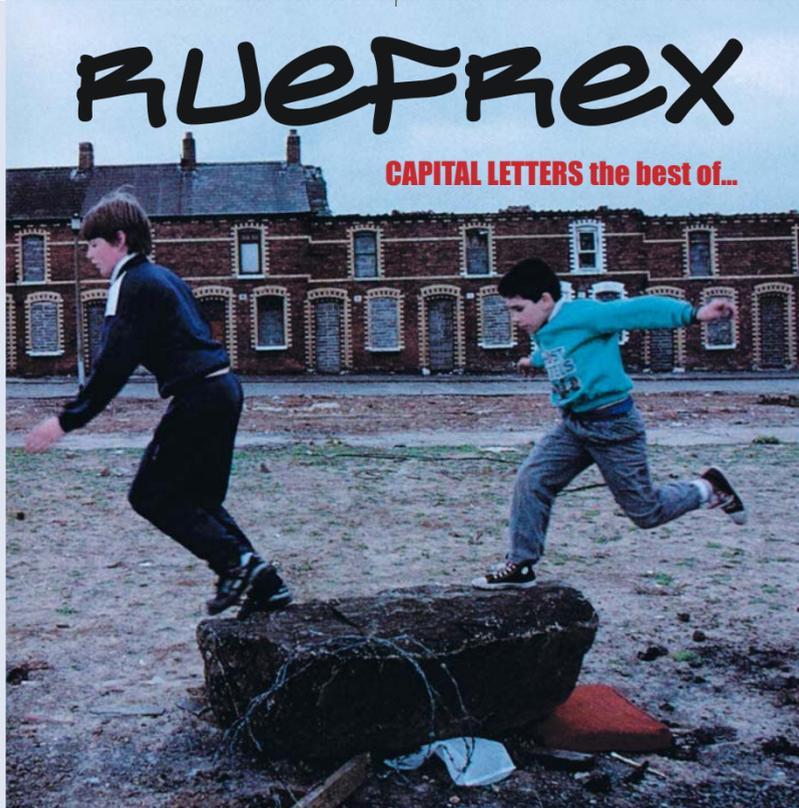
They decided to alter their name to Ruefrex as a half-hearted play on punk nomenclature of the time. It was a nonsense word that we enjoyed headfucking journalists with! The best theory I heard was it was an amalgamation of the French (Rue) and the Latin (Rex) to reveal... Street Kings! I'll take that! At this time, April 1979, they also lost their lead singer, Kelly joining the Wall. He was replaced by local hard man Allan Clarke. Terri Hooley of Good Vibrations offered them the chance to release their debut EP. "We just turned up and recorded," Burgess recalled in an interview with Tony McGartland in 2002. "We really had to hassle him to have it packaged and released though, but in hindsight he was likely short of money."

The EP featured 'Cross The Line', a call for an end to sectarian in-fighting, in keeping with the group's policy of playing to



audiences on both sides of the divide. The song inspired a BBC Northern Ireland documentary, shown in July 1980, which shared its title. Later they would play benefits for the integrated secondary school Lagan College. Their opposition to sectarianism brought them enemies in both camps. "We evoked the wrath of both communities, although it was probably more politically incorrect and damaging to be portrayed as the 'Prod' band as opposed, say, to That Petrol Emotion as the "oppressed" RC one. You'll still find - in regard to arts and cultural undertakings - that the Ulster Protestant community must overcome these initial prejudicial comparisons with the perceived cultural oppression of South Africa, Israel and the like. You can only sing with credibility about your own experience and culture. Or, of course, reject it and adopt some bogus stance. On the personal endangerment front, there are plenty of stories that I won't recount here. But they involved a gig in the killing grounds of the Shankill Butchers; being chased at gunpoint from the Harp after playing Sham 69's 'Ulster Boy' and having a succession of police and ambulances sent to my parents house on the pretext of my murder! This followed a volley of pool balls through their windows after interviews I gave legitimising (in theory) a conditional United Ireland. I guess we must have been getting to the right people!"

Ruefrex played three more support shows to Stiff Little Fingers at Cork City



Hall, Mansion House, Dublin, and the Ulster Hall, Belfast, during September 1980. It was the Mansion House gig that saw the beginning of the end of their relationship with Stiff Little Fingers. Targeted by local Catholics, who'd decided their singer might enjoy having cigarette butts extinguished on his person, Clarke responded by

However, Ruefrex stalled when Good Vibrations went under. Clarke left to get married and Burgess, having previously worked at Short Brothers aircraft manufacturers, took up teaching and started his degree. Coulter and Forgie messed around with various musical projects that didn't come to fruition. It was four years before



Photo by Andrew Catlin

undoing his studded belt and coshing the nearest heckler. Later shows saw widespread chaos and destruction, almost all of it caused by Ruefrex. Stiff Little Fingers began to distance themselves from the band. Burgess: "Widespread chaos? We were misunderstood..."

The members of Stiff Little Fingers were comfortably older, though both bands came from the same community and attended the same school. "We had a close friend who died in a confused incident in West Belfast. This guy lived close to Burnside but - as he hung with us - he



derided their musical pretensions as we did. We were very pissed then, when his story appeared as 'Wasted Life', an SLF anthem. In a nutshell, we didn't believe that they ever had the cajones to occupy or deliver on their claims. There was a credibility gap that was fuelled as well by some careful management to make sure that they remained on the fence. Of course we were jealous as fuck when they were on Top Of The Pops and swore we would never do it!"

they recorded again.

They reconvened at the prompting of Dublin friend Gareth Ryan, who had set up Kabuki Records in London. In the interim, Forgie had formed Colenso Parade, though he still featured on the subsequent release, drawn from a Downtown Radio live session in March 1980. 'Capital Letters', a cryptic anti-nuclear song, was a fantastic effort, building incrementally from Burgess's 'New Rose' like intro, to a roaring crescendo. Yet absolutely no-one, seemingly, bought it. Gary Ferris was recruited as the new guitarist in time for the follow-up, 'Paid In Kind', released on One To One Records, a label set up by Keith McCormack in tribute to the band's first EP. The b-side, 'The Perfect Crime', came from the same Downtown radio session that produced 'Capital Letters'.

But their big break, in a story where there were few such good auspices, came with 'The Wild Colonial Boy', an attack on Americans donating blindly to terrorist organisations without reckoning on the consequences, specifically Noraid. "We recorded 'Wild Colonial Boy' off our own bat, with our own money and said fuck it, we're not going to compromise at all," Burgess told McGartland. "So we stuck the Armalite on the cover, put the lyrics on the back and didn't expect any BBC play because it was too hot to handle. It was going to be our last shot. This was the song we felt had to be done. For every reason. Because of what we were trying to say."

Strangely, it all came together. Janice Long began playing the single, gave the band a session, and that led to performances of 'Capital Letters' and 'Paid In Kind' on the BBC's Channel

One programme, and 'The Wild Colonial Boy' and 'The Ruah' on Channel 4's The Tube. In its wake came encouraging press notices. "An audience becoming increasingly nervous at the sight of Ruefrex singer Allan Clarke," recounted Zig Zag. "To all appearances a nasty piece of work is swinging around the stage, a perspiringly muscular urban Rambo singing the song 'Wild Colonial Boy', an economically vicious satire on US pro-Republicanism (safe from a distance). A political stance taken by these Belfast sons on neither side of the line, they claim, simply against murderous stupidity." The success of 'Wild Colonial Boy' resulted in a new deal with Kasper Records via Stiff's Dave Robinson, who licensed the label. Flowers For All Occasions was released in 1986, its title-track denouncing the then prevalent sectarian murders from a studiously neutral position ("Orange lilies, Shamrock green/Bloody scarlet, poppy Red").

The other standout was 'Even In The Dark Hours', demonstrating that Burgess and Ruefrex could also write perfectly framed contemporary rock songs dwelling on subjects outside the troubles. It was this ability that led to whispers they might become the new U2. Certainly there were many admirers of Burgess's writing - Tony Clayton-Lea and Richie Taylor declared him "a songwriter of immeasurable power and substance" in their book Irish Rock and Bono was an early fan. Did the pigeonholing as a 'political band' grate? Burgess: "We were conscious of the political tag, and whilst that was obviously a very important part of what we did, we were at pains to accentuate some degree of autonomy from it. As a writer, I was very keen to explore more conventional literary topics with universal and timeless themes. As usual it was the press who insisted on pigeonholing. Interviews became very one-dimensional to the chagrin of myself and particularly other band members, who rightly complained that no-one ever wanted to talk about the music, only the words."

However, their progress was disrupted with the departure of Coulter, with the well travelled Gordon Blair (ex-SLF, Rudi, Outcasts) replacing him, while Burgess persuaded Forgie to rejoin. 'The Wild Colonial Boy', with production by Mick Glossop, was reissued on a 12-inch with a new cover (a wee drummer boy accompanied by the stars and stripes). Suddenly the mainstream beckoned, with cover features in the Melody Maker (who asked: "Are they the most important band in Britain?") The same feature played up Clarke's 'macho' image in a piece that verged on the homoerotic. There was also a full roster of support slots to the Pogues - a very unlikely coupling indeed - and SLF.

But the projected second album never arrived, principally because the band's core creative partnership, between Burgess and Coulter, was over. Although a mini-album did eventually emerge, the live studio snapshot Political Wings (sometimes referred to as Playing Cards With Dead Men), Burgess decided to pull the plug. He has since gone on to study at Oxford and Cork Universities, where he now lectures, and completed his PhD. He has published two books - A Crisis of Conscience: Moral ambivalence and education in Northern Ireland and The Reconciliation Industry: Community relations, community identity and social policy in Northern Ireland. His latest poetry book is titled after an old Ruefrex song, 'Correct Your Fireside Manner'.

Forgie, who is a community worker in Belfast, formed a new band, the Black Taxi Ballads, in 2002, cutting a song, 'Shadows Over Windsor Park', which dealt with the Neil Lennon incident (awarded the Northern Irish captaincy, he was subjected to death threats from loyalists because he was a Catholic). Coulter and Kelly work for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Clarke is a taxi driver.

Ruefrex reformed to play at the benefit for Terri Hooley at the Empire Music Hall, Belfast, in September 2003. Stiff Little Fingers' drummer Brian Falloon filled the drum stool for the absent Burgess, who was in America. They also



Photo by Andrew Catlin

appeared at the launch party for Guy Trelford and Sean O'Neill's celebration of the Belfast punk scene, It Makes You Want To Spit. At both events, they were overwhelmed by the residual affection they were able to tap into.

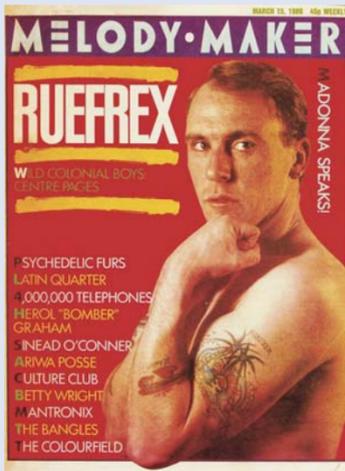
Partially thanks to the excellent It Makes You Want To Spit, the impression that Northern Ireland only ever produced two punk bands of worth is now retreating. What comes across fiercely is the fact that Belfast punks considered the London media to be fantastically gullible in their deference to Stiff Little Fingers and the Undertones while effectively ignoring a vibrant creative hinterland. It's all very well putting the story straight now, but it's only happened retrospectively. How frustrating was it at the



Photo by Tom Sheehan

time? Burgess: "Incredibly frustrating! You always believe that you're much better than everyone else anyhow. But to have to overcome the hostility and indifference from the usual sources only to run into the same frustrations from those who should know better. It simply had the effect of reinforcing our already keen prejudices. The fact that we did secure some modicum of recognition in the national music press - and without any compromise - still stands as testament to the music and the project and attitude."

Written and co-ordinated by Alex Ogg



ONE BY ONE

"Shall we sit down together for a while, here on the hillside? Where we can look down on the city in the sunset, so old, so sick with memories. Old woman, some say are damned, but you I know will walk the streets of paradise. The old woman said no."

By Dennis Johson
From the foreword of 'Strumpet City' (James Plunkett)

See the mighty all have fallen. The townspeople hide and cry. Bodies laid under tarpaulin, there were many more to die. Seeking refuge in the basement, shaking fists toward the skies. Orphaned children seek replacement, accusation in their eyes

Panic, Panic, respected citizens are on the run.
Panic, Panic, all the kings and queens are dying one by one.

Metropolises painted still. Standards slump where chaos reigns. Seeking Hamlyn's sacred hill, frozen snakes in traffic lanes. Believers climb the only towers. Bibles clutched in bloody hands. Authorities clear the grounds of flowers, to bury friends of Uncle Sam.

Panic, panic, masses try to find a chosen one.
Panic, panic, false prophets profit always one by one.

DON'T PANIC (In a Siberian climate, cuz the pendulum swings both ways)

Butter,
What a novelty.
TC turn it on to fuzz,
Cuz I must be going mad
Dad just phoned the audio.
Oh, I get but I don't want.
Wanton boys must flies accept,
Septic throats and sticky buns,
I must be going mad.
What's so wrong with that?
I hoped you'd understand.
All around,
I'll round it all.
All I want is all you'll get.
Getting pretty in your pantry,
Panting at your window pane.
Pain I Love,
But painful silence?
Silent science says it all.
I must be going mad.
Yeah, I must be going mad.
What's so wrong with that?
I hoped you'd understand.

CAPITAL LETTERS

"Take a letter Mullah Hussain, mark it; White House, USA,
now attach it to this warhead,
that's the price they'll have to pay."

"Take a letter Miss Morretta, and despatch it right away,
please inform supreme headquarters,
that tomorrow is the day."

Take a letter, wrote the Lord Mayor, on his desk of varnished teak, and inform the county council,
that the townhall's closed next week.

"Take a letter", moaned Herr Schmidt, as he read gold left again,
"...that I've cancelled all appointments,
seems the whole world's gone insane."

"I've read the letters," cried the newsman,
to the hushed and captive crowd,
"and they tell of word from Baghdad, to expect a mushroom cloud."

"We've read the letters," wailed the children,
in their final throes of pain,
"and so we've paid our postage duties, Christ's been crucified again."

MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH GOD FORGIVE YOUR DEBTORS CUZ THEY'RE KEEPING THE AIRWAVES OPEN FOR CAPITAL LETTERS.

APRIL FOOL

Today, it's never been greyer before.
Delay, in bus queues and chilled to the core.
I know, those eyes, they're watching me still.
I can't help but feel that they're stalking their kill...I'm not alone.

Tonight, car noise spoils the calm of my room.
In fright, lone dogs close their ranks and resume,
To howl and let me know I'm not alone.
Alright, so who's on the end of the phone...I'm not alone.

Despair, it's 12 o'clock, was that the door?
I'll swear, a foot-fall was heard on the floor.
Okay, whoever is down there come out.
If that's you, then you better stop messing about...cut it out.

Oh no, I don't think that's funny at all.
Oh oh, there's a man with a mask in the hall,
Keep calm, remember to maintain your cool,
What's that? What do you mean April Fool...April Fool!

Is it a trick or treat?

THE PERFECT CRIME

"The wait was long,
I took my time,
as stealth befits the perfect crime.
My mind made up,
the seed they'd sown,
and all that time I'd never known,
my wife, my joy, I'd loved so much,
lay naked to my best friend's touch,
for I was taken unawares,
as early home I climbed the stairs.
I heard their breath, their talk of love,
I heard it clearly come from above.
I'll play for time,
yes I will wait,
and then decide their perfect fate.
I'll lure them to this empty street,
whilst promising old friends we'll meet,
and as my blade shines and sings,
I'll pass them on to better things."
"For it is written, it is said,
adulterers are better dead,
because the bible tells me so,
God's will be done,
for God will know.
And if in chains ye shall bind me,
the Holy Ghost will set me free.
A great reward in heaven I'll gain,
though men will point, accuse insane.
Oh, I'll be gentle as a feather,
and after all they'll be together.
Ah, here they come now,
right on time,
and so to work,
the perfect crime."

THE WILD COLONIAL BOY

Well I'm the Emerald Isle's own son,
I was born on stateside, Wisconsin.
And your troubles sound like Hollywood,
they sound real good to me.

The rush to be Irish now is on,
the queue is standing ten miles long,
and would-be green men stand in line,
to swap their stories tall.

Well I have traced my past right back,
I've even checked and double checked,
and I'm as sure as ever now that I'm a leprechaun.

And I know that if I get my chance,
that I can jig, and reel, and dance,
cuz in between the killing that's what all us Irish do.

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR:
"Eat up all our TV dinner,
open up your wallet wide,
and let your green be seen."

A people cannot live that way,
or so the songs and leaflets say,
and all this time we're trying hard,
to keep the niggers down.

What with collection time and all,
with charities, functions and balls,
it really gives me such a thrill,
to kill from far away."

CORRECT YOUR FIRESIDE MANNER

The chairs and the tables,
casting shadows going nowhere
meeting no-one...
but the doors and the windows.
They know the things that no-one ever tells you.
The cracked pots and the cutlery,
left in cupboards,
locked in drawers.
Shut away from the children.
And the ashtrays, yes the ashtrays,
have burned black for your pleasure.
The cushions and the colour set,
closed down now and folded neatly,
safe to go to bed yet?
Still the embers, yes the embers, feel their power
and glow with fury.

And up there in the bathroom,
taps that babble and gurgle, drip and talk 'til morning.
And the bottles, ah the bottles,
swapping sweeties with the babies.
Meanwhile in the cellar, refrigeration fooling no-one.
Immersion danger pulsing red.
Whilst the heaters and the burners
still dine on midnight toxic.
So rest if rest is needed,
having de-plugged and decoded.
Close your eyes now.
Close your eyes.

Whilst the forces and the energies will resume obeying no-one.

EVEN IN THE DARK HOURS

Mornings come and go,
Times passed me by
And I don't feel like food anymore
My mail lies unopened,
the phone doesn't ring,
and I'm lying alone on the floor.
What use are my friends,
Well they give me advice
About how I should make a new start
Well it's alright for them,
They can listen and learn
While another kid pours out his heart.
I've read every line
But still I refuse
To accept that you're not coming back
Well they're too many heartaches?
Well maybe it's me
But I'd change if I just had you back
And even in the dark hours, I hope and hope
Days come and go,
Times passed me by

Never thought it would come to this
But now it's begun, I don't think that I
Could stop even if I tried.
Mornings come and go,
Times passed me by
And I don't feel like food anymore
My mail lies unopened, my mail lies unread
And I'm dying alone on the floor

PAID IN KIND

MacLavery lies drunk,
in doorway 51,
his state conceals the mission, his coat conceals the gun.
To kill the last man on the foot patrol,
is what the orders say,
and soon,
"no sweat about it, we'll have ya down on Galway Bay."
The street lamps wash blue silhouettes,
dogs bark and howl somewhere,
for effect MacLavery warbles 'The Londonderry Air'.
Strangled notes that slur together,
forgotten words are forced to rhyme,
shop front windows; 'Cut Price Discount',
the only witness to the crime.
On down the road, in single file,
hugging shadows, feeling lost,
more statistics, more reminders,
of a weary, pointless cost.
Now MacLavery shakes with readiness,
his hand is on cold steel,
for the animal that he's become has forgotten how to feel.
"Are ye alright mister?" comes from nowhere,
"Are ye hurt or anything?"
MacLavery's finger on the trigger,
voice forgotten how to sing.
From the depths of a too large parka,
all curious and brassy bold,
comes the voice of Eamon Duffy, eyes of blue and ten years old.
Now the men are near upon him,
English oaths and English talk,
but little Eamon Duffy declines to take a walk.
Instead he sits right down beside him,
"hey mister, what's your name?"
And all MacLavery's thinking is, "I'm not the one to blame."

Two young boys died for nothing,
in that mindless senseless act.
Another in the riots of the twisted, tangled facts.
And MacLavery just ran, and never looked behind,
to finish three months later,
in Armagh.....and paid in kind.....

BY THE SHADOW-LINE

"Hold hard and fast", the captain said,
"give us this day our daily bread...",
"if the tide turns now we'll all be dead."



By the shadow-line.

All down below deck hummed a sad refrain,
Of love and death and life and pain.
When you reach rock bottom you come up again.
By the shadow-line.

Some will be lost, some will be found,
Some will be spared and some will be drowned,
But the cabin boy laughed and the mate just frowned.
By the shadow-line.

Loose your innocence as the wall clocks chime,
Loose your sweet young life when it's in its prime,
And never forget the march of time.
By the shadow-line.

So set the sails with no course in mind,
Leave the hopes and the dreams and the doubts behind,
And return at last to your very own kind.
By the shadow-line.

IN THE TRAPS

Starting prices favour failure,
gates are open, heads are down.
No tails wag with paper seizure,
a silent pause, a cheated frown.

Off and running, jumping questions,
stroking comma's flustered brow.
Wished I'd taken running lessons,
barked up wrong trees, too late now.

What's the odds they're going to give?
Certificates are now held high.
Some must die so you can live,
your leash, the hallowed old school tie.

Competitors gain thorough-bred,
your kennel owners only mumble,
pointed ears still hear what's said,
"you warped, unwanted, wasting mongrel."

FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

The tests had come back positive, it rained all that April day,
They could stay and face the banners or they could leave and run away.
Now her Mother's found the letters, there was nothing more to say.
In a gown one size too big, she swore her youth and life away.

There were flowers for all occasions,
As the bridesmaids gathered 'round,
Confetti, petals, broken dreams lay scattered on the ground.

Midnight snacks became a nuisance, morning sickness came and went,
She worked hard to fix the spare room, he worked hard

to pay the rent.
While she laboured in the ward, he kept his panic stricken seat,
Sweater pulled on inside out, odd shoes on different feet.

There were flowers for all occasions,
And cigars and smiles and sighs.
He's got his daddy's temper, he's got his mammy's eyes.

The child was not to know his father, who would die one winter's day,
In a dark and stinking alleyway, always the innocent who pay.
And the clergy sang it out, their damnation and their prayers,
And police and politicians blame sectarian affairs.

There were flowers for all occasions,
As they shouldered heavy grief,
Sickly sweetness filled our senses, they had kept the service brief.

There were flowers for all occasions,
Floral tributes to the dead.
Orange lilies, shamrock green,
Bloody scarlet poppy red.

THE LENDERS OF THE LAST RESORT

The lenders of the last resort,
Must love someone,
They know their time is short,
The lenders of the last resort.

The keepers of an open mind,
Can see both sides,
But must leave one behind,
The keepers of an open mind.

The speakers of a mighty truth,
Must give their lives,
As lasting, final proof,
The speakers of a mighty truth.

The lenders of the last resort,
Put down their pens,
And file their last reports,
The lenders of the last resort.

DAYS OF HEAVEN

A burned out pub, a playground for the bored,
a Cyclops skylight offers sanctuary.
A boy peeps through the corrugated iron,
from the safety of his world within a world.
Far away from sirens in his shell,
days of heaven, nights of hell.

Little fortresses of common love,
football burst on glass-topped backyard walls.

'Johnny 7', 'Hunts' and 'Hide 'n Go.'
"Best prices paid for copper and for lead."
But with darkness the stones and rubble fell,
days of heaven, nights of hell.

A generation built from red-bricked streets
all proud, and hard, and honourable men.
One same purpose, that of right and wrong,
family and jobs their main concern.
Another side the newsmen seldom tell,
days of heaven, nights of hell.

PLAYING ADULT GAMES

"Ice cream, lollipops and all free today" The Child Catcher, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

All the rest voted yes, so I thought that I'd better agree.
With the lad from the Kesh and the man at the back, we made three.
I wanted to ask them why they wouldn't do,
The things that they wanted me to go through...

And they said...

"Oh, you're playing grown up cops and robbers now.
Oh, you've paid your dues, your oath, your pledge, your vow.
Oh, never worry, worry never helps,
Just playing adult games, collecting cowboy scalps."

It was square, and small and squat and brown paper clad.
And I thought of the things that I'd done and the times that I'd had.
I've visions of mayhem as I close the bar door.
Still cannot believe this would even be a score.

And they said...

"Oh, we've told you son, you're not to think that way,
and don't forget about the trigger-switch delay.
Oh, you faceless men, you'll answer for this yet.
Just playing adult games, deserving what you get."

On the line at the top it said 'prime and retire right away'.
And they knew that I knew, you can bet that I didn't delay.
The room it revolved with the sound of a bang
My fate was resolved, my hospital ward sang; -

And they sang...

"Oh, you've played their game, you must have been insane.
Oh, just inhale, forget about the pain.
Oh, you got more, than you bargained for.
Just playing adult games, and no-one's keeping score."

Moving counters, throwing dice, playing adult games.
Naïve children pay the price, fulfilling some ones aims.
Moving counters, throwing dice, playing adult games

THE FIGHTIN' 36th

"They are not bitter at the slaughter of their own people,
in a battle judged necessary by those not of their class,
not of their country. They are not angry, not bitter, do not protest, they are proud.
Such is the tragedy of the ordinary Ulster Protestant."
Geoffrey Bell

A silence falls
with front line dawn,
and Private Samuel Dodds
needs God to lean upon.

The sun shines down,
the gas clouds clear,
the Woodvale cricket club
are keeping quiet their fear.

The shells pour down,
the whistles blow,
the Cloughmills L.O.L.
have nowhere left to go.

Through hell fire's rage,
with bayonets fixed,
the cry was "no surrender"
from the fightin' 36th.

BETWEEN HAVING AND WANTING

When the dust has settled on forgotten years,
You'll remember me with the taste of salty tears.
Did head rule heart in our last act
Can faith and feeling outweigh fact
The easy option looked too good,
you took it like he hoped you would.
Between these lines, beyond what's said,
what's mine, was yours, was ours, is dead.
So if we should meet, I'll wear my smiling mask,
remembering the only thing I asked,
was that you trust me,
trust me,
trust me.

PLAYING CARDS WITH DEAD MEN

The Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Robin Eames,
has said he is gravely concerned about the peace process in the North. He was very concerned that the removal of alienation on the part of one section of the community there was being done "at the terrible expense



Photo by Eugene Adebari

of alienating another". Speaking to reporters during the Church of Ireland General Synod in Dublin, he referred to Dr John Reid's description of Northern Ireland as "a cold place for Protestants". Many Protestants believed this to be true, including clergy with whom he had discussed it, he said. That was the perception, and in Northern Ireland perception quickly became reality. "

To keep us down in days gone by
you played the orange card,
and European fields of war, like sheep,
we'd rush to guard.

Six county men have looked to you
in past and present strife,
six county men again have found
you're betting with their life.

"And you're playing cards with deadmen
but you're losing every hand,
you cheat my people past and present,
we'll live and die upon this land."

You've used our home, a testing ground
for ballot box and gun,
you've raised our wages, bought our souls,
we're learning one by one.

You've dealt us all the Erin deal
now come and count the cost,
you've gambled with democracy,
you've gambled and you've lost.

"And you're playing cards with deadmen
but you're losing every hand,
you cheat my people past and present,
we'll live and die upon this land."

MIDDLEGROUND

Amidst all historical error,
amongst buildings gutted with flames,
comes a voice over laden with terror,
from a land that exists with two names.

Red runs her drains and her gutters,
and covers her ground in a soak.
For this land has been nourished and fed,
blood and tears rent from hearts being broken.

From the deep seated fears, of two cultures,
where so much, yet so little, has changed,
Fitting feast for the street corner vultures,
Who in truth, hope that none's rearranged.

And all of this making no difference.
And all of this seeing no end.
To every solution a problem.
In every road forward a bend.

MIDDLEGROUND; Two must learn.

MIDDLEGROUND; Two must learn.

DISCOGRAPHY:

One By One 7-inch EP (Good Vibrations GOT 8 1979)
One By One/Cross The Line/Don't Panic

Capital Letters/April Fool 7-inch (Kabuki KAR 7 April 1983)

Paid In Kind/The Perfect Crime 7-inch (One By One 1x1 1984)

Flowers For All Occasions LP (Kasper KATLP 1 1985)
The Wild Colonial Boy/In the Traps/The Ruah/Mr Renfield Reflects/Correct Your Fireside Manner/The Sources Of The Energies/By the Shadowline/Paid in Kind/Even in the Dark Hours/One by One/Flowers For All Occasions

The Wild Colonial Boy (Parts 1 & 2)/Even In The Dark Hours 7-inch (Kasper KAS 2 1986)
(12-inch version, 12 KAS 2, adds 'The Wild Colonial Boy (extended version)')

In The Traps/Leaders Of The Last Resort 7-inch (Kasper KAS 3 1986)
(also available as a 12-inch, 12 KAS 3)

Political Wings mini-LP (Flicknick BLUNT 041 1987)
Political Wings/On Kingsmill Road/Playing Cards With Dead Men/Days Of Heaven/Playing Adult Games (Recorded live at the Chocolate Factory Studio, London. Other songs cut at this session, 'Fightin' 36th', 'April Fool', 'Between Having And Wanting', 'Middle Ground', remained unreleased - until now!)

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