



THE ART OF FLYING

INTERVIEW WITH

JIMMY WREN

6

Introduction

PRACTI- CALITIES AND FLYING THE CITY

05

Fly-posting is an equal opportunity activity. Pretty much anyone can do it. But why would you? Routes into becoming a fly-poster vary. A gas fitter whose spent years working in confined spaces, encountering hazardous materials such as asbestos might decide to throw it all in and go 'on the brush'.

Or you might have a burning desire to have the walls of the city bear witness to injustice or wrongdoing. XR would be a case in point. Probably best to not fly-post Palestine Action posters though, not until Starmer and his ilk develop a moral conscience.

Another time-honoured way into the practice of sticking posters on property that doesn't belong to you is, of course, promotion. You might get so good at fly-posting for your own or a mate's band that other people ask, maybe even pay you, to put posters up promoting their gigs. But practical considerations need to be borne in mind.

First: The kit! Unless you're starting work for an established firm, the rookie fly-poster will inevitably begin with wallpaper paste mixed in a plastic bucket (or, heaven forbid, PVA glue) and use a paint brush to paste up. Or a wallpaper paste brush. Some graduate to wielding brooms. There are those who use a paint roller to paste the surface they're posting (idiots!). Rumours abound regarding a certain Canadian who toted staple guns, one in each hand. Presumably an aide held the poster up against the hoarding as he gave it both 'barrels'. Not too useful if you're posting on brick, or metal, or glass. Plus, they had to take early retirement due to RSI in their wrists.

Observant folk quickly realise the ultimate kit is already used by bona fide outdoor ad. hoarding bill-posters. A ten-inch natural bristle pasting brush with a 3ft long handle is king. Pair this with an oval shaped galvanised steel bucket and we're talking professional. The oval shape means that legitimate billboard bill-posters can hang the bucket between the hoarding and the ladder they're working off. For the purposes of street level fly-posting an oval bucket is preferable as it doesn't bump against your legs.

Method? Paste the urban surface, put the poster on the pasted area. With practice this can be done holding the poster by a corner in one hand and using the brush to introduce the poster onto the pre-pasted surface. This wet surface allows for a degree of adjustment so as to finely position the poster. Get it up straight. When it's up go over the poster with more paste. Using this method will mean

creasing remain as the poster dries but arguably this lends authenticity. Wrinkles on the face of the city. If you're out on your own, get into a rhythm of putting up a couple of posters and then looking behind you to be aware of potential predators/junkies/thieves/anti-fly-posting psychos. Repeat until you're finished flying the site.

Are there tactics to mitigate against sticky hands? Yes. One example: have your 'better half' - pardon the outmoded lingo - prepare a damp flannel in a Tupperware container so you can wipe your hands between postings. A time-honoured but less sophisticated method is to wipe the pastey hand under your armpit. Best to use the armpit opposite the hand you're posting with. A radical design innovation that somewhat ameliorated the problem of gloopy hands arrived in the form of half a tennis ball. Pierced by cutting a cross in the middle with a Stanley knife and pushed up the shaft of your long-handled brush, the half tennis ball acts like a little cup that collects paste drips before they reach your hand. Game changer!

The aspiration, of course, is not to get paste on your hands in the first place. This is eminently achievable, first by remembering to tap the brush on the side of your metal bucket before pasting, then not wielding it like a whirling dervish. Be quick but efficient, the less time your brush is above head height, the less likely drips will run down the handle shaft.

What, when and where? The paper your posters are printed on is a serious consideration (as ideally is developing good relations with a printer). 115gsm blue backed poster paper is the Holy Grail for posting. It's more durable than regular paper. The white side is the surface on which words and images are printed. The blue back affords better opacity, ensuring the posters being covered up do not ghost through the new ones being installed.

When to fly-post is a moveable feast. Some prefer to go out under cover of darkness but the fact that streets are deserted can make you more conspicuous to passing patrol cars, private security officers, etc. Fly-posting at busy times of day can afford a degree of protection from the powers that be but then you will be more susceptible to interference from random members of the public. Unauthorised fly-posting challenges norms of social behaviour and because of this some people feel duty bound to comment, even to intervene physically. NB: It's never worth getting into a fight over sticking up bits of paper.

Where you post will depend on your intentions. Protest posters might best appear on sites that are related to the objects of ire. If you're an eco-activist, for example, the headquarters of companies that are profiting from environmental pollution. But they'll more likely appear peppered across walls, hoardings, bus shelters, defunct phone boxes or other street furniture. When promoting an event or a gig, fly-posting the local vicinity or near other venues already frequented by the crowd you want to attract is a tried and tested approach. If fly-posting isn't your regular job, it's probably wise not to paste your poster on top of established fly-posting sites. Not least because they are likely to be regularly maintained so your poster won't stay up very long. Find your own spots for top visibility.

If you do graduate to pasting up larger posters (or are partial to large arty die-cut paste-ups) the long-handled brush comes into its own. The extra reach is key, especially if you're working off a ladder. Also be aware, if/when a time comes that you need to bulk order paste from a wholesale supplier the minimum order could be a tonne. A tonne of paste is a lot of paste.

Opt for work wear. The uniform of street workers: Combat trousers/shorts, dark jumper/hoodie, sturdy boots to defend against discarded needles. Always don a hi-vis vest, preferably bearing the logo of a company you don't mind vexing. Day or night, it can't be emphasised enough how invisible a hi-vis vest renders the wearer, both to police and public alike. Carry loose change for people without housing, they'll appreciate it and keep an eye on the site for you. Thank street cleaners for clearing down sites, they are working for you without realising it. Return when they are gone. Likewise council workers, just say you didn't realise what you're doing is prohibited. Never argue with the police, plead poverty and thank them for doing a great job. Though note this approach is unlikely to wash if your poster is politically provocative, contentious or otherwise deemed divisive or offensive.

Urban sociology views material surfaces of the city as signifiers of economic, social and political relationships and agendas. In practical terms brick requires a generous slaver of viscous paste to help the poster adhere. Many vacant lots used to be 'boarded up' with corrugated iron. Incidentally this was also the material used to fence early music festivals. Again, like brick, corrugated iron is not ideal for posting. You have to get the vertical drop straight or the wave form of the material very quickly skews

the pasted poster, and it looks daft. Plywood hoardings are a treat. Stirling board, with its chequer of wood fragments glued together less so over time. Glass is sweet though on very hot days a poster can dry and fall away from glazed surfaces. Likewise shiny plastic or metal sheeting.

To conclude, the build-up of successive layers of posters can reach epic proportions. So much so that it would sometimes appear it's the slab of posters that are supporting the structure they're pasted on rather than the other way round. And when these paper behemoths eventually disengage from a wall, hoarding, disused shopfront, if need be, with the aid of a shovel, they're like huge scabs of urban skin. Not dissimilar to the thick skin a fly-poster must develop in order not to be deterred from their mission.

ADRIAN BURNHAM

BEGINS

2ND NOV, 2023
1.45PM - 3.40PM

VENUE

The Old Royal
53 Church Street
Birmingham B3 2DP

PRESENT

Jimmy Wren
**
Adrian Burnham
Richard Broadbent

Interview with

JIMMY WREN

11

[Preamble about the fly-posting oral history project...]

** Well, anything that's gonna be a dying breed and disappear needs documenting.

JW I'll tell you something, when you think of all the fucking photographs we used to have of the Streets of Birmingham [...] I've got a video of the Council, undercover, filming me, if I can lay my hands on it.

It's a real history, you don't really see it at the time.

RB Anything you say, you'll get a chance to look it over first.

JW I'm not bothered. I think it's good to do this.

** I'm happy. In the back of my mind, I was itching to do something.

RB Just to say, we've never done this with two people together...

JW I think because our stories intertwine a bit. [...]

** The reason I came to Birmingham in 1980 was because [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I wanted a whole

total change of life, came to Birmingham. Met Mike Faal at the time, Vinnie's older brother, but Tully was doing poster here.

RB You were in Manchester then?

** I worked for Tosh Ryan at the time [...] The only people doing poster at the time was Tosh, Terry Slater, Vince and Myles, up in Scotland. Tosh Ryan had the whole of outside London. And then Vinnie Faal's, no you're not, he said, I'm having Manchester. So, I said well, me and Mike said, fuck

¹ Philip Tomanov, known as Toby Toman, was a drummer with the Nosebleeds, the Durutti Column, Blue Orchids and Primal Scream.

it, we're having Birmingham then. So, we took the Central TV area. Kept that.

[REDACTED]

AB [To JW] What was your young life then?

JW Born in Birmingham. I saw that me and school didn't fit when I was about 12. So, I started, I was taken to a Manchester United game, 1969, last match of the season they won the European Cup.² And then I went to the next away game at Arsenal, no Chelsea, it was the year Arsenal won the League Cup Final.³ I was about 13 then. Big fight outside Euston Station and I met these two lads from Manchester who became [mates], I still see one of them, saw him recently at a match.

And from going to matches we soon learnt there was a lot of money to be made selling souvenirs. Which then led on to doing outside venues, doing pirate stuff. You know, I did that for years. I run off to Denmark when I was 15. Came home, had a job for 6 weeks, a job for 7 weeks. And I joined the Royal Marines. I had a soft ligament injury in training, second week in. It [took] weeks to heal and then I did it again. So, they released me, with a recommendation to get fit, a recommendation for re-enlistment. And I went down to Torquay for the weekend and stayed there 3 years.

I worked at Pontins. And the next year, '76, the heatwave for 3 months. I was working on Paignton beach on the boats. Signing on as well. Fucking more money than I could [have known what to do with]. I ended up back in Birmingham and I got a job in a hotel. From that hotel I ended up working in the Bull Dog Bar, at the Royal Kensington Hotel, Kensington High Street, but couldn't find anywhere to live.

I came back and got a job in a club in Birmingham called The Rum Runner, which is famous for where Duran Duran started. And the New Romantic scene. The owners of that club were the managers of Duran Duran, yeah? So, we used to get [great bands] you know, The Who, at that time in the early 80s. All footballers came in, there was lots going on there.

Then one day we found that, 'cos of my history in hotels I always had The Caterer [magazine], right? And then I saw, one day I saw my job advertised and me mate who was the manager, they thought we had too much control. So, they were looking to sack us. That was on the Friday, so on the Sunday we had

a free night. We gave all the beer away. Walked out of there 6 o'clock and threw the keys in the office.

Not long after that we opened our own club. We rented room above a strip club. And we called it the Tin Can Club. And it was meant to be a dance club but the opening night we put Sade on. And it turned itself into a venue. And I put on Southern Death Cult, The Death Cult and The Cult in all three forms. You name it, any band at that time. I did REM's first British show ever. They just wanted to play a small 600 capacity, fucking JoBoxers, The Mission, Sisters of Mercy, all that...

RB Is that what Dave Hall was doing?

JW Well, funny enough, Dave Hall was managing Red Lorry Yellow Lorry, and we put them on. So that's where I met Dave. And that was where I saw Nige.⁴ I didn't know Rod and Nigel at the time, but they come up the stairs looking for [Dave Hall], but I didn't know who they were. So that was like ships passing in the night.

From that I went on to manage a punk band called GBH, and I was with them for 10 years. It was very successful in America, Japan, and they still go to South America. So, going back to like The Rum Runner, we was in a pub across the road, and we come out and someone had stuck two posters on the fucking window. And it was him [referring to [REDACTED]] and I was, fucking get them off! Then I got to know him, and when I was with GBH I wanted posters up. So, we became friends, and whatever country I was in I always made sure we had posters up and when we was at the Tin Can, there was another firm, what were they called? Les. There was another guy...

** Les [Johnson], yeah, used to manage The Wonder Stuff.

JW That's it, he managed a band The Wonder Stuff. I remember, 1983, sticking a few of our own posters up as well. And when the band days came to an end, I was doing a bit of tour managing but I'd been everywhere and I was bored of it. So, the work stopped coming in, I needed a job and Pete said he had a guy working for him called Liepens? Paul Liepens, his dad was in the war but he was on the fucking German side. Paul was ex-CID, he was an alcoholic.

2 Season 1967/68 Manchester United won the European Cup beating Benfica 4-1 at Wembley Stadium.
3 Swindon beat Arsenal 1-0 in the 1969 League Cup Final.
4 Nigel Daley would go on to buy Slater and Walker, London based fly-posting outfit.

** It made sense 'cos all the coppers knew him and they didn't come near...

JW Anywhere you went with him, you know, 'Alright Liepens, what you doing here?' And he smashed up a van. They got him a new one and he fucking smashed that up, 'cos he was always drunk. I came in to, you know like I'm keeping an eye on Jonny Salmon now, I was doing [keeping an eye on 'Loopy' Liepiens]. And that's how I got involved in it, a loose association with posters probably from 1983. But started sticking 'em up in 1992. And I worked for [REDACTED] 'til he sold out to, er, who'd you sell out to?

** Nigel, and Nigel flogged it to Tim.

RB But you carried on didn't you?

** I did the festivals, I carried on doing Glastonbury and all that sort of shit. And then Dave took over, I'd had enough and Dave Hall took over. That would be '98, '99.

RB So, you were involved in the posters from...?

** From 1979, that was fun, you'd have people coming up in uniform, 'You can't do that round here!' And we go, fuck off. You had no respect in them days.

RB What'd you start with then, was it just DCs?

** Quads, DCs, the odd 4 sheet occasionally.

RB What was that for then, music?

** Tosh was into all the record companies.⁵ And don't forget we had the punk thing explode. So, it was all Stiff Records, etc., ...

RB Tosh supplied the posters?

** No, the record companies did. Red Star to Manchester. Or Red Star to Birmingham.

JW Known as the [REDACTED]

** That's right, exactly, so they used to get a couple of crates of whiskey at New Year to keep them sweet and kept their mouth shut.

RB So how did the Faals get involved in it all then?

** The Faals started when I started in, erm, 78, 79, with Tosh. Just going out in mum's car, all pile in and go and do poster. But, we'd always make sure there was a professional with us, so we learnt off them, these were like kids who used to play in Jazz Bands, and it was art to them. For us it was fun. Annoying people, you know. It's been one long laugh from day one.

RB Didn't they fall out Tosh and the Faals?

** Well, Vinnie Faal threatened him with his life. Said, if you put any more posters up in Manchester, or approach any record companies, I'll kill yer. So, it was extortion at the end of the day. I had my own problems here with a fella called John Toy, who was working for Ed [...] at the time, and threatened us with all the gangsters, all the heavies and things like that. But we got round all that. But it's always been rivalry. If someone was doing good, somebody wanted it, somebody was always in the background, trying to take it off you again. You had to be quite acute with what you did, and how you did it, without being too over the top.

AB What was your childhood like?

** My childhood? Altar Boy, Catholic Church...

JW Me too!

** Yeah, in fact yesterday, somebody sent me a photograph of when I was about 7 years of age in the Catholic Church, in Manchester, in Wythenshawe, the reservation! A picture with all my mates from Primary School, it was amazing, can still name them now.

JW When I went to Primary School, the first question you [were] asked on a Monday morning was, what colour were the priest's cassock? 'Cos you were gonna get asked, and if you didn't know you were gonna get a fucking beating. In my school, it was Shard End and there was a lot of Irish immigrants coming there, so they got a lot of Irish school teachers over. And they weren't afraid to use, you know, I was 8, I remember getting, one bloke broke three rulers over my leg. Cut all my legs open. He'd go to prison today for that.

⁵ Based in Manchester, Anthony 'Tosh' Ryan, made connections throughout the UK and was instrumental in fly-posting, first through the musicians' collective Music Force and then to fund his own label Rabid Records.

AB What did your parents do for a job?

JW My dad was a bookmaker. Mum was a shop worker. On course bookmaker, he was on the tracks. So, he was around when they were all jumping over the rails with guns and, later than the Peaky Blinders, but that went on 'til the 50s. Where I grew up, my dad was a bit of a fence, you know, so I'd wake up and house'd be full of stolen goods. [...] Some serious gangsters stayed at ours, my house. I mean, there was two of them were on the run. 'Cos they used to rob, you know when everyone was paid in cash? They used to rob the security vans. And a couple of security guys got killed. And intermittently, I won't name them, but intermittently, I'd go to school, and the police'd be sitting up the road. I'd say, Dad, the police are outside. Not that, he didn't have a criminal record. He was in the army, had a wonderful war record, he was a sergeant major in the parachute battalion. But he just had a lot of... Dodgy mates.

[...]

RB So, when did you develop an interest in music then?

** I was taught to play the double bass by the principal player in the Halle Orchestra. From school, yeah, he used to come round every week. And he picked me as a pupil. So I played bass in the South Manchester Youth Orchestra, won awards, all that crap.

One year, he came round, and I'd just bought the bass back from our house, me house in Wythenshaw, mum and dad's, in a Vauxhall Viva. Take the seats out to get it in, to take it home. I thought fuck this off. So, I bought a bass guitar. And he came round, and he said when you rely on the Electricity Board for your performance, it's when we part company.

And I went, okay, fair enough, I'm joining a punk band anyway.

RB Fantastic...

** Vini Riley was the guitarist in that original band with Eddie Ed Banger, Durutti Column, Factory Records. He was a genius. So, I've been surrounded by lots of influential people as well.

RB When did Morrissey join?

** He joined, erm, last gig we ever played was at The Ritz in Manchester, with Magazine, supported them. We were booked to

go on their European tour, through the agency. We went on to support them, and we blew 'em off. They had no chance of, they played their hits, and they got away with it, but we'd been the stars. 'Cos Morrissey started off with, I dunno where he got them from, fucking big bag full of toffees, come out of his back pocket. He was throwing them to the crowd, and we had a song called peppermint, "Sat right down and I cried and cried 'cos I dropped my toast on the buttered side..." Typical Morrissey, and he started throwing [sweets], and I'm like, fucking hell.

RB What was he like to hang around with then?

** Very strange. His best friend was his sister. We used to go round to his house and things like that. And it was like going into a semi-library come council house. Very, very serene. But he knew what he wanted, and he knew how to get it. At the time me younger brother went to school with a fella called Johnny Marr, and they used to shift our gear, they were the roadies. Johnny used to hang around, Billy Duffy's teaching all the chords, things like that. And that's how it became. Morrissey and Marr's second only to Lennon and McCartney. Abba's third I think, something like that, it's amazing.

RB We always ask this, any nicknames?

JW Some people call me Jimmy Posters, in the promoters' world. 'Cos I used to, I never took any record company work. I always took the live work. And I developed that in Birmingham, right? I remember when Godskitchen became really massive.⁶ They started doing a hundred A2 posters, and then they ended up spending 40 grand a year, just on the festival. You know? And I got a lot of festivals.

[Jimmy gets a phone call from his partner's 96-year-old dad.]

RB So, were you doing that yourself?

JW No, I always realised you got to work together. You can't have, we're doing that, and we're doing this. So, I was working with Pete, Pete used to get paid by me.

** We used to call it the pot didn't we?

JW Yeah, same situation when I used to work with Rod, and then

⁶ Godskitchen was originally a Birmingham club night known especially for electronic dance music.

when I worked with Tim. I remember Tim when he was Diabolical, just doing the junction boxes, there was always this animosity. But I've always thought you gotta work together. 'Cos united you're strong and divided, you fall, innit? Tim came in 2006, 2007? And Nigel bought it off you 1998?

** Something like that.

RB Nigel probably had it what 10 years?

JW So, there's a good story gone missing here. How we got involved with Glen...

** Oh, right yeah, Glenroy.

JW Well, what happened...

RB I knew him 'cos I was a youth worker in Birmingham.

** Really?

RB He came because he'd been smuggling marijuana or something, so he had to do a hundred hours community service. With his brother who was even bigger, Rodney.

JW Rodney's dead.

RB That was the best period for the youth club ever.

JW What happened was, Glen was doing security. And he noticed all the posters, so he started doing his own posters, all the black artists. And then, this is sort of where I come in. Crossed onto sites, and they would cover my sites up, and all the rest of it. So, Tully, was very bombastic. And when he had a drink, he was fucking dangerous. What happened was, Murphy, John Murphy from South London, started giving Glen posters. The first 2 jobs was Prince, when he'd dropped his name and had the image, and a boxing poster. We started seeing these posters popping up.

** Red flag to a bull...

JW And we started covering them. Then it come up, you know, [who] it was them doing it. So there was this poster war started. And we found out the guys, Vinnie was involved, and Mike. They were coming down poster on days. And it got fucking bad. One day, I was sitting in this van with a very nasty man, waiting for them to come on this site, and we saw them. I didn't know Vinnie then. Vinnie's got out the van,

sticking posters up, and then fucking Tully has appeared from nowhere, in a BMW, and tried to run him over. Vinnie's got this baseball bat, fucking hit the car, started smashing his car up. And the kid with me - what was his name again? - he said we need some more men.

So, I drive round Birmingham, got about 10 guys in the back of the van. And there was this place called The Subway, whoever had the posters there was running the fucking show. So, they've all gone down The Subway, Rodney, Glen, Radar, Dennis, they said, we need more men. It was never actually, but if it had kicked off, someone was gonna get murdered. Honestly. So, they buy John out, Tully. And [REDACTED] and Glen become partners.

Tully went but he was worried about getting paid. So, at that time we used to drive around in a left-hand drive Range Rover which, I believe it was a test model they sent to Saudi Arabia, and it was parked on my drive. Tully phoned me up and said, [REDACTED] hasn't paid me, and the Range Rover and all that. I says, the Range Rover's fine, it's outside my house. And I heard this noise outside, and he's there with a hammer, car parked out the front, his wife standing at the boot. And he's come round, started smashing the window, broad daylight, with a hammer. Anyway, I disarmed him. I got hold of him, I lost my temper. Luckily, my wife was there, Angela, and she was, no don't, don't do that.

His missus was standing by the boot of the car. And he went in the car. So, the next thing, he's gone down to the unit, where [REDACTED] is with Glen. I haven't witnessed this but you tell 'em what happened. [...] I wasn't there but I know it never happened like that. He's pulled up in the car, Glen's there, Tim was there...

RB I was there.

JW You was there. When I had hold of him at the house, she's lifted the boot and pulled a fucking shot gun out, that's Tully's wife.

RB At the unit she shot the ceiling didn't she? It was so long ago...

JW No, no, she didn't discharge it. But Glen, she had this shotgun pointed at Pete, and Glen stood in front and went...

** If you're going to shoot anybody, it's me.

JW He said, go on then. Now then, she was a solicitor's clerk, [REDACTED] banks, serious lunatics. So you don't know, when she's round my house, standing by the boot of the car, you don't know... And when they got out of jail, remember they went down, they stabbed fucking Tim didn't they?

RB Stabbed who?

** Fella who used to work for us. Used to do the door at the pub.

JW Went in the pub, followed him into the kitchen and got a knife and fucking stabbed him. So, anyway, Tully got his money and that was the end of him.

** Or so we thought. He always kept coming back for a nibble.

JW When we had the poster war, Glen told me, singlehandedly really, I was getting up 3 in the morning. And the one day I went out and I just saw this trail of posters going down like Soho Road, Constitution Hill, all the way to Mosely. I didn't know at that time but they had John Murphy coming up to see the job, 'we're running Birmingham', so they could get the work. And I took the fucking lot out didn't I. You know, and that sort of stopped them getting any work. And then Glen told me, he said we'd given up because we just kept getting covered and covered. They had no money. They didn't have this, that, but what got 'em going was Tully, drunk every night, phoning up goading them. That's what done it.

** Came out in the wash. Interesting times, eh?

RB Yeah, I remember that day. I remember a policeman coming along on a bicycle. It took ages and he was really slow.

JW I think Tully managed to get home and ditch the gun before they got there, didn't he?

** Yeah, they lost their licence and everything.

JW She lost her job didn't she?

RB Glen was really shaking there, he was actually shaking.

** Oh yeah, yeah. I was. I had to sit on the bog for half an hour. I'd already been held up by the Faals in a pub in Birmingham, they'd pot a gun to me head, they pulled it out and said, 'we want everything.' What they wanted was the posters, not putting them up but to sell. And I went, oh yeah? Fuck off.

JW GBH had an album out or come out. And they were going round painting out the posters, in black.

RB Was that Mike Faal?

JW Vinnie that was.

RB When did Marcel come into it then?

** Marcel was a cousin of Vinnie and Mike a fella called Jacob, 3 brothers, or 3 different fathers I suppose. Marcel was the cousin from Moss Side. And he was the one that got away with it.⁷

JW What happened they were having a war with, the Hacienda doormen tried to step into the poster business up there. They give Marcel part of the business, for protection. But he didn't trust, who was the pig farmer, what was his name?

** Jim.

JW Jim, he didn't trust Jim. So, Chris has gone up, rush job, and Jim says, 'Can you give me a hand?' So, they're there, middle of the night, and Marcel drove past and saw them, says, 'what you doing?' He thought they were cheating him. You know, he shot Jim in front of everybody. And when Chris says, 'You can't do that' or whatever he said, [REDACTED]

RB Yeah, I went to the trial. I just wondered where Marcel came in, and what year. I mean he must've been quite new then.

** Yeah, I mean when me and Glen came to the funeral, in Glossop, I remember it very vividly 'cos me mum was in Buxton Hospital and we'd come over the top, you know from Leek. And we stopped off there to go and see my mum.

JW Glen ended up a very sick man. Mate, he was a nice guy. Fucking tough. Tough ain't the word.

RB He got diabetes, didn't he?

JW He ended up losing a kidney. He had a kidney transplant, that's the last time I saw him. [...] I checked his phone on WhatsApp, he's still on it.

⁷ Christopher Horrox was shot and killed while out fly-posting in Manchester 4th May 1994. Source: <http://www.unsolved-murders.co.uk/murder-content.php?key=5787&termRef=Christopher%20Horrox>

RB Did he buy a club or something?

JW He bought chip shops, clubs, a disaster. Pete described Glen as like, him and money, it's like giving strawberries to a donkey.

RB Never had any did he?

** Always wanted more.

JW But he was such a nice guy. Family were nice too.

RB So, after you packed in then what did you do?

** My missus was working for Ansell's Brewery, and I was giving a lot of money back to the brewery! Had a few bob off Nigel, I thought, well, let's re-invest it so I bought the place where we are now. Been there 27 years. 1996. Still there, suits and boots, people who've got money. She knows how to do it properly. I do it. She runs it.

RB Do you still do a bit of music?

** Just bought an Ovation semi-acoustic bass for my own pleasure.

RB [To JW] And you just carried on didn't you?

JW Yeah, well, I never stopped. The relationship I had with Rod, me and Rod kept the accounts on the back of a fucking fag packet. [...] And I carried on with Tim, I've got customers here in Birmingham I've had for 30 years.

RB So, you sold to Tim did you?

JW No, what happened was, I came to a decision in about 2014, I thought, right, I've been doing this for years, I've got an established customer base, and at that time I had all these festivals, and a lot of the really big boys were using me as well. The one thing I always learnt was, never chase a customer. Because, unlike other cities, [REDACTED] are red hot here. And if you go looking for work, that's a criminal offence mate. You wanna always let 'em come to you.

I could see it changing and Tim bought me out. Basically. I still do consultancy for him. Same as Rod, yeah. But, going back to the council, we was always under surveillance, and the first two, back in the 90s, what was there name? Willy someone, enforcement officers, they used to sit outside my house you know. And I thought, right, I'm gonna make you work

here. We'd get up three in the morning and go out postering, and they'd drive round following us. That was like mid-90s. They used to follow us and they had these undercover cars. And one day I was mixing outside [his house] and I see a Hillman Imp, I thought fuck me, that's [...] and them two were in it.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Corrupt as fuck. So the next [time], it got more serious after that. I was getting followed and they was always finding us, they had a tracker on the van somewhere, but I couldn't find it. But I thought, whatever happens, happens. And the guy was called, er, I won't name him but he was fucking good at his job. And he looked on us as scum. But what happened was, and this is well documented, Dave Hall got nicked in Nottingham and he got done for a poster in Bury. Bury council took him to court in a test case. And every council in the country put money towards it. 'Cos if they'd won, there'd be no fly-posting now, it'd be over and done with.

But Dave employed a barrister, it was her first case, just straight out of law school. Anyway, we won the case, and the judge was saying the council were leading the witnesses. There was one woman they got to say, I used to go and have my haircut at this hairdressers, and they put a poster next to it and it made me frightened. And I feel I never [want to go] there again. The poster made her frightened! And all this shit. Anyway, we knew we were being followed and [...] one day they turned up, Rod phoned me up one Sunday night, I've still got the file, that big, all the CCTV evidence, me, Jason...

RB Where'd you get it from?

JW It was served on us, an injunction. Yeah, and Rod was going, they've got me in Mosely village sticking up! They followed us all day. The day they caught us, I picked Jason up, M1, junction 5, and this car really slows. I thought that's strange. They followed us all the way down the Bristol Road doing junction boxes. We saw them in [...] and fucked off.

Anyway, we needed some petrol. Pulled in the petrol station and there were all these sirens, and I thought, fucking hell, what's going on here, thinking it must be a terrorist thing. And they pulled up on the, they cordoned us in the garage.

The council cop started taking photos. So I started taking photos o' them. Then they served this injunction and we went to court, we got threatened with immediate prison if we broke it. They wanted to do [us for] 5 years. But I turned up in court and I had all the work we'd done for Birmingham City Council. And it said anyone who benefits from a poster is responsible. And this was all work for the NEC, they fucking owned the place. So, I said to our lawyer. I was sitting next to this fella, I said go over and tell them what we've got and give him the photos. And tell him the fella next to me is a reporter from the Birmingham Evening Mail who's a friend of mine.

So, he went over, he said, well they were going for 5 years but will you accept [the injunction for] a year? I said, alright, done. We never came into Birmingham again. And the day that finished, I sent an email to the councillor who was head of public protection, I says you've spent all this money, private detectives on us, and all the rest of it, I said nothing's changed, let's have a meeting (I cc'd Tim in on it). And he replied, he went alright. So, had a meeting, went in and they said, well, come together with a deal. So, all the enforcement officers who were chasing us, I've ended up in their office having a cup of coffee. And they're driving me around Birmingham and I showed them the sites we had. And honestly, they were so helpful, 'cos they realised. They realised that we weren't horrible people. What they realised was that we'd policed the city. And when we stopped, it was full of Corex boards, it'd got worse. We ended up, we was on the verge of getting a scheme, [REDACTED], from Erdington, put the spanner in.

And there's a bit of er, I don't think you can put this in, in case they read it but, there's a bit of a 'we know what you're doing, but keep doing what you're doing, and don't go over the top. No junction boxes. No lamppost boards.' And that's what I do spend most of my time, taking down, keeping it [tidy], giving something back, back to the city.

[RB goes and gets some more drinks...]

** How old are you now?

JW I ain't saying. It's been a long time. People sticking

posters up now, we've trained. When one was on holiday, I was poster and there's somebody in the office, I won't say who, but they were saying we need these posters up by Friday and it was a fucking storm basically, the wind's horizontal. And I said to Tim, get everyone in that office and get 'em out, know the business, get 'em out sticking it up on a brush and have the rats running round your feet, and treading in human excreta, you know, and you're out there at that time of the morning. And there's only you and the junkies.

I used to go to Stoke once a fortnight, crashes between junction 14 and 15! I thought it was a mannequin in the road. And I saw last Saturday the remains of a hit and run in Handsworth, they had the tent over. [REDACTED]

AB So, they were promoters as well?

JW [REDACTED]

RB Do you feel like you've contributed to the culture of the city then?

JW Well, I suppose we have, 100%. Not everybody likes posters, and they say, you know, this is illegal and all the rest of it. But by the time they put it on, what do you call it? Coronation Street or East Enders, there's the posters [in the background]. Bands would say, can you get me on that wall? [TV programme makers] they'd take anything without a date.

** I used to say to kids in Birmingham, where do you think the posters come from? God put 'em up. One minute they're there, the next minute they're changed. It's like a free information board.

[...]

JW Two best campaigns: Reservoir Dogs and Orange phones, when Orange came out with telecommunications. They started off with the junction boxes, like with an orange, just an orange poster, and it went up. The next one is 'The Future', and the next one, 'Is Orange'. They went on to 4 sheets,

billboards, you had a national campaign. It was brilliant it was. Really good.

When we had this, er, I'll name these bastards, don't like 'em, there was a Liberal Democrat councillor called Martyn Mullaney up in King's Heath. And he was one of the first people I approached about doing legal stuff. And I said, we could put a drum in Mosely Village. He went home, next thing he did, he put his own advertising up there. He said it was all him. Everybody fucking hated him. And he had another Liberal Democrat councillor called Ernie Hendricks, who was a promoter, I'd done work for Ernie, right. And one day, I was sitting in [to **] your bar and the phone went, 'Ah, I got your number somewhere about doing posters,' and I knew it was that Martin Mullaney. And the only person he could've got my number off was Ernie Hendricks, who became a Liberal Democrat councillor.

So, I get a phone call one day, from this MP, right, and he had his office down erm, I forget his name now, do you remember

[REDACTED]

[...]

RB Do you ever do any of those special builds, the arty ones?

JW No. Not my format.

** The biggest campaign I ever did, the biggest posters anyway, was a Mars campaign at festivals. Nigel got this contract off the main people, fucking hell there was some money in that. But the posters were about 20ft high, easy, easy. [...] Nigel and me were like [together], like the whole time, you know, but you drift apart. I've been ill since 2017, cancer. Before that I had open heart surgery. Get through it don't ya? Make yourself better. No one else it gonna help ya.

JW

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And when this was all going on I give him a call and said, do you remember doing some fly-posting in London, and he said, I may have done. I had his number.

RB So, were you quite proud of your fly-posting?

** Music and posterage went hand in hand for me. I mean certain bands got certain treatment 'cos you liked them. And things like that.

RB I used to like, especially with women and stuff, I didn't say I was a fly-poster. I'd say I work in this advertising...

JW I said I was an advertising consultant. I've been self-employed for 40 years. And that says it all. I never tell anyone what I do. I remember once, Channel 5 were doing a documentary. They approached me, Nigel, Tully, and Mike Faal. Mike Faal and Tully did it. Nigel fucked off to America. And I left town for a while. Well, I don't wanna talk about what I'm doing. But the people with egos talked about what they were doing.

[...]

JW And the Cook Report did Nigel. About when they were rigging the charts. What they did, they got Edwina Currie's daughter to say she was like pop star.⁹ Yeah, we did posters of her and everything like that. And they would go in [buying records around the country] to manipulate the charts.

RB They used to send people round buying the records didn't they?

JW That's right, yeah, it was on open secret.

[...]

** Glen phoned me up the other day. I thought he either wants money...

8

[REDACTED]

9 Debbie Currie, daughter of MP Edwina Currie, took part in an elaborate hoax set up by Roger Cook to reveal the secret world of rigging the pop charts. The special edition of Carlton TV's 'The Cook Report' was screened June 1997. Source: <https://www.topfoto.co.uk/asset/489816/>

JW That's why you can't talk to Glen, God bless him, he either wants money. It's a shame.

[...]

RB It's an interesting project this, [we want] to do Europe, and America as well. 'Cos all this fly-posting was happening all over the world.

** Japan as well.

RB Yeah, I was in Barcelona a few weeks ago with Tim. To see the guys, I've known them for years.

JW When I spoke to you a few weeks ago and I was doing that job. What's his name again the kid out there?

RB Oh, Carlos...

** That's the fucker I was thinking of. 'Cos he came to Birmingham once. Demolished fucking everything. He's a fucking maniac. I don't know what he was taking. Do you remember that guy who used to work for Nigel, I had to put up with him, that Julian? He chucked industrial amounts of sulphate up his nose.

JW One time, he had to come round my house to get some posters. And he turned round, he's in this car right, and he was late. I said, you're late, I waited in for you. He'd got like a pub ashtray in the front. A can of Special Brew. And some girl sitting there, said, I had to get her from prison. He used to sleep in a demolished van!

** Well, you know who used to take him out to ballet and opera? It was Nigel's wife, Alison, Alison Gracie.

RB She was the captain of the golf club wasn't she?

** Don't forget who her granddad was. Paul Getty.¹⁰ The Gracies and the Gettys were New York society. She had an apartment on 5th Avenue.

JW Alan Wicker did a documentary on Getty in the 60s and he had a payphone in the lobby of his house. In the reception. If anyone wanted to phone up, they had to put money in the phone.

RB Recently Banksy chopped a payphone in half, I think it was in London, and Getty bought it. One of the great, great grandsons, he bought it for a million quid, 'cos he remembered he had to pay.

JW I saw Banksy when he did...

RB You saw him?

JW The reindeer. Didn't know at the time, but I was out early, driving down the jewellery quarter, and I seen a guy like lying on a bench and a guy with a massive zoom lens, half 5, 6 o'clock. [...] And I thought, you're up early doing that. And, of course, the next day, there were 2 reindeer pulling the bench. It must've been him lying on the bench. The funny thing was, before they could cover it, someone's put a red nose on the reindeer. Well, they didn't damage it any other way, but I thought that was a nice step. I'm assuming that was him lying on the bench or taking the photograph.

RB Was there any funny one outstanding moment? Or the maddest time?

** Well, for me yeah, forever. We were making a Christmas card of a poster site, and we're all dressed in fancy dress. There was the fairy, and we're sprinkling the gold and whatever, we're sending it to all the record companies, we had clocks made, with a fly on the [minute hand]. Tully's dressed as a policeman. And I'm postering, it's all done perfectly. And the old bill pulled up, and they've gone, are you Press? And he went, I'm not fucking pissed, I've not had a drink since last night. He thought they said, are you pissed? That's always stuck in my mind. We did one on the Aston Expressway, it was the whole of a big building site. And all we did was put, 'Merry Christmas to all our readers'. Even Central TV picked up on it. Evening Mail front page: Cheeky Bastards!

JW When the Council were pulling the posters down, we'd put, 'normal service will resume as soon as'. I remember Prince Charles was coming up once, it was a really hot day, and they'd cleaned this site down. But we just re-did it, we used to follow them round. We used to stick posters on the back of the Council cleaning wagons. Once, I used to go working 'til Christmas Eve, make sure no one was getting naughty. I was standing on Mosely Road, and I just heard this commotion behind me. And there's 2 bullocks, standing looking at me. They'd escaped from the abattoir. The police shot 'em dead. I thought they shot them fucking dead, they could'a shot me dead. They shot 'em just at the top of the road here.

And the tornado, there's a bit of a tornado alley in Birmingham, and I was standing, I'd been in America and I'd been near

a tornado. And I was getting posters from Godskitchen, and we were standing outside the Custard Factory. I'd seen the sky, and I said, boys that looks like it might be a weather phenomenon coming. But it landed, d'you remember, it landed bottom of the Stratford Road? And fucking went up the Stratford Road, ripped up all the trees and everything, houses, shops. They call it Britain's tornado alley.

[...]

- ** They do it all on social media now... Saw that coming.
- JW Like you say, you'd come to that conclusion. But it wasn't the case. People still want [posters]. The bands want to see their names on the wall.
- RB It's almost a tradition, isn't it?
- ** When we used to work with Tosh Ryan, we'd blank out in white, almost like a shopfront and get a spray artist black on white to write 'Live Tonight!'. And the impact that had was fucking amazing. What tickets weren't sold went immediately.
- JW Nothing like seeing your name on a wall, is it? When I used to manage bands, you'd pull into a German city, you know, the spirits would rise when they see their name.
- ** Famous!
- JW Not so much that. It was that people cared. You know that the promoters were trying. 'Cos that promoting business, I've done every aspect, I've been a music publisher, I've got record deals, and I've done the advertising side of it. I know how much the posters mean to the bands.
- RB When you've done a massive campaign, and you see all your posters you've just put up, it's quite a strange feeling isn't it?
- ** We used to call it 'the Spitfire run'.
- RB I used to find it really strange 'cos you've decorated it, and you drive back.
- ** Victory roll.
- JW You know we had something recently here. Long time promoter, you know, he's a pain in the arse, and he'll take advantage of you. I said to him, I'm packing it in now. And I want you

to start calling this other person, 'oh alright'. And he had a 48 sheet up. Had permission. And, by mistake, I got it covered up. He got really upset about it. I said, tell you what, I'll do you another board. And I spoke to James and everything. It went up but he said it was hanging off. It wasn't. So, I blocked him. I said you're not getting any more posters up. I blocked him. He started doing his own. He said, you don't own the boards. Anyone can stick boards up. And I said, well, morally we do. I said, 'cos people have lost their lives over this. And we've kept it going, fought the councils. When customers have been taken to court, we've provided lawyers, paid the fines. And then you wanna stick some up because of what we've done? But no, he's just disappeared now. He's doing little bits and pieces. I told him he's got to start going through Ian. And he phones Ian up and then he won't spend the money. To be fair, he always paid on time, but look what happened to Chris. You know? And the poster wars we had and everything. We've got a moral right.

- ** Whatever happened to Fred Rowe? Blockheads? Used to be one of the minders for Ian Dury. Started doing postering...
- AB Dury was in Kilburn and the High Roads before Blockheads?
- ** That's right.
- JW I met the bass player out of the Blockheads.¹¹ [...] I was in Japan with GBH and Wilko Johnson was there. We were in the restaurant together. And the bass player out of the Blockheads was in his band, so I met him. We was in Japan and we fucking missed our flights back. What we had to do, we were stuck there for 5 days. We'd get this next flight, Egyptian Airlines or whatever it was. [...] I said to the promoter, fantastic guy, I said organise a show, we'll do it for nothing, you can recover your costs. Wilko Johnson played in the show as well.
- RB Who was the singer in Doctor Feelgood?
- ** Lee Brilleaux.
- RB He was great weren't he?
- JW He was...
- ** My hero! Canvey Island rockers...

11 Norman Watt-Roy was bass player in the band Ian Dury and the Blockheads.

JW Wilko had cancer didn't he? Is he still alive?

** No, he's dead. [...] It's always hanging in the background. It's always gonna get you at some point.

AB So, some final thoughts, my early recollections of fly-posting are wallpaper paste, garages, stirring up...

** Solve it!

AB And here we are today, what are your thoughts?

** Wouldn't change it. If I could, I wouldn't change it. It was fun. Earnt a few quid. Had a great time. No regrets.

JW Just say, you're only as good as the tools you've got. And when Stadex [paste] came in, that was the business. And we're back to the weather crippling the posters. I've had a varied life, and no, I wouldn't change a thing I've done. I guarantee you this as well, people I've dealt with over the years, could not pick me out of a line-up. Because I never met anybody, I just done it over the phone and kept a low profile, living in this city. And I think when I go to other cities, I think, you don't know what we had to put up with here. Seriously, you never knew what was gonna happen from one weekend to the next.

The best one was, I told you, after the injunction thing, we went in to see 'em, first thing they said, these posters here, they're not real are they? 'Cos we were putting up, we were getting fictitious posters, having them printed and putting them up, so they'd be spending hours trying to track 'em down to send them a letter.

[Laughter]

RB So, beside posting, what's your passion?

JW I'm football, me. Man United. And James, as a kid, he loved football as a goalkeeper.¹² And he was at Walsall from 8 to 18, he got promised a contract by the chairman, and Dean Smith came in and said no, released him. Then he went down to Brighton, it's another good story this, he went to Brighton and I took him down to Brighton and Gus Poyet was the manager, and he went there for a week, and they said, right, we're having a week off, why don't you come back for another week? Another 3 days, he went back for 3 days, and they said to him, okay, we're gonna offer you a contract, this is where you're gonna live, they were second division then. Their stadium and training ground was just opening. And, this is what you're

gonna be doing, this is what we're gonna be paying you, and that was on the Friday, on the Tuesday they phoned him up, said they weren't taking him. 'Cos they'd spent a lot of money on a new striker. But I knew, I'd worked in football a lot by then, he was at Walsall all those years and I started recommending players. [...] So when he left Walsall I went to work for Wolverhampton Wanderers, I was there for 5 years, and I was at West Brom. for 5 years, [REDACTED]

So, going back to James, when they released him I knew these agents and I found out, I ain't gonna mention his name but he was a bit racist. But Fat Boy Slim owned, was a shareholder, and I was speaking to John Curd and John Curd told Fat Boy Slim and he caused a fucking stink about it. There was a massive fall out, they phoned James up, he was 18, just 18.

Yeah, so I work in football now. I do that at weekends. I go to grass roots, I'm going to Cambridge United and Milton Keynes on Sunday, it's called predatory scouting, looking for players. And this year I've made 4 recommendations, they signed 3, spent 350 thousand pounds, and the fourth one didn't want to come, he went elsewhere, that's what keeps me sane. 'Cos when I go to football, I don't think about anything else.

[...]

I can honestly say, other than that episode back in the early days, after that, you get the respect of people because they see you do your job. It's when you don't do your job, someone's gonna do your job for you.

And this is what happens down in Bristol, there's about every fucking man jack, is at it down there. Because I've been going down there and I've noticed, them young kids would have their own nights, just A3 [posters everywhere], it's Dickensian. That Stokes Croft, where they've got the bonfire going, turned round there the other day and they were feeding a rat. When I was down there the other day, there's a geezer having a piss up the side of a, he's 'oh sorry mate'. I said carry on. Stepped over a geezer in a sleeping bag. And then this guy's come up, and he's got like a rope round his waist, he looked like the fucking grandad out of Only Fools and Horses, he's only a young boy. You seen Blind Pugh out of Treasure Island? That's what he looked like. I said to Tim, you should do a documentary about it.

RB That's fucking mad that place.

JW I've never seen anywhere like it. And the postering, [...] they just go over everything, but they seem to know, there's a little poster up like that and there's a date on it, they won't touch it. When that date's gone, they're on it.

RB It's crazy that place. There's a phone box, and that's where they queue for their heroin and crack, and they queue in a very English way, nobody pushes in or anything.

[...]

JW The only equivalent in Birmingham was probably Small Heath and Alum Rock, and you used to get them taxi drivers, pulling the prostitutes. And when you said getting the crack out of the telephone boxes, there was one by The George pub in Small Heath, we don't even go down there anymore, it's too dangerous. The Muslim kids have got it sewn up. Had a job, I gave Mark Mason a job for a big Muslim show, a Muslim artist at Greenwich, and they wanted like Birmingham done, and Gravesend, the Medway towns. It was at the O2. And I went down Alum Rock, 5 in the morning on a Saturday, and these kids come out this café, and they asked me for a poster, but we wet roll 'em all now, they're all wet. Well, I said you can have one but it'll be no good to you. They followed me for about three miles, I had to drive in to Stechford police station. You know they're all fucking packing, guns, knives and whatever. And it's a bit of a 'no go'.

RB I think we're pretty much wrapped up here.

ENDS

Transcribed by AB
(9,040 words)



[FIG. 1]

[FIG. 1] JW managed post-punk band G.B.H.

[FIG. 2] JW with football paraphernalia.

[FIG. 2]



UNCLE

PRESENTS

THE ART OF FLYING :

AN ONGOING ORAL HISTORY AND
MULTI-MEDIA RESEARCH INITIATIVE

This series of booklets shares for the first-time in-depth conversations with individuals whose involvement in unauthorised commercial fly-posting circa 1973 to '93 is deemed significant.

Transcribed conversations are each prefaced with a short introduction that explores broader material, social, ethical and political issues relevant to the subject of fly-posting in the city.

There are several stakeholders concerning the illegal display of commercial posters.

- (i) Entrepreneurial promoters and big corporations who commission the activity.
- (ii) Practitioners who put posters up.
- (iii) Individuals and agencies who take it upon themselves or are charged with enforcing laws against it.
- (iv) Finally, the urban dwellers who are either oblivious to fly-posting or variously informed, entertained, offended or intrigued by it.

Research began with MYLES COONEY's many decades of 'adventures' north of the border in Scotland. Next up, DAVE HALL's local Bradford and Leeds 'misdeeds' as well as accounts of fly-posting every capital city in Europe. JIMMY MILLER's wide-ranging memories, not least of confronting 'The Ballerina' - universally acclaimed as one of the finest with brush and pavste - were classic. Flautist DAVIE CARLTON's shift from musical protégé to master baker to fly-poster was a journey.

PETER BRIGHTON shared tales of working on the streets, post WWII fly-posting history and his famous maxim, "We don't mind competition. But we just won't stand for it." JIMMY WREN told fascinating, sometimes hairy tales of Birmingham and beyond. Promoter and printer Dave Hutton reminded us that Fred 'Spider' Rowe - Ian Dury's sometime minder - covered his van shelves with pink faux fur to stop posters slipping around. MANDY BROWN shared her memories and adventures fly-posting in West Yorkshire and beyond. Tracking down and talking with Trotskyist music collective inspired ANTHONY 'TOSH' RYAN in Crete took us from the 1960s Manchester Jazz scene to Tarantinoesque activity that curtailed his posting days in the 1980s. Interviewing DAVE WALKER - ably assisted by Paul Carr - was a roller coaster, and great to hear from half of Slater & Walker, for our intents and purposes, one of 'the originals'. JOHNNY MURPHY had a stranded Christmas tree delivery to thank for his life as a fly-poster. KEVIN THOMAS went from a teen flogging tat in shop doorways to luxury car sales, then an eight pounds a day, two days a week wage at Slater & Walker, to eventually running the whole show. LOL MOORE loved doing Notting Hill Carnival, not so much wintertime breaking the ice on the paste when it had frozen overnight in the van.

The oral histories collected since 2023 illuminate aspects of an industry hitherto enveloped in secrecy. While accounts unfold, we are also made critically aware of the changing face of cities across the UK: the many and diverse music scenes; variations in public attitudes; policing and the law; council corruption, condemnation and eventual cooperation; the bitter rivalries and competition for wall space and wider territories. There's also the laughs and life-long friendships made along the way.

THE ART OF FLYING

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