

McNABB RAG.

'REAMS'

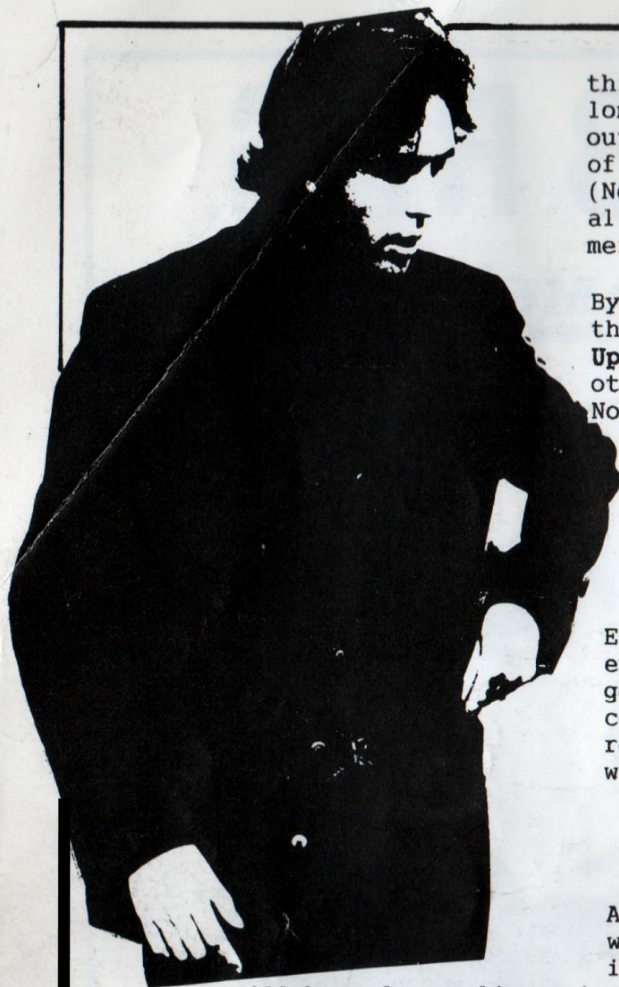


GREAT

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Hello and many thanks for buying this fanzine. 'McNABB Rag' has come a long way since I sheepishly stood outside the Grand in Clapham at the end of September trying to flog issue 1. (Not least of which is that Geoff has allowed it to be sold on the merchandise stall!).

By far the best news is Ian signing to the relatively new label, 'This Way Up'. Despite interest from a number of other labels a deal was agreed on November 2nd '92 (Ian's 32nd birthday!)

TWU's first action was to delay the release of 'Truth and Beauty', and the single 'Guitars', until January to get the promotional machine into action.

Early signs seem to be very encouraging. 'Guitars' is picking up good airplay and even got N.M.E.'s coveted single of the week. Early reviews of the LP are also encouraging with Select giving it four out of five.

As Judith Riley explains in her article, we can expect a lot of activity from Ian in '93. Prior to the January tour, he will have done a live set on 'Hit the North' (radio 5) and a show for 'Electric Ballroom' on Irish TV (which should be broadcast here late Feb/early March). February 1st sees the release of 'Guitars' in most of Europe, followed by the LP on the first of March. So in the next issue I'll tell you whether the single bombed in Belgium, sold like hot croissants in France or did nowt in the Netherlands!

After a short visit to meet many of the European agents, there will be some U.K dates at the end of February. Look out for lots of accompanying local and regional press/radio coverage (and please photocopy/record these, where possible, for future enjoyment by fellow fans). March should then see Ian playing a number of European shows and very probably the re-release of 'Dreams'.

Please keep the contributions coming in. You've heard of the 'difficult third album', well I'm facing the difficult third fanzine! Many of my ideas have been exhausted in the first two issues. Perhaps you would like to write a happy ending to L. Baskerville's 'A Story of love.....' and try and beat the 25 or so songs mentioned. If nothing else please send me any concert photo's/press cuttings etc that could be used in the next issue.

Cheers

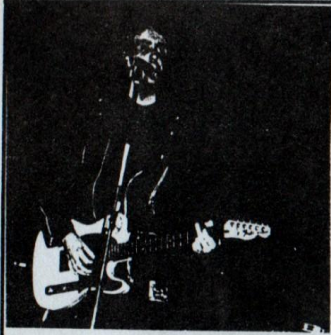
IAN McNABB SIGNS TO THIS WAY UP



Greetings to all the McNabb fans. I've been asked by Paul to fill you in on a bit of history of This Way Up and let you know what plans we have for our Ian McNabb world domination assault. This Way up is a relatively new label, only formed in April 92, financed by Polygram and run independently by a crack team of 4 from our new offices in South Kensington. Our leader and guru is Andrew Lauder who has been responsible for starting several other well known labels - Radar, F-Beat, Demon and latterly Silvertone. Andrew's been called a 'music biz veteran' (a term he hates!) - but anyone who knows him will tell you he's first and foremost a music fan - the proud owner of a very extensive record collection and as Ian puts it 'a bit of a train-spotter' - of the very nicest kind. Andrew has worked with a multitude of groups since starting in the music business in 1965 at Southern Music in Tin Pan Alley then going onto the newly formed Liberty label then United Artists. Here's a quick list of the best known - The Idle Race, Bonzo Dog Band, Family, Canned Heat, Man, Hawkwind, The Groundhogs, Flamin' Groovies, The Stranglers, The Buzzcocks, Nick Lowe, Elvis Costello, The Pop Group, Pere Ubu, The Soft Boys, T-Bone Burnett, That Petrol Emotion, Robert Cray, John Hiatt, Brendan Croker, The Men They Couldn't Hang, Buddy Guy, The Stone Roses, Loudon Wainwright III. There's also the considerable number of re-issues and repackages put together on the Demon and Edsel labels - many of which I'm sure a discerning McNabb fan has in their collection. The other This Way Uppers are myself - I've worked with Andrew since United Artists days in the mid seventies through all the labels listed above. We also have our A&R wizard, Dave 'Farmer' Bedford who came from Fire Records having worked with Teenage Fan Club, Spacemen 3, TVP's, Captain America and numerous others. Completing the team is Lucy Launder (no relation!) who worked with myself and Andrew at Silvertone and without whom...etc etc! Other artists on the label so far are the legendary American singer/songwriter John Prine, fab LA band Redd Kross and Chicago blues legend Otis Rush...then of course there's Ian McNabb. We signed Ian on his birthday this year and to say we're all very excited about this would be a huge understatement. The first single 'If Love Was Like Guitars' comes out on January 11th closely followed by the 'Truth and Beauty' LP on January 18th. We will be doing a special limited edition vinyl version of the LP on two discs so make sure you rush out and buy one before they all go! We're expecting excellent radio and press coverage on Ian and the first thing for next year is to make sure he's elevated to get the profile he deserves in the media and get him across to all those new fans who are going to love the album. We also have trips planned to Ireland and round Europe early next year plus numerous radio and TV appearances so keep your eyes peeled. There will be constant activity throughout 1993 and we will be doing everything we possibly can to make sure that 1993 turns out to be a great and successful year for Ian.

JUDITH RILEY - General Manager - THIS WAY UP - December 1992





McNABB'S Back

by Paul Grundy



I'd only been to the Clapham Grand once before, to see That Petrol Emotion - a good joint and a good gig. That's also what the Ian McNabb gig, some weeks later promised to be. Well I know all about sod's law an' all but someone sure smiled on me this night. Living north of North London and picking up a mate who worked late on Saturdays made us late enough to watch ANNA (the support) leave the stage.

In Harlow, I sometimes feel I'm on a one man Icicle crusade, and so it was cool to hang out with other such conquistadors of the Ice Age. With only one or two beers inside us, on strolled Ian and band. We quickly made our way to the front, meeting the opening chords to 'Shit Creek' (can there be a better way to start?). It didn't take long before the crowd began to sing along (fortunate because Ian forgot the words once or twice!). The sounds were right and the atmosphere was right and then Ian threw a spanner in the 'works' (geddit?) and played some of his new stuff. Some I'd already heard but the others also had that familiar feel and a lot of us sung along to songs we'd never even heard - weird.

We were treated to a few songs concerning the Mersey homeland - a great version of 'Hope Street Rag' and 'Up here in the North of England'.

I've already mentioned the mellow atmosphere, but when we heard 'Evangeline' and 'Understanding Jane' - and a classic version of 'Birds fly' (if anyone got that on tape, hey - I'm interested) - we all had a bit of a polite slam. Working hard, yet clearly enjoying himself as much as us, Ian had his guitar retuned after each song - keeping the roadie really busy - and once had to play air guitar, which still sounded cool.

At one point some Joe got up on stage to help shake that tamborine and gave us a bit of a laugh - when he was eventually bottled off, that too, was almost polite. People were there just to dig the scene and it was cool.

Once he left the stage, it didn't take much to get him back for an encore - this was solo and acoustic. After we helped him out with 'One True Love' (he sang the second verse twice!) he gave the guy next to me what he'd been screaming for all night ("Do Hollow Horse! - he's a mate of mine, is Ian!"). This verish was beautiful, the dogs bollocks - it finished off the complete range of emotions we'd all felt that night. This was more than a gig - it was a slice of the good life, one we don't get often enough. Finishing off with a couple of new songs with the band, he told us that he'd see us all before Christmas, and hey, I caught a plectrum he threw out to the crowd. Man, I love Christmas!

ASCENDING.....a brief history

'Ascending' was the name given to the first release by The Icicle Works way back in 1981. As those fortunate to have heard it will tell you, it is unlike any of their later material.

Ian best describes the 6 track cassette as sounding like early Soft Cell. Only about 200 copies were ever produced and were distributed by Probe records. Needless to say, copies are very hard to come by.

Should you be lucky enough to come across a copy then expect to part with anything between £15 and £30 (although I managed to get my copy for a tenner after putting an ad in the N.M.E.!).

Recorded, partly, at the 'Ministry' rehearsal studios, Ian adopted a very much 'hands-on' approach to the whole project. Finances were tight so he took control of reproducing the cassettes.

So the story goes a young and very keen McNabb would get up of a morning and, after brekky, would set about running off copies of the tape from the master on his trusty twin - deck. Between about 10.30am and 3.00pm he would run off about ten c60's and then have an hour off.

He would continue about 4.30pm knocking out copy after copy until beer o'clock. A well earned visit to the pub followed. There he stayed until the start of the late shift when he would run off even more copies into the small hours.

This routine was followed almost religiously for some three weeks until the 200 or so copies were ready. The two Chris's then apparently stepped in to give a hand (well more probably a tongue!) in gumming all the labels on.

Fortunately all this hard work paid off as all copies were snapped up almost immediately. One even found its way to John Peel's offices and he was suitably impressed enough to afford it airplay. The rest, as they say, is history.

Good luck in the hunt.

PW



DAMAGED AND HURT (and BROKE!!)

by Rob Williamson

May 1990, usual story, excellent new album, big U.K. tour, great shows, minimal airplay, few sales....so?. So the Icicle works troop around the country again in a vain (usually) attempt to shift a few more copies.

Friday 25th and it's off to Egham, Surrey college. Met my mate Simon at Waterloo and we get the train to Egham. No Icicle works T-shirts visible on the train, but we can see and hear 2 guys talking about how good last night's Big Country gig was (oh dear!). These 2 people turn out to be Bryan Johnson (see last issue's story) and the fat man (oops - sorry Dave Chinnery), 2 long time committed McNabb fans. We get to the college union to find that the Icicle works won't be on for another 3 hours. typical!

3 hours and many pints later we take our place, half an hour after that the band comes on stage. Ian as usual is great but - just as they are playing 'Up here in the north of England' and the stage fills with dry ice - pandemonium erupts! Flashing lights, loud sirens, bells - yep the smoke and dry ice have set the fire alarm off - everybody out!

Whilst walking around outside waiting for the O.K. to go back inside we bump into a long haired bloke in a leather coat - none other than McNabb himself who seems well pissed (or stoned!) and mumbles something about how they can't play 'I still want you' on stage and how Lennon must be turning in his grave after the recent tribute show in Liverpool. Anyhow the rest of the show is great and we head back to London in a cab at 2am pissed but in high spirits.

Monday 28th Bank holiday. A gig in Doncaster. Just near my home town so up on the train and meet up with 2 old friends, John and Dave (who I've persuaded to come and see the band for the first time). The gig is at a place called the Jug. I remembered this place from years ago and I don't recall it being very big. Well my worst fears are confirmed - The place is tiny, making the 'Camden Underworld' seem like Wembley arena. After about 6 or 7 numbers the band launch into 'little girl lost' - Quite loudly. In fact too loud because they blow the main fuse! The band troop off and then return 2 minutes later but after 30 seconds they blow the fuse again. Band leave - band return - and yet again after a short while the fuse goes again for the 3rd time. Upon their return Ian quips "thanks for bringing us back for 3 encores folks". The rest of the gig is played at a much lower volume but my mates are still impressed (and buy "permanent damage" on the strength of it) but I don't think Ian will pay here again.

Saturday 2nd June, a week later, and the last show of the tour - Essex Uni, Colchester. I travel alone as my mate Bryan has to be at a wedding. I get a day return from Liverpool street for £15 - when I get there a crazy series of events follows.

Taxi from station to college £5 - takes me half an hour to find the student union - time 8pm. Find out band aren't on till midnight (typical - I should have known). No trains to London after 11.30 pm. B & B time I think - taxi into town £5; Book B & B for £28; taxi back to university £5 (puff pant!). Quite a few pints later I take my place at the front of the stage. Its a great show and during the last encore 'Birds fly' Ian is getting carried away - 'magic bus', 'I want candy', 'Who do you love', 'tonight's the night', 'twist & shout', 'she loves you', 'ferry cross the Mersey' to name but a few. Then 2 people jump on stage, then 2 more, suddenly about a dozen (Ian is now getting very carried away). Then more people jump on stage and soon - "sod this" I'm up there as well, the security is non existent. Ian announces that "this is probably the best gig the Icicle works have ever played"(it also turns out to be the last as well). At this point it seems the whole stage is about to give way. The security men move about 2 dozen people off the stage and in a couple of minutes it's all over. What a show!

It's about 3 am and I get a cab to the B & B £8 (this was before the recession - I now sleep on stations.{see last issue}).Next day my return ticket is no longer valid so its another £12 to get back to London. Bloody hell! nearly £100 to see a £5 gig only 30 miles from home - worth every penny?, you bet.

Phew, what a week. Fire alarms going off, gigs evacuated, fuses blown, stages nearly collapsing, bank account empty - Damaged & hurt? No way!

Drive on - (as the man said). Rob Williamson.

P.S. Anybody who has a copy of either Doncaster or Colchester gigs please, please drop me a line - I'm open to bribes.

Rob Williamson



THE BEST OF THE ICICLE WORKS/
BEST KEPT SECRETS

A WASTED OPPORTUNITY?

When news first emerged that Beggars Banquet were to release an Icicle Works 'Best Of..', I, like most fans I expect, was pleased that there was another chance for my favourite band to gain some well-deserved attention. I wasn't particularly excited, however, as I expected that I'd already own all the tracks on it and that I'd probably only end up buying it to be a completist/sad pathetic trainspotter (delete as appropriate).

However, once I heard (via the NME's McNabb interview) that Ian was involved in the compilation of a bonus out-takes and rarities disc to make the package better value for money, I perked up considerably and looked forward to a veritable feast of unheard goodies.

Sitting now with the actual (admittedly very attractive) artefact in front of me, though, I can't help but feel a slight twinge of disappointment.

I realise that at this point some of you may be agog at what sounds like criticism of our hero, but the best fanzines always contain constructive criticism rather than page after page of gushing praise. So, those of you with open minds, please read on....

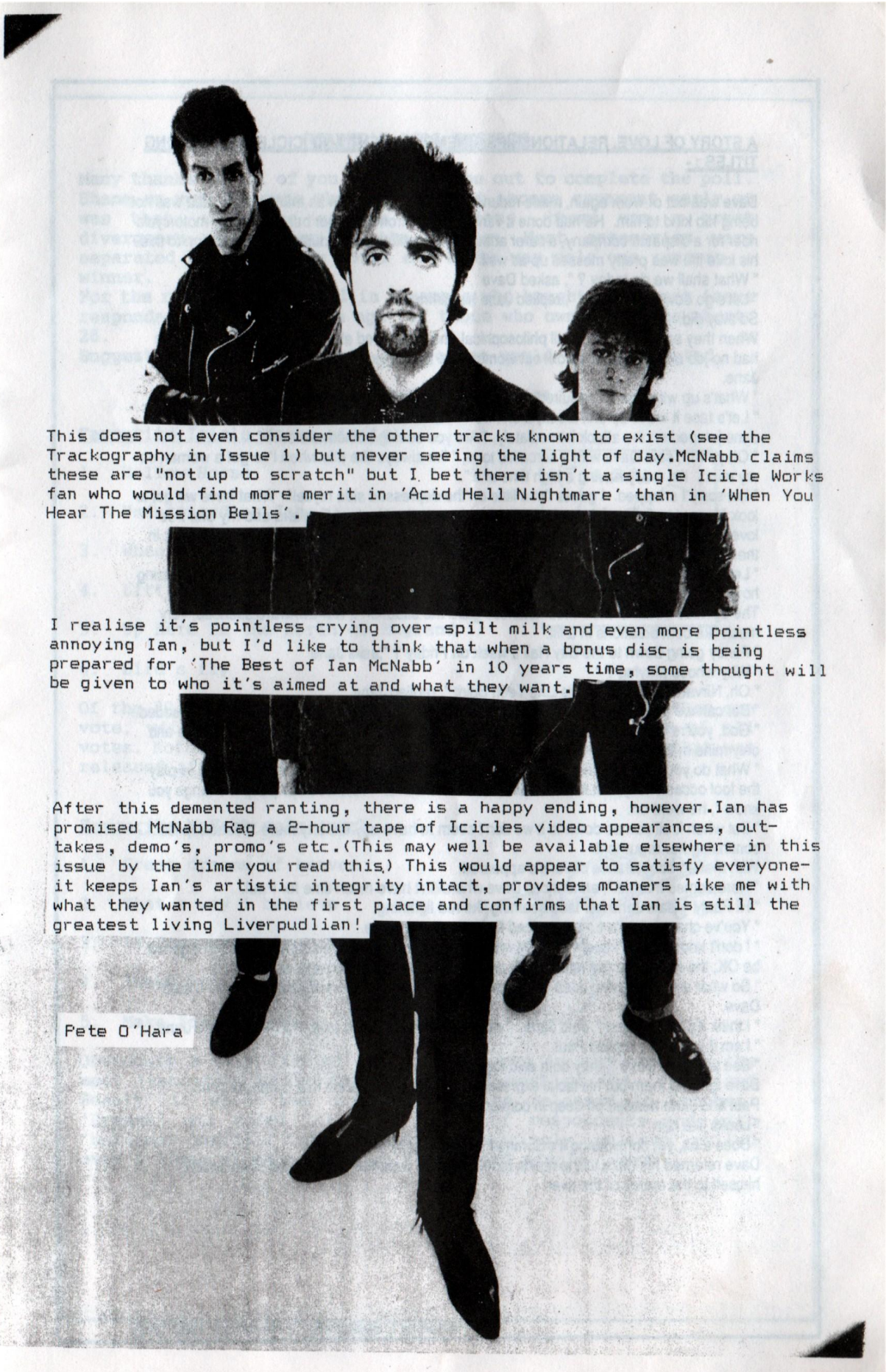
Actually, there is little about the 'Best Of' disc to quibble about... From a personal point of view, I would have preferred future generations to judge the Icicles by Seven Horses or Here Comes Trouble rather than Shit Creek but, in general, all the goodies which the casual buyer would be looking for are here.

Before criticising 'Best Kept Secrets', let's consider why it exists. It seems unlikely that it is to attract casual buyers. Firstly, unless they looked very closely (or incurred the wrath of their local Megastore by opening the package!), they would be unlikely to even know it was there. Secondly, whilst people like ourselves buy singles specifically for B-sides and extra tracks, your average single-buyer is unlikely to even listen to them. Sad but true.

The conclusion must, therefore, be that the extra disc is aimed squarely at you and I, to swell sales. I have no quarrel with this—Beggars need the money, Ian deserves the money and we want the bonus tracks. So we're all happy, right? Wrong.

The problem lies in what we get as our 'bonus'. By the time the album was released, only 'Acid Hell Nightmare' had not been previously released. OK, so 'Triad/Chestnut Mare' and 'The Needle and The Damage Done' are genuine rarities and you could make a case for 'Goin' Back' as the Seven Horses double pack is hard to find. That leaves us with 12 tracks which virtually everyone will already own (6 of which were already available on CD).

There must be many fans who have discovered the band late and who have consequently struggled to find tracks like 'Lovehunt', 'Scirocco', 'Reverie Girl', 'Gunboys', 'The Devil On Horseback' or 'Impossibly Three Lovers' on some of the more obscure formats.



This does not even consider the other tracks known to exist (see the Trackography in Issue 1) but never seeing the light of day. McNabb claims these are "not up to scratch" but I bet there isn't a single Icicle Works fan who would find more merit in 'Acid Hell Nightmare' than in 'When You Hear The Mission Bells'.

I realise it's pointless crying over spilt milk and even more pointless annoying Ian, but I'd like to think that when a bonus disc is being prepared for 'The Best of Ian McNabb' in 10 years time, some thought will be given to who it's aimed at and what they want.

After this demented ranting, there is a happy ending, however. Ian has promised McNabb Rag a 2-hour tape of Icicles video appearances, out-takes, demo's, promo's etc. (This may well be available elsewhere in this issue by the time you read this.) This would appear to satisfy everyone - it keeps Ian's artistic integrity intact, provides moaners like me with what they wanted in the first place and confirms that Ian is still the greatest living Liverpoolian!

Pete O'Hara

A STORY OF LOVE, RELATIONSHIPS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND ICICLE WORKS SONG
TITLES :-

Dave was out of work again, made redundant for the fifth time in as many years. Life was not being too kind to him. He had done a variety of jobs from a burger bar salesman, motorcycle rider for a dispatch company, a carer at the Blind Institute and a dustman. In addition to this his love life was pretty messed up as well.

"What shall we do today?", asked Dave

"Let's go down to the river", replied Jane his girlfriend.

So they did.

When they arrived Dave got all philosophical and depressed about the state of his life. He had no job and he couldn't work out women, like most men, and had trouble understanding Jane.

"What's up with you?", inquired Jane, noticing Dave's demeanour.

"Let's face it we're up shit creek, aren't we?", announced Dave.

Jane jumped on the attack immediately, "Are you seeing someone else?"

"Oh yeh!", said Dave with a sarcastic tone, "I'm always like this when I've got a woman on my mind. I'm really having a high time of it".

"I'm sorry I snapped. I guess I'm a little on the depressed side myself. What have we got to look forward to? The job market's dead up here in the North of England and my one true love is no different from most being unemployed", said Jane, "we seem to be goin' back in the wrong direction"

"Let's change the subject", appealed Dave. "Look at that magpie up there. Isn't it amazing how birds fly? It's such a shame some people chop th tree and deny it a natural habitat." The obvious strain of their circumstances gave the situation a few awkward silences, very much like conversations in a lift.

"Fancy going down to the City Hall a week on Friday?", asks Jane

"Why whose playing?"

"Oh, Nirvana. I loved Smells Like Teen Spirit", replied Jane.

"But can we afford it?", asked Dave. "If only we could acquire a small windfall", he added.

"God, you're so practical at times. You never used to be like this when you were mine and only mine in the early days", snorted Jane.

"What do you mean by that? I may be serious nowadays. OK so everybody loves to play the fool occasionally, but there is a limit", retorted Dave. "And besides people change you know", he went on.

"But when it all comes down to it we don't seem to have any fun any more", Jane replied continuing her argument.

With that an acquaintance of Jane's appeared.

"Here comes trouble", announced Dave who didn't have much time for Paul.

"Hi Paul!", said Jane her face beaming like red lightning.

"You've changed your tune", noticed Dave turning to Jane.

"I don't know, I don't seem to know where we are any more. One minute I think I'm gonna be OK, the next I see our relationship as causing permannet damage to us both"

"So what are you saying Jane? That we should finish. I still want you, you know", said Dave.

"I think it's for the best", said Jane. "Are you going back into town Paul?", asked Jane.

"I am if you are", replied Paul.

"See you then Dave", they both said together.

Dave ignored them but his facial expression showed a realization that it was all over.

Paul and Jane headed off deep in conversation.

"Looks like rain"

"Does a bit, yet considering it's Summer it's a bit out of season".

Dave returned his gaze to the rapids forming on the waterline and just felt like throwing himself to the mercy of the river.

READER'S POLL RESULTS

Many thanks to all of you who took time out to complete the poll. Shame on you the ones who didn't! What became apparent early on was that, with one or two exceptions, there was a great divergence of opinion in the voting. Most categories were separated by only a few votes and there was only one runaway winner.

For the record just over 1 in 4 people who bought the first issue responded and the average age (of those who owned up) was about 26.

Suggestions for future poll categories would be appreciated.

Favourite Icicle Works single

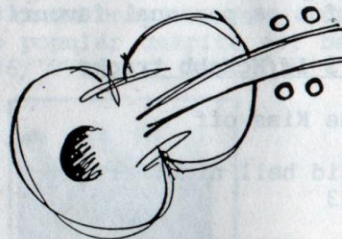
1. Hollow Horse
2. Understanding Jane
3. When it all comes down
4. Little girl lost
5. Up here in the North of England
6. Bird's fly



Of the 20 or so singles to date only these six got more than one vote, with the winner picking up just over a quarter of all votes. Notably, Little girl lost is the only one listed that was released after '86.

Favourite McNabb solo track

1. Great dreams of heaven
2. That's why I believe
3. If love was like guitars
4. These are the days
5. Make love to you



Obviously a very limited category to vote in and probably the most inaccurate as it doesn't reflect most of the 'Truth and Beauty' LP which was originally to be released in October. 'Dreams' was voted for by a third of respondents and with 'believe' coming a close second. Interestingly, 'believe' polled over 4 times as many votes as the second single 'days'.

Best Icicle Works album

1. Blind
2. If you want to defeat your enemy
3. The Icicle Works
4. Permanent Damage
5. The small price of a bicycle



The original Icicle Works swansong LP proved to be most popular here with almost a third of the votes. A late rush of voting for 'Defeat' saw it edging out The first LP for second place. 'Bicycle' brought up the rear, one vote behind the last Iccies LP.

Favourite 5 IW/McNabb tracks

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Hollow horse | 6.- Out of season |
| 2. What she did to my mind | - Up here in the North |
| 3. Understanding Jane | 8.- Great dreams of heaven |
| 4. When it all comes down | - Stood before Saint Peter |
| 5. Bird's fly | 10 Firepower |

'Hollow horse' romped home a few furlongs ahead of the rest of the field with the only non-single in the top 5, 'What she did', finishing a respectable second. Just missing out of a spot in the top ten were 'That's why I believe', 'Little girl lost', 'Love is a wonderful colour' and 'Evangeline'. Overall some 62 tracks were voted for as personal favourites.

Worst 3 IW/McNabb tracks

1. The Kiss off
- 2.- Acid hell nightmare
- 223
- 4.- I never saw my hometown
- Shit creek
- Tincan
- One good eye



Universally slated (but McNabb's 2nd fave Iccies single), 'Kiss off' gets the thumbs down from the voters. '223' didn't fare much better either - less of the Zodiac Mindwarp impressions in future methinks! Also mentioned for inclusion were 'Hot profit gospel', 'Walk a while with me', 'let's go down to the river' and 'I dreamt I was a beautiful woman'. It is worth noting that three of the worst tracks appear on the best LP, 'Blind'.

Best gig seen

No winners or losers here, obviously. What is noticeable is that over half of the gigs mentioned are those since mid '88 when the original band split. This either suggests we have a number of late converts or that McNabb's performances have simply got better over the years. Ian's two most recent shows at 'the Grand', Clapham and 'Jabez Clegg', Manchester got a few mentions. Other gigs voted as best included :-

Norwich U.E.A. '84, Caesar's Palace Aberdeen '90, Leicester Poly 29/11/87, Bristol Bierkeller 12/87, Manchester Appollo '88, Town and Country Club 12/86, Royal Court Liverpool '85, The Venue London 3/4/84, King Tut's Glasgow 5/90, Irish centre Northampton 25/7/91, Liverpool Poly 12/83, Aston Univ Birmingham 12/87, Camden Palace '87, Coventry Poly 28/3/90, Exeter Univ '90.

I guess you had to be there!

Favourite live song

1. When it all comes down
- 2.- Hollow Horse
- Understanding Jane
4. Starry blue-eyed wonder
- 5.- Bird's fly
- What she did to my mind
7. Nirvana



A close run thing this one but the combined votes of the different versions of 'WIACD' were enough to secure first place. The usual crowd pleaser, 'Bird's Fly' could only manage tie fifth place. 'Nirvana' proved still to be popular despite not being part of the usual set since about '86/'87.

Favourite song lyric/line

1. Hollow horse
2. Up here in the North of England
3. When it all comes down
4. What she did to my mind



Of the 21 tracks voted for, it was our old friend 'Hollow horse' and particularly the "we'll be as we are....." chorus that emerged victorious. Second most mentioned lyric was from WIACD - "Well I once knew a girl looked a lot like you ..." etc but 'Up here in the North of England' got more votes as a whole to secure the second spot.

Best record sleeve/cover

- 1.- Blind (U.S.A. version)
- 2.- Blind
 - Hollow Horse
 - Permanent Damage
5. The Small price of a bicycle

Surprisingly the American cover of 'Blind' got the thumbs up in this category with a three (hollow) horse race for second place. Some sixteen other covers were nominated including 'Nirvana', 'Seven Horses' and 'Numb'.

Favourite guitar solo

1. When it all comes down
2. Shit creek
- 3.- Blind
 - Truck driver's lament

By far the most clear cut category with the winner earning over three times as many votes as the second place track. Also mentioned for their axe-worthiness were 'What she did', 'Stood before St.Peter', 'Understanding Jane', and 'Evangeline'.

Favourite other bands/artists

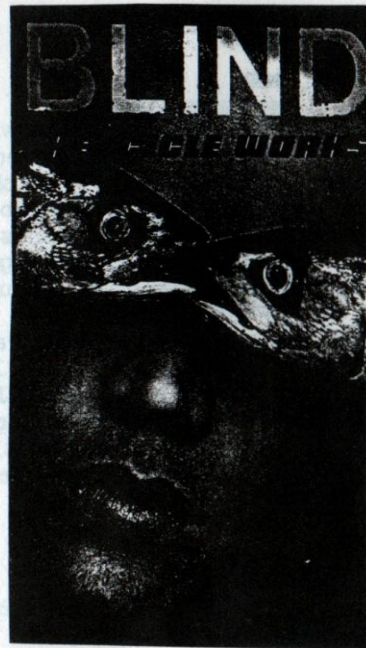
1. R.E.M
- 2.- Julian Cope
 - Neil Young
- 4.- Green on red
 - U2
5. Diesel park west

Georgia's finest proved to be the most popular here with about a quarter of voters listing them. Two of Ian's other favourites, Neil Young and Green on Red, also made the top 4. Other bands mentioned included XTC, The Cure, The Wonderstuff, Echo & the Bunnymen, Wah/Wylie, The Jam, The Waterboys, The Byrds and The Doors.

Iceicle Works single that never was

- 1.- As the dragonfly flies
 - Starry blue-eyed wonder
 - Out of season

Very little consensus for this one. Over 25 tracks were put forward as potential singles but only the top three managed more than a couple of votes. Others mentioned were 'solid ground', 'what she did..', 'Hope street rag' and 'Don't let it rain on my parade'.



"BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU DREAM OF..."

By Liz Rushton

I thought the Icicle Works were the best group in the world the minute I heard 'Birds Fly' (and Chris Sharrock's drums).

I desperately wanted to know more about them and as there records were so hard to find on the East Coast of America, I joined the fan club in 1984.

Three years later when I submitted my name to the Electric Ice pen pal slot in the hopes of finding an English friend to write to about the finer things in life, like the Icicle Works, I didn't really expect an answer - and that was just what I thought I had got.

It was a month later in July '87 - I'd forgotten all about entering my name in the fanzine - when a mysterious brown envelope arrived from England.

I read the contents. It was my one and only reply - a boy from Southampton who also thought the Icicle Works were the coolest. He said he couldn't help noticing me advertising myself in the fanzine (which made me sound brazen hussy) and anyone bored in the USA must be interesting.

I replied, of course I had to, with all these compliments I had to find out about this boy. I mentioned that anyone who liked the Icicle Works must be okay.

I wondered if I would receive another letter, or would he just decide not to write again? How long did a letter take to send back and forth? Had I said something stupid in my letter?

But never fear, a reply came within 2 weeks and from then on we were on a roll.

We slowly (and with the Royal Mail and the US Mail entrusted with our letters I mean slow) got to know each other by letter.

Neil's birthday is in September and I non-chalantly (and rather boldly) asked him for his phone number - just for curiosity's sake. He gave it to me, (rather reluctantly I think) and my plan of action had started fitting into place.

By this time my last year of school had started and my friends duly egged me on into phoning Neil a few days before his birthday 'just to try out the number.'

I threw caution to the wind (and my mother's phone bill) and phoned his number when I got home from school. Neil's father answered. With his accent being watered down Liverpool and my accent being so East Coast American, we had a job to understand each other. He hurriedly got rid of me and fetched Neil from his room where Neil told me he'd been listening to the Icicle Works that very minute. We spoke our first words to each other which were of amazement that we were actually speaking to each other after so many months of writing. We hung up with a promise that I would phone Sunday, his birthday, which I did but not before my mother had found me a nice weekend job to pay for the phone calls.

The letters continued, some of them averaging 11 pages long with talk of the Icicle Works, which songs or albums were our favorites at the minute, what other groups we liked, and we sent each other tapes of groups we hadn't heard before. And the phone calls continued weekly on a Sunday at 9pm GMT - 4pm EST. We started plotting how I could go to university in England to be near each other (it turned out that I'd missed all of the dead lines for applications and grants etc. so that idea was out the window. I'd even sent away to about every university in England for a prospectus).

This was when things started heating up.

The months crawled by with nothing to keep us company but the crooning of the Icicle Works on the stereo. We made arrangements for me to visit Neil in July (88) after I'd finished school. But July finally arrived by some miracle and the thought of finally meeting Neil made me sick (with excitement). He was there to greet me at the airport in all his glory. The year of letter writing had paid off - this was it - my pen-pal Neil who I was in love (or was it lust) with (don't get me wrong, he was in love with me too but that's for him to tell his side of the story).

We only had two weeks together and we went to the Lake District, London, Devon and, of course, Liverpool - Home of the Greatest Band in the World (no not them) - The Icicle Works.

Every day spent together was also one less day that we had to spend together & before you can say 'BOB' I was zapped back home. Vacation & being near Neil OVER.

Forlorn and depressed in a scorching American summer where you can't lift the shades to let the sun in because the heat is too much to bear, I once again began to wait (and wait & wait) and count down the days until Christmas when we planned to be together next.

Our vague plans were to find a way for me to live in England (without going to school). Looking back on it now I can see that there was only one way to go. Marriage. We'd dabbled in the idea before like some secret, forbidden cult but now the prospect loomed large.

Neil began to find out how you went about living & working in England if you were a foreigner. You needed references and references of references and promises that you wouldn't live off the state, etc etc etc.

Neil finally popped the question in October (88) with only a few days prior warning that there was a question he wanted to ask me the next Sunday we spoke. By that time our calls had escalated to Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.

I said yes & we set a date for December, around Christmas when Neil would be spending Christmas in Vermont. The date was finally set on New Years Eve.

I lived through my first earthquake - spent alone on Thanksgiving in November when the cats deserted me for the open space of the outdoors, their sixth sense having told them to evacuate without telling me to evacuate with them.

The only other earth shattering experience I went through was getting married a month later.

This was the BIG STEP, no turning back.

We got married in the living room of my mother's house. It was nerve racking and not something to take lightly (until we had the party afterwards where the groom wrestled the bride's 11 year old sister to the kitchen floor yes, Neil was now part of the family).

The British Embassy processed my papers extra quick and by the beginning of February (89) I had bid a tearful farewell to my family and set out for England what I thought to be the coolest country in the world.

Well, it's nearly four years onwards and I'm still hear - even though the Icicle Works aren't - with Neil, my three cats, two rabbits and a hamster.

So, if you ever get a chance to enter it, I would recommend the pen-pal slot but remember be careful what you dream of it may come up and surprise you.

Great moments in rock.



Part 53 - Charles Manson meets The Icicle Works!

Cover versions

If you ever saw the Icicle Works live, chances are you caught them knocking out a cover or two during the set. The choice of these tracks have been many and varied, indicating a large range of Ian's influences.

After the trackography in the first issue, a number of you suggested doing something similar with cover versions. So with the help of Mike Prenton, Pete O'Hara and Bryan Johnson, find below a reasonably comprehensive list of covers (plus some interesting snippets of info.) played by Ian and his various ensembles since about '82. No doubt a good few have been omitted.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>ARTISTS</u>
It makes no difference ('86 aborted solo single)	The Band/Robbie Robertson
Caroline no ('90-'92 radio acoustic)	The Beach boys
Barbara Ann	The Beach boys
Fight for your right to party ('87 solo gig - encore with The Chain gang.)	The Beastie boys
Nowhere Man ('87 High Time tour)	The Beatles
Twist and shout ('90 live - with Frank Sidebottom.)	The Beatles
Get Back ('87 live Defeat tour)	The Beatles
I saw her standing there ('87 live Defeat tour)	The Beatles
You ain't seen nothing yet ('85 live single free with 'Understanding Jane')	Bachman Turner Overdrive
Slough (collaboration with Mike Read)	Sir John Betjamen
For what it's worth ('88 Blind tour encore)	Buffalo Springfield
Mr. Soul ('85 live and b-side of 'daughters')	Buffalo Springfield/Neil Young
Goin' back ('85 live & b-side of '7 horses' dbl pack)	The Byrds/Dusty Springfield
Wild mountain thyme ('87 esp. Reading Rock Festival)	The Byrds/trad.
White Christmas ('86 live)	Bing Crosby
Triad/Chestnut Mare ('90/'91 live solo gigs and compilation LP)	David Crosby/The Byrds
Johnny B Goode ('83 live with Billy Bragg)	Chuck Berry/trad.
Should I stay or should I go? ('86/'87 live)	The Clash

Suzie Q ('87 live)	Creedence Clearwater Revival
Roadhouse Blues ('83-'87 - probably the most played cover of all!)	The Doors
L.A. Woman ('86 live)	The Doors
Light my fire (soundchecks ?)	The Doors
The In - Crowd ('81/'82 - one of the earliest covers)	Dobie Gray
Rescue	Echo & the Bunnymen
Do it Clean	Echo & the Bunnymen
Heartbreak Hotel ('86 live)	Elvis Presley
One night with you	Elvis Presley
You really got me (live and soundchecks)	The Kinks
Dazed and confused ('86 onwards live intro)	Led Zeppelin
Rock and Roll ('88 live and b-side)	Led Zeppelin
Cold Turkey ('85 b-side of WIACD)	John Lennon
Jean's not happening ('87 live)	The Pale Fountains
Private lives	The Pretenders
Set the controls for the heart of the sun ('86 live - opening number)	Pink Floyd
Radio free Europe ('84 live)	REM
Merry Christmas everybody ('85 Xmas live)	Slade
Pretty vacant ('85 live)	The Sex Pistols
Nature's way ('86 b-side of 'Up here')	Spirit
Born to be wild ('85 live)	Steppenwolf
I want your love (Dec '88 live - featuring Zak)	Transvision Vamp
Into the mystic ('86 live and 'Jane' b-side)	Van Morrison
Pale blue eyes ('85 live)	Velvet Underground
Jump ('87 live)	Van Halen
Sea song ('86 b-side of 'Up here')	Robert Wyatt
The Kids are alright	The Who

Young man ('85 live)	The Who
Substitute	The Who
Superstition ('85 live)	Stevie Wonder
Private Revolution ('88 live)	World Party
Helpless ('85 live)	Neil Young
The Needle and the damage done ('86 live and anti-heroin benefit LP track with Wylie)	Neil Young
Down by the river ('85 live)	Neil Young
Rockin' in the free world ('90 soundcheck - Big Country support)	Neil Young
Sunshine on a rainy day ('92 - threw in a verse and chorus during 'Guitars')	Zoe

Also worthy of a mention are the following which have been incorporated into the 'Birds fly' medley at one time or another. When the music's over, I want candy, who do you love, magic bus, hey Bo Diddley, Jumpin' Jack Flash, Allelujah, Dixieland, Rock & Roll music, Sympathy for the devil, Not fade away, She loves you, Ferry cross the mersey, tonight's the night, funy how etc etc etc

Not forgetting

Gloria (Evangeline) and Walk on the wild side (For what its worth medley).

Corrections/additions gratefully accepted!

As with most bands that attempt cover versions, some of Ian's choices have proved wiser than others. I remember a lot of heads being scratched when they heard the intro to 'Jump' back in '87. While 'Roadhouse blues' and 'Wild mountain Thyme' won over many a sceptic at the Reading Rock festival the same year.

In an attempt to subliminally influence Ian's future choice of covers how about sending me the tracks you would like to see done. It'll make interesting reading in the next issue, if nothing else!

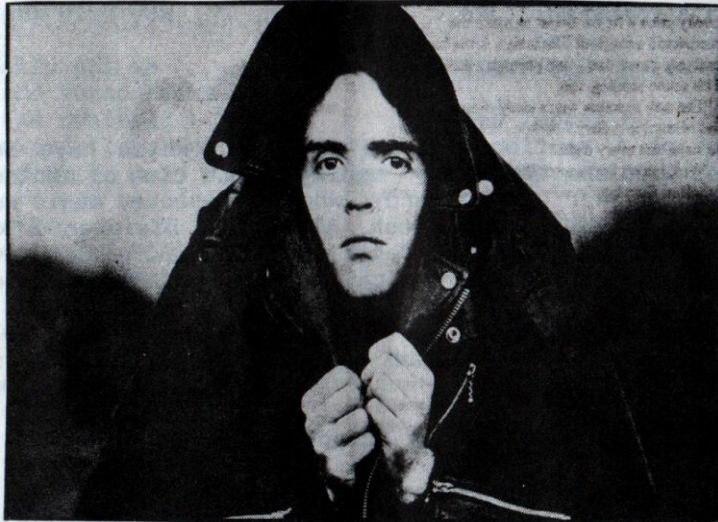
title artist

Psst....Wanna buy a Video?

Issue one's Icicle Works compilation video idea brought a very good response. Many of you wrote in offering to donate your prized clips for a planned Iccies video extravaganza.

The plan was soon put on ice, however, after a chance backstage chat with Mr. McNABB in early October. It transpired that he was the proud owner of over 10 hours of IW footage! Nice chap that he is, Ian offered to make up a few compilations and sell them in the fanzine at a reasonable price. An offer I couldn't refuse, don't you think?

No doubt the very next day (and after he'd sobered up and realised what he'd let himself in for) Ian set about putting the compilations together. Among the clips that are probably included are a whole gig at the Manchester Apollo, lots of U.S. TV appearances circa '84 and numerous U.K. promo's.



Ian's hitherto unknown cameo appearance in 'E.T' will not be made available!

Prior to Ian signing to 'This Way Up' everything was going to plan and full details, prices etc of the vid's were to appear on these very pages. However, the project has had to take a back seat just recently with Ian doing a lot of promo work and rehearsing for the January tour. Consequently we're going to have to wait a little longer for the compilations to become available.

All necessary information will appear in next issue. However, if you can't wait that long just send your name & address (form opposite) to me and I'll send you full details as soon as they are available.

The same goes for Ian McNABB merchandise. If you can't make it to any of the gigs but would love to get hold of a tee-shirt, badge, luminous socks(!) etc. then send an s.a.e and I'll forward more details when I get them.

A Trivial Quiz

It's competition time, folks. Find below ten teasers bound to stretch your Iccies/McNABB knowledge to the limit. Judith from 'This Way Up' has promised a bag of goodies for the winner (promo's, photo's etc!). Answers etc will appear in the next issue.

1. Name the two people, one a politician, the other a musician, who are credited with inspiring two Icicle Works LP Titles?
2. Who once described Ian as the 'Midfield General' of the band?
3. 'Up here in the North of England' was written from the 'bare bones' of which other IW song?
4. Who, rumour has it, is 'Starry blue - eyed wonder' dedicated to?
5. 'Truth and Beauty' is Ian's 6th studio LP. What is the main difference between the first three and the last three?
6. Name two McNabb compositions with the words 'inclement weather' in them.
7. What was 'Seven singles deep' originally going to be called?
8. Only one Iccies song, at least to my knowledge, has appeared on a movie soundtrack. Name the song and the movie.
9. Who played brass on 'All the daughters'?
- 10 Under what name back in '86 was Ian going to release 'It makes no difference' as a single?

Issue 3 of McNabb Rag Should be unleashed to an unsuspecting public in the very near future. To reserve your copy rush this down to your local newsagent and he'll look at you stupid! So instead send it to me and I'll add you to the ever - growing mailing list.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Finally if you would like to receive some sporadic updates of future McNabb activity, just send me a few s.a.e.'s and I'll endeavour to keep you posted.

Issue three

Hopefully, most will agree this issue is a great improvement on the first one. With the backing of Ian and Geoff, and a very co-operative record company, future issues should be even better.

At time of writing the third issue can be expected sometime in April or May. Things all depend on the number of contributions I receive. Very simply the more stuff I get in the more frequently I'll be able to put issues out.

The next rag will feature the results and winners of the competitions and gig/album reviews (assuming I receive some!). Hopefully, with European gigs lined up in March there'll be some reviews sent in by our readers out there in the 'Community'.

Also, instead of me thinking up inane questions to put to Ian and then pass them of as a questionnaire, I'll be looking for you to send me any burning questions you may have. So if want to know what Ian wears in bed; what his favourite TV programme is or, more likely, when he plans to play Bognor Regis then let me know. I'll pass them on and include them in the next issue.

Since Issue one was put out, I've been overwhelmed by the number of people wanting to get hold of various live recordings. I've been able to help many out and, in the process, increase my own collection thru' swapping. If anybody has any ideas on how to make more tapes available then please write. One idea would be to make a catalogue of IW/McNABB tapes, (include length and quality, name and address) and then interested parties could write directly to the owner. Where swapping was not possible perhaps we could put limits on the prices (eg. c60-£2, c90-£2.50, c120-£3). I wouldn't object to collating the catalogue if you send all necessary information about your collections. I'd get them photocopied and, for a minimal fee, the catalogue could be yours. It's just an idea. Let me know what you think.

Finally, I've a few copies of issue one still gathering dust on the sideboard. Send us a quid and a s.a.e if you would like one. Apologies to anybody who bought this edition for the 'Iccies loving celeb interview' - I'm still working on it.

One last thing, if anybody knows where I can get some cheap printing done or how I can generally improve 'McNabb rag' please contact me. See ya.

PW

Contributions/correspondence etc. to :-

PAUL WARRY
'McNABB Rag'



Thanks

Thanks - a - plenty go to Messrs. McNabb and Muir for their contributions and co-operation in this issue. A big slap on the back to 'This way Up' for making the signing of the decade and ensuring a much higher profile for Ian in '93 (and after!). Special thanks go to Judith for the article and constant updates.

Other contributors I'd like to acknowledge include:- Pete O'Hara, Paul Grundy, Jon Perigud, Rob Williamson, Steve Plunkett, David McCombie, Liz and Neil Rushton, Tony Strutt, Bryan Johnson and Lee Baskerville (especially for the subtitle!).

As with the first issue, I've probably left a few people out so once again sorry and thanks.

A final mention goes to my very good mate, Darren Jones. It was his fanzine, '**White Lemonade**', that was the single biggest influence on me starting 'McNabb Rag' in the first place (actually he reckons issue 1 is practically identical to his!). So if you would like to know more (and judge for yourself) contact Darren at 'White Lemonade' H.Q. - 10 Kimberley Way, Glynfach, Porth, Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan, S.Wales. Artists featured in the three issues to date include the Manics, Darling Buds, Wedding Present, Anhrefn, Heavenly, lots of other up and coming Welsh bands and the well known Terrorist Ballet Dancers from Hell to nameer, quite a lot.

.....And we've just received some late photo news.

Pictured below, one little ole' wine drinking McNabb and a certain Karl Wallinger of that band with the excellent drummer...um....World Party, that's it. The shot was taken at last year's launch of the N.M.E.'s charity compilation LP, Ruby Trax on which lot's of trendy band's covered some of their fave hits from the 70's and 80's. Sadly Ian wasn't asked to contribute (what would he have covered, I wonder?).

Anyway, the person who can come up with the funniest Private eye - like caption (or the least unfunny!) will win a tee - shirt (size large) from the January tour. I'll ask Ian to pick the winner.

