

# THE MUSIC & ELSEWHERE NEWSLETTER » NEW YEAR '97



M  
&  
E

6 FARM COURT  
FARM ROAD  
FRIMLEY  
CAMBERLEY  
SURREY  
GU16 5TJ UK

**MICK MAGIC**  
TEL: 01276 684209

## MARK JENKINS SETTLES AMICABLY!!! WAR IS OVER»» LET THERE BE PEACE!!!

**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR!**

And many greetings to yas! Well, that's another grotty overly commercialistic festive season over and done with, and another year out of the way, where do they go? Can't say I'm sorry to see the back of 1996 though, it's not been the best of years for me and Sammi personally, what with the sad loss of my father in March and the long legal battle against ~~the crooked~~ Mark Jenkins that has dominated it. Me and Sammi have both been through the waves of depression you'd expect in traumatic times, but I think we're slowly starting to win the fight against the blues. For M&E, it's been an excellent year, broken sales records, an ever growing surge of interest in the underground music scene and the eventual release of our very first CD back in May. If we can survive a year like 1996, we can survive anything. Let's just hope I'm not tempting fate

by saying that, huh!? For openers then, let's check out the bands you've loved over the last twelve months... 1st Jan.-31st Dec.

M&E BEST SELLING ARTISTS OF 1996 (previous four years placings in brackets)

No. (95)(94)(93)(92)

01	(01)	(03)	(01)	(01)	MAGIC MOMENTS AT TWILIGHT TIME...nice try, Jenkins, but we're still there! Great to be top, thanks to all!
02	(12)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Steve Andrews...and the best selling M&E artist for 1996 is the old Welsh hippy himself. Congrats, Steve!
03	(29)	(09)	(23)	(—)	The Witches...my own favourite M&E band are riding high again, the wonderous pagan gothic sounds, oh yeah.
04	(02)	(—)	(—)	(—)	The Conspiracy...the ever more famous underground pop/rock combo from Plymouth keep it tight at the top.
05	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Titania Moon...the fabulous electronic music band from Hertfordshire that's had the EM world buzzing of late.
06	(—)	(04)	(09)	(02)	T.M.R./The Thamesmead Rollers...their switch to psychedelic dance music has paid off, the old 'uns return!
07	(28)	(12)	(05)	(—)	The Invisible Band...one man psychefest, Rory Cargill from London, climbs the heights again.
08	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Holland/Skin/Tunnel...New York's savage noise merchant, Josh Marlowe, made a lot of ears bleed last year!
09	(03)	(01)	(03)	(03)	Sons of Selina...the ever popular spacepunk band from Wales, M&E's favourite sons, eternal top 10ers.
10	(06)	(19)	(—)	(—)	Cosmic Dance Society...fine German band, Rasmi's electronics and Caroline's beautiful voice in harmony.
11	(—)	(—)	(—)	(16)	Solanceae Tau...another great German band, returning to the best sellers list after a three year absence.
12	(11)	(11)	(04)	(13)	Stormclouds...the great psychedelic kitsche and folk of Wiltshire's finest, from Steve Lines of Acid Tapes.
13	(—)	(—)	(—)	(19)	Who Moved The Ground?...the pacy punky popsters from Hampshire who supported Oasis a while back.
14	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Ignite...Australian doom metallers, lead by the overweight monk himself, Derek Garland.
15	(24)	(29)	(—)	(—)	Communication Union...extremely imaginative electronic band from Ohio, U.S.A.
16	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Dave Munkhoff...Mr.Guitar himself, from Florida, U.S.A., to hear him play is to believe a man has 38 fingers.
17	(08)	(—)	(13)	(20)	Sabotage...the premier German electrodance band of my hearthrob, Isabelle Gernand. Now signed to E.M.I.
18	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Earth...one man band, Wolfgang Erdmann, from Germany, finally wins with his brand of prog/psyche guitar rock.
**	(05)	(17)	(24)	(—)	Into The Abyss...the excellent progressive gothic rock band from Greece, currently residing in Germany.
20	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Cerise Eclipse...eccentric English kitsche psychedelia, and all we know is his name is Jim!
21	(—)	(08)	(07)	(10)	Lord Litter...nice to see the underground's biggest living legend back in the best sellers.
22	(—)	(—)	(10)	(—)	Sosumi...them totally crazed Zappaesque psyche rockers from Ohio, U.S.A.
23	(15)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Doctor Brown...from Southsea in Hampshire, probably the greatest psychedelic blues band on the planet.
24	(13)	(—)	(25)	(—)	Jaws Of The Flying Carpet...the decidedly wacky and creative improvisational band from Canada.
25	(—)	(07)	(21)	(—)	Dark Star...the classy electronic space music of Pleasuredome's Wolfgang Reffert, from Freiburg, Germany.
26	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Our Glassie Azoth...the strangely named ambient electronic experimentalists from deepest Wales.
27	(—)	(—)	(—)	(12)	Sponge...the long defunct Scottish spacerockers come back for yet another curtain call.
28	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Operattack...classy progressive and very stylised rock band with the operatic baritone of Brian Doran.
29	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Toshiyuki Hiraoka & Okaniwa Fumihiro...as off-the-wall as it gets, strange sounds from Tokyo, Japan.
30	(—)	(—)	(—)	(—)	Sanity Assassins...from East Hartford, CT, U.S.A., excellent psyche rock, future M&E faves for sure.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\* = two bands tied for 18th position, don't they always? Bubbling under, the bands that came VERY close...Christ!, Invisible Universe, Naj, Almost Human, The Original Mind Band, Heavy Vampires On Nuclear Waste, Sound Inhaler, Equinox Revolution and Robin O'Brien & David Mitros. Don't be sad, there's always next year! Great to see old faves, Lord Litter and T.M.R. back up there again, brilliant to see my own personal faves, The Witches, at no.3. Many congrats to Steve Andrews, and the same to Titania Moon and Holland/Skin/Tunnel for seriously breaking the mould. And remember, the only TRUE failure is not to try!



M&E BEST SELLING ALBUMS OF 1996 (previous four years placings in brackets)

Table with columns for rank, previous years' ranks, album title, and chart reference. Includes entries like 'MAGIC MOMENTS AT TWILIGHT TIME', 'Steve Andrews', 'The Witches', etc.

\*\* = the unavoidable fact that two titles always tie for at least one position, this time 37th. For the purposes of the best selling albums chart, I don't include compilations as they tend to have something of an advantage, extra promotion, shit like that.

DELETIONS; Come the 10th anniversary, we'll be having a little cull again, the shelves overfloweth with master tapes! Here's a list of some of the bands on the deletion shortlist (sorry, guys, but we can't force people to buy your stuff).....

THE M&E YEARBOOK 1997 OUT NOW!

Our new annual "everything you need to know about the underground but were afraid to ask" is out now, The M&E Yearbook 1997!! Lots of useful (and trivial) information about our friends in the united world underground network...



I think that's enough about the inimitable Mr. Jenkins for now, don't you? What do you mean, "only seven pages??? Give us more!!!!"??? Oh, you lot are so greedy! Well, look, we're due in court with him (again...yawn) in a wee while, so you'll get a report of his failure to show up (again...

yawn) and how we started bankruptcy proceedings against him etc etc a bit later on, okay? Happy now? Good, in that case, let's have a look at the first few goodies of the New Year. Now, first off, should point out that there is no new Showcase album and only nine new releases coz the last M+E News didn't go out till mid November. So these are just the masters we received in the last six weeks of the year. Nine is better than nothing, so don't go complaining, and there's some good stuff here. Ready...

RELEASE OF THE SEASON \*\*\* M+E 369 \*\*\* (\*\* C40) \*\*\* STRANGEBREW \*\*\* "DEBUT" \*\*\* RELEASE OF THE SEASON

This will keep our good mate, Ken MacKenzie (Abfin) happy. "Och aye the noo," he groaned when he was down here recently, dropping ash on our new living room carpet, "why de ya no have many decent Scottish bands on M+E?" (Actually, he doesn't talk like that at all, I'm just trying to make it more dramatic and colourful, okay?) Truth is that we get very few demos from Scottish bands, rumours that we reject them all because they won't give our goalposts back are just malicious gossip! So, here they are, Strangebrew, a Scottish band, from just outside Glasgow, getting "Release Of The Season". And we won't even mention the quaint Scottish show of heroism shown on Burns Night. Okay, we will, coz it shows such courage. A guy, with only a large knife at hand, bravely threatens and attacks a piece of unarmed cooked meat. Well hard, eh? No wonder Mel Gibson wanted to make a film about them. Notice there was no mention of our goalposts in the script though. Typical. Hide the truth. Okay, I can take the piss, but I've seen "Braveheart (Men In Skirts)" and thought it was a bloody good film, even found myself cheering on the nice Scots against the wicked English, and the English were real shits in them days, weren't they!? A chorus of "no change there then" echoes around Glasgow. Anyway, we're not here to sulk about losing at Bannockburn (just don't think we've forgotten it), we're here to talk about Strangebrew's really very good debut, imaginatively titled "Debut". So no more digs. No more saying things like they may win battles but they can't get past the first round of a World Cup. You might have heard the band on our last Showcase, so you'll know all about that fine wall of psyche guitar that opens the album, breaking into a nice Hendrix bluesy riff, topped with Robert Jones (Jones???) cool bluesy rock vocals. You wouldn't catch this guy doing "Donald, Where's Ya Trousers?!" Echoey slide guitar, some very classy musicianship, effective changes of pace within the tracks, strong hints of progressive rock amidst the psyched out blues. Like the way the song finishes on a slower section, an almost crying crystal clear lead guitar, a plaintive Moody Blues vocal with harmonies, lifts the track to almost rock epic status, like "Layla" or "Freebird". Strangebrew have a very grown up band, these guys have payed their dues, mastered their instruments. Sort of American AOR sound in places, bit like the Blue Oyster Cult, Cheap Trick maybe. Some of the bluesy clear lead over drifting keys took me back to Pink Floyd's mellow moments on the "Wish You Were Here" album. Some tracks light and funky like Hall & Oates, some pure psychedelic blues and a bit of play that funky wah wah pedal, this guy is a shit hot guitarist, trust me. Elements of early 70s Traffic, some of the classic stylised psychedelic stuff Jethro Tull did circa "Stand Up" too. Then there's that 70s prog feel, Uriah Heep ("Magician's Birthday" era), metally, but maybe closer to some of the 70s hard rock sounds of bands like Atomic Rooster. And this is just a debut? I sense good things coming...

M+E 370 (\*\* C60) TITANIA MOON - "Phases"

And a newbie from one of our most popular new finds of '96, the mighty Titania Moon, the happening electronic duo from Hertfordshire. Since the release of "Slipstream", the band have been picking up much attention from the EM fraternity, magazines like Sequences have been very keen to talk to them, so watch this space for new developments! This is another fine piece of what they call retro EM too, muchly spacey electronics, twittering synth FX on a spacey echoey atmosphere, a deep bass rumble in the background. Then come the dancing sequences, memories of fine Tangerine Dream albums like "Phaedra", mucho cool. The flipside is Mick Skinner solo, and every bit as good as the duo. Ya gets synth voices hanging on dark atmospheric backgrounds, good bouncy sequences, big symphonic synths, some classy use of delay on sequences too, well thought out stereoscape, solar breezes flitting about the room. Ah yes, lovely spacey electronics indeed. Another winner, no doubt.

M+E 371 (\* C30) EARTH - "Evil Princess"

Another very good offering from the German guitar man, Wolfgang Erdmann. Some good and pacey heavily guitar driven psycherock opens the show, purely instrumental, a la-U.F.C.'s finer moments of jamming glory. Next ya gets jungle percussion and a wailing processed guitar, rather tribal, methinks. Journey on through some spacey guitar rock, very 70s psyche style, nice leadwork. The second side opens with a track called "View From The Docks On Spaceship Psychotron Passing By" (well crept, Wolfie!), golly, fame at last! If you're into psychospaceventiesprogressiveinstrumentalguitar rock, buy it!

M+E 372 (\* C40) DIE TRAKTOR - "Fat Girl"

A band who get homicidal about dyslexic farm machinery, yas! The Germans will be scratching their heads over that one, "what is das fucking stupid Magic on about, Hans?" And German they be, including Earth's Wolfgang Erdmann on guitar, plus another name known to M+E supporters, one Carsten Olbrich of Ebu's Musik and the band, Schmerz Der Welten. This is what we call "fraggle rock" on this part of the UK, punky pacey poppy stufage, underground punky rock with some nifty guitarwork. Remind me of bands like Who Moved The Ground and Ned's Atomic Dustbin. Metally riffs, a bit of rappy vox here and there, like some of them young-at-heart American punk bands...ooh...four letter words too...tut tut! And, at the very end of the album (uncredited, natch), the most wicked piss-take of Take That's "Back For Good". Worth buying it for alone!

M+E 373 (O C90) LORD LITTER - "Death Of The Giant Killer Ant"

Ah, the legend himself, the sort of subterranean legend that will be remembered long after he's forgotten, the extremely mighty Lord Litter. Billed as "the lost Lord Litter album", it's not. It's actually a collection of stuff I've never heard before, covering his four track recordings from 1982-1996. Don't be put off by the lack of a star rating here, that's mainly coz it's a long collection with a lot of tracks included for curio value. If the best of this album was put on a C60, it would be in the star ratings with no trouble. Ya gets classic R&B jamming from LL and his new band, the Lazy Sleepers, some early poppy stuff, sounding like 50s tracks covered in the 70s, LL being spacey with dirty guitar and hot rocks, LL being mellow with acoustics, touch of country, LL being melancholic, LL being...well, LL! Quite a few collaborations on the collection too, Das Freie Orchester appear, plus L.G.Mair Jr (stylish jazzy electronics with LL on funky psyche guitar) and even an appearance from Dion Trevarthen (Sponge) on fiddle. Chris Phinney's then baby daughter lends a voice on "My ABC", which will be great to embarrass her with when she brings her first boyfriend home in ten years time! The title track was my fave, a strange and slow beat, odd synth FX screeching in both ears, distorted harmonics on the guitar, grinding weird noises, reminiscent of some of Roxy Music's earlier stuff. I wouldn't recommend this as an introduction to Litter, better "Torn Between Temptations" or "Space Age" for that, but a great collection if you're already into the great man.

M+E 374 (\*\* C45) LITTER & THE LAZY SLEEPERS - "Ruff 'Nuff?"

And that leads us nicely onto a welcome M+E debut from the Lord's new crew, a band that have been wowing audiences all over Europe at live shows. The album opens with a motorbike, and maybe that tells ya just where they're coming from. Might've been a hair dryer, but I think it's a motorbike. Can't imagine Chris Spedding singing about the glories of "Hairdryin'", can ya? This is ballsy hard rocking music, thumping bass, meaty riffing guitar and rock steady drumming. LL sings it bluesy and soulful, quite a different side of his talents from his solo tapes. These guys drink hard liquor and smirk tabs, rock & roll lifestyle, a thinking man's Rolling Stones? Reminiscent of some of the great hard rocking bands of the past, Free, Deep Purple, Bad Company. Nice 'n tight, a very seasoned bunch of muzos, who needs a bottleneck when ya can slide your guitar strings along the legs of ya zimmerframe? It begs to be played at prosecution levels, fuck the neighbours, get the volume knob up to 11! You could really call this band a living tribute to the most enduring traditions of rock music, wether they're belting out good old fashioned rock & roll or going at it hard, heavy, slow and bluesful, like a heavied up early Stones. The live track that closes the album lets you hear just how much crowds love 'em. Thumbs through ya belt straps, bend at the waist, shoulders forward, go left, go right and bang that head!

M+E 375 (O C60) CHEAPO CARD COMPANY - "Ointment Makes Am-Ess"

Specially for M+E, the nutters from Norfolk present their last 2 mini albums in one...er...unique set. CCC are typically English, that classic Pythonesque English humour, a more electronic version of Christ (the band, not the Messiah) perchance? Tekky twee beats, some pure Toytown Production, silly voices (normal if you're Joe Pasquale), the thinking man's Black Lace. They'll take the piss out of anything, and they'll do it to reggae, punk, electropop or whatever. They'll introduce an alien circus show using an MC on hard drugs, Frank Spencer meets the Pet Shop Boys, and a seriously funny send up of Chas & Dave. The clown princes of Casio perform for the pleasure of the mentally challenged!???



Following the release of the first Kelektrik demo on M&E last year, we proudly present the first album proper, and what a difference, it's all come together. This is the work of Frenchman, Vincent Bondet, the man behind the OIW project and the Notions zine, and some fascinating work it is. I have to admit, I was pushed to find anything positive to say about the demo, too fragmented really, but that elusive sense of direction has now been very much found and explored. The album opens with strange elektroid noises and what sounds like a steam train in the background, oh yes, Ivor The Engine in deep space! This isn't music, this is strictly in the elsewhere department. Rhythms built from electronic noise, twittering synth FX dart around the foreground. Track 2 opens with a bassy throb, electrical crackles and lots of swishy white noise, almost a vague tune somewhere deep down in the middle of it. Electrical buzzes, maybe pitched earth hum, something nasty lurks in the distance, something alien, distortion and phase colour it, echoey rumbles and feedback sit behind. These type of spacey electronic soundscapes benefit a lot from longer tracks, more room to explore them and get quite lost in the middle. There's wailing noises, like Martian whalesong, some pulsing sequencer rhythms, muchly outer space. Yup, definately found some solid directions have Kelektrik, but none of these vectors are Earthbound. Trust me, I'm a spaceman.

M&E 377 (O C40) WILD RAIN - "Live At The Square"

Another band you may have heard on the last M&E Showcase, a bunch of young lads from Hertfordshire, all around the 16/17 mark, and showing a lot of promise, I hear they have quite a few pre-pubescent young ladies going all ga-ga over them too! Envious? Me? Never. Okay, yes. This isn't really our field, but I just have a feeling about these lads, so I thought it'd be nice to give them a start. I remember the bands I played in when I was 16, they were all utter crap! It was just a trip, a bit of a laugh. But not so Wild Rain, I have a strong feeling they'll go far. It's the classic lead/rhythm/bass/drums combo, very guitar orientated indie rock, something like Oasis, only Wild Rain don't re-write old Beatles songs and pretend they're their own. I notice entry to this gig was over 16s only...hope the band didn't have trouble getting in! And doors had to open 7:30, expect their mummies wanted them in bed by 10:00! But once they get going, forget the Milky Bars, these youngsters have quite a grown up sound. Not bad sound for a live tape either, well mixed, Matt Scales' vocals nice and clear, got a pretty decent voice too. Yup, they play very well, obviously rehearse a lot, which takes discipline, which is one of the real keys to success. A lot of smooth and flowing mid tempo indie rock to be had here, almost an American AOR sound creeping in at times. The crowd certainly love them, you can hear that, all the little brownies throwing their woggles on stage. Ya gets a bit of dirt on the guitar sometimes too, adds an edge to that melancholic sound that's so popular at the moment. Hey, like Noel Gallagher says, "it's cool to look unhappy." And who wouldn't with a brother sleeping with Patsy Kensit? Maybe the cover of 'Purple Haze' was a bit ambitious to close the set on, but not a bad attempt. Like how many 17 year olds do you know can play guitar like Jimi Hendrix, huh? I think my only criticism of their own songs for now would be that they could use a bit more variance in tempo, they all tend to be pretty much the same pace. Either way, I wouldn't mind betting a few record companies will be knocking on their doors within a year or two, and the best of luck to them.

ORDERING

All single M&E/SHO/MMATT tapes are £3.50 each. Double tape sets, like "Life, The Underground & Everything" and "Subterranean Psychefest" are £5.00. Cheques etc should be made payable to our Sammi, that's S.J.Taylor, who being a pillar of wisdom, won't let me near the money while the marzipan choccy bar shop is open. Hmmp. Overseas people can use their own currencies (relatively major ones, anyway), please add 15% to the exchange rate for bank charges (coz banks are mean, sorry) and make sure you pay in banknotes only. Eurocheques/giros in UK Sterling are cool too. Any additional contributions for postage (or just donations to the cause) are very much appreciated, M&E being a totally non-profit project. Foreign currency cheques by prior arrangement only please, ta. MMATT CD 1 MAGIC MOMENTS AT TWILIGHT TIME - "Creavolution";

UK: £7.99 direct from us, wholesale available for record shops and mailorder distros etc. Overseas: £10 direct from us, including postage and packing. Germany: 23 DM from Uli Gernand, MY WAY, Finkenstr. 8, 59192 Bergkamen. Australia: \$18 from Derek Garland, IGNITE PRODUCTIONS, 47/81 Bath Road, Kirrawee, NSW 2232. Greece: price unknown from Chrysostomidis Chrysostomos, CHRIST FORUM, P.O.Box 9, 50200 Ptolemaida. Austria: price unknown from Andreas Hollering, TROST, Glasergasse 24/3, 1090 Wien. UK Distribution (chain record shops etc): ELSE DISTRIBUTION 01227 700516.

STAR RATINGS: 0 = an album of some merit. \* = stands out from the crowd a bit. \*\* = pretty damned good piece of work. \*\*\* = this is getting bloody good. \*\*\*\* = utterly brilliant. \*\*\*\*\* = glue it in your tapedeck, you need nothing else!

PRICE RISE

Well, the bit in the November '96 M&E News about a price increase certainly got some reaction! To my amazement, the vast majority of it was FOR an increase! What a nice understanding bunch of people you are, thanks. Seriously, it means a lot to me that people think it's important that M&E survives and continues to grow, kinda makes all the effort and hard work well worthwhile. Many of you were definately pleased to here about the jump up to special M&E chrome tapes too and thought that made the increase worth it alone. Generally, everyone was against losing the M&E Newsletters. One or two suggested a charge for them, but I really don't want to do that, I like the idea that all M&E supporters get them. Some suggested a fixed charge for postage, but I'd rather keep this voluntary, then people can add on a bit if they can afford it, or not if things are a bit on the tight side. A couple of people said we were already more expensive than some tape labels, but added we were a hell of a lot better than most. Nice people. Ta kissy kissy. One of our supporters has initiated his own rise and now insists on paying £5 per tape (thanks, Allan!), many put additional bits on just for the cause in general, so I guess we can't be THAT expensive. Steve Andrews was the only person who thought we might lose some M&E supporters if we upped the price, but I honestly hope that won't happen and don't think it will. It certainly never has before. I don't want M&E to be just a tape label (not that there's anything wrong with being just a tape label!), I like it to be much more than that, I like being able to scour the planet finding good bands for yas, I like to be able to provide lots of other useful contact addresses and news and stuff, and I'm pleased to see so many of you think M&E, overall, is good value. As I said last time, the ideal rise would be to about £3.96, but I'm still looking at all the figures carefully to see if there's any other ways to save money without losing service and quality. Whatever the increase turns out to be, it'll come into effect when the next M&E News goes out, which I think will be late April...along with them dazzling (I hope) new M&E chrome special cassettes! Cheers...

SONS OF SELINA ON THE INTERNET!

Yes, technology comes to Wales, M&E's favourite sons hit the worldwide web. Us? We've got an abacus. If you're one of them sad anoraks with nothing better to do with your life than sit in front of a PC (or "techno minded", as the far more diplomatic SOS call yas) and play with yourself, then you could do a lot worse than look up these pages. You could do a lot better too, obviously. I mean, who wants to see pages about sheep farming? Anyway, if you do, you'll find the official (golly!) SOS website, packed with info about life in Wales (went there once, it was closed), details of all them groovy SOS releases and interviews (Neil, what's your girlfriend's name? Baa-baa-ra)! Contact zone coming up... [http://www.delerium.co.uk/delerium/bandsite/sons\\_top.html](http://www.delerium.co.uk/delerium/bandsite/sons_top.html) Alternatively, for a total piss-take of Sons Of Selina, you could always try... [http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mik\\_fairhurst](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mik_fairhurst) And, if you then want to see Sons Of Selinas' response to having the piss taken out of them fiercely (they mail me dead sheep), you could try their reply page on... [http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Blind\\_Lesbian\\_Dwarf](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Blind_Lesbian_Dwarf) If, on the other hand, you'd like to do something more constructive with your life, write to SOS's Neil Birchall and ask him why his underpants smell of lamb... <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Mint-Sauce-Y-Fronts>

And, as always, a little plug for the HOPEFIELD ANIMAL SANCTUARY. That's the wonderful work of Paula & Ernie Clark, 697a Green Lane, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 1UU, UK. Tel: 0181 590 6273. They can always use donations, big or small, not to mention voluntary helpers who love animals. You can sponsor animals, or there's the very cheap adoption scheme (but you can't take them home!). If you want to find out more, send a small donation and an SAE along for a copy of the Hopefield Newsletter, and say hi from us!



# 12 M+E vs MARK JENKINS/AMP/F.A.M.E. PART 4 - THE END!!

The more observant of you may have noticed something strange with the page numbering in this ish of the M+E News? Like it goes 1-2-10-11-12, right? Well, pages 3 to 9 were all about Mark Jenkins being awarded our Shitbag Of The Year title for 1996 and that kind of thing, seven whole pages of it...and, as it turned out, all typed up for nothing. Yes, referring back to my comments at the top of page 10, looks like it's time for Magic to eat some humble pie. Er...pass the ketchup. The tale...

Well, it's true to say that I did set out for Edmonton County Court last Wednesday morning (January 8th) armed with a completed statutory demand, the precursor to bankruptcy proceedings, fully expecting to be alone with a judge again. It was a bit of a rush job, I'd had to go out in the taxi for the morning rush, didn't even have time to change into my glad rags. But, on the plus side of things, travelling a little later than last time, I did actually manage to get a seat on the train. British Rail... we're getting there! The oral examination hearing was scheduled for 2:00, I got there an hour early, so nipped into the Citizens Advice Bureau to find out what happened after I issued the statutory demand etc etc. Complicated stuff, trust me, hearings in the High Court, scary thought. That out of the way, I had some time to kill, so I nipped up the road for a bite to eat. All sounds quite dull so far, don't it? Well, I didn't expect it to be an eventful day either. I arrived back at the court about 10 minutes before two, had my briefcase searched by the security guard again (well, this is London), popped through to the court office to get the address of a legal stationers and the High Court, then wandered upstairs to check in for my fourth battle with an empty chair. "Oh," said the clerk, "Mr. Jenkins is just filling in the form now, you can take a copy when he's finished." I stood there in a stunned silence. "Sorry?" I mumbled. She repeated her statement as if I was completely stupid. "He's here?" I mumbled again. She wasn't going to tell me a third time. I thought maybe a sit down would be a good idea, glancing around the courtroom, trying to figure out which one he was, nobody looked familiar. A bearded guy said "Mick?" I sort of looked through him, man in his 50s, nobody I knew. "Mick, it's me." He repeated, "Les Sully, MCPS." I was still a bit shell-shocked, but managed to shake his hand and sat down for a matter. He'd wanted to meet up with me to sort out a bit of business, so I told him I'd be in London today and suggested he meet up and we could chat over a pint. "So which one is he?" Les asked. I shook my head, clueless. I'd built up this image of an antichrist-like figure, but there was nobody up there that looked even vaguely unpleasant. Then the penny dropped, the man who'd taken the photo of me down in the court office earlier...

I was just standing in the queue, saw a flash go off, didn't really take a lot of notice. Thought someone was taking snaps for a court advertising brochure, "Sue The Friend Of Your Choice Here! Sue one, get one free!" I glanced at the photographer briefly, turned my head away, I don't like cameras really. The flash went again, the photographer packed up and left the office. The guy in front of me in the queue asked if I was famous. I grinned, "well, I'm a musician, but I wouldn't expect to be recognised here!" Now it clicked, there was a smart and well dressed man on the other side of the waiting room, busily filling a form in. He took the form over to the clerk who then called my name, my photographer it was, somebody else cynical enough to think I'm not as cool as I look on the album cover (e.g. a realist)! I copied off the notes from the form, walked over to where he was sitting. Strangely, I felt no hostility, just handed him the form and said "thanks". Without even glancing up at me, he told me he had something for me too and handed me what looked like a summons. "What is it?" I asked. No reply. I repeated the question. "You've been served." I wandered off muttering some obscenities under my breath, then mumbled "no I haven't, it's not been sealed by the court, and it's not dated, and Amp is a company, not a firm." And other such meaningless waffle. Then our names were called and in we went to a little side room, along with a court officer, and she wasn't taking any shit! I started on him the second we got in there. Having been put very firmly in my place by the court officer, I shut up, there was only one person running this show...and don't calle her Babe! The atmosphere was tense, you could have cut the air with a knife. I could sense that Mark was as wary of me as I was of him, I asked a question, he evaded it, I tried again, he gave me the slip. It was at this point that the court officer took firm control of things, cooled the situation down. I tried a smile, said "you'll have to excuse the friction between myself and Mr. Jenkins, we've fought a long and bloody battle." The rest of the hearing was easier, but I found I was really starting to doubt that Mark Jenkins was really the sinister crook I'd taken him to be. Here was a polite and well mannered man, intelligent, articulate, surely this was a man I could work things out with? As the hearing drew to a close, I turned to the court officer and asked if I could ask Mark a question off the record. "No," she replied, "everything said in here must be on the record." With that, she picked up her pen and proceeded to write down every word I said. I haven't had a copy of the transcript from the court yet, but I bet it's gonna look really funny when it arrives, coz my question was; "Mark, how about I take you over the road, buy you a drink, and let's see if we can't work this out?" Understandably, he was a little cautious, seemed quite surprised by the offer. Before long, he'd agreed, though not in the pub, but in the other court waiting room, nice and peaceful. Graciously, Les Sully waited downstairs for me, nice man. Then began something I had never thought would happen, me and Mark Jenkins sat down and talked to each other civilly.

I honestly couldn't believe the situation. After all the grief we've been through, I found Mark to be quite a pleasant bloke, found myself warming to him in no time at all. As soon as he realised that I was serious about being willing to sit down and talk, willing to compromise and be reasonable, all the barriers came down. To my surprise, I found that Mark is perfectly capable of being reasonable if I approached him the same way. Within 90 minutes, we were laughing and joking like old friends, and we'd managed to do in that time what the courts had failed to do in a year, we'd sorted the whole thing out amicably. Oh, to hell with it, I admit it, I'm podgier than he is! Mark had no problem with the fact I had judgement, only the amount of it. He offered a complete refund, plus a generous sum on top to cover legal expenses etc...no preconditions, I was more than impressed. He explained that he had been quite perplexed about the digital glitching on the CD, never had a problem like it before. The pressing plant had told him the CD was the same as the compiled master and he knew damned well it wasn't. Then he took me by surprise again... "Actually," he began, "I'd like to do another CD for you. No money up front, you only pay if you're satisfied with it." That's really putting your money where your mouth is, isn't it? A truly dodgy CD manufacturer would never dare make an offer like that. A man confident in his own abilities would though. I have to admit, talking to Mark face to face soon convinced me that he was not the person I had originally thought him to be and I wasn't too big to tell him so. So how the hell did we get into this mess in the first place? It was interesting to hear Mark's side of things and soon became quite clear that he felt he'd had a bit of a rough ride out of me too. He asked if I was prepared to be reasonable in print too, I nodded, I had honestly never intended to print anything that I didn't believe to be the truth in the first place, but sure, meeting him had rather changed my view and I was quite happy to report it all in the M+E News. To be fair, the settlement Mark was offering was probably far closer to the amount we would have got had the case been defended than the amount of the actual award made in his absence. He'd been perfectly willing to agree to all actions of whatever nature being stopped by both sides immediately too, not quite the actions of a spiteful and vindictive person, huh? So sure, I said I was quite willing to set the record straight in print. An amicable deal made, Mark and I shook hands...and poor old Les Sully finally got his drink!

A couple of days later, I received a letter from Mark confirming our agreement. He was the first one to put it in writing, another brownie point. He asked if it was okay to send half the amount up front, then the rest when he'd seen the M+E News. No problem, I could understand his cautiousness, we had been at war much longer than we'd been at peace. I'd been a bit shell shocked too, wondered if I'd been done, should I trust him etc. I think it's hard not to get a little paranoid after the kind of grief me and Mark had been through. I phoned Ash Prema to tell him that we'd sorted it all out, he knew Mark better than me, what did he think, would the cheque come? To my surprise, Ash was not in the least surprised that Mark had been so reasonable about it all, he had no doubts at all that I should trust him. If Ash said so, that was good enough for me. A few more days, the first cheque arrived, the last niggling doubts left my head. Mark had been good to his word, so shall I be to mine.

As I've already said, I honestly never set out to print lies about Mark in the first place, and I stand by my account of the actual events and communications that took place between us. But, to put this in context, I'm sure everyone already is aware that all these articles would have been written from my viewpoint only. Had circumstances been slightly less awful than they were at that time, I don't think I would have ever gone after Mark with quite the vengeance I did. It was a difficult time for me, my father was terminally ill, I wasn't in the best of emotional states. The CD itself had been dogged by problems from the very beginning, just seemed to be one thing after another that was going wrong, as if fate was conspiring against me to stop it ever happening. The CD was something of a lifetime's dream for me, I don't think I could ever put into words just how much it meant to me. Under those circumstances, I'm sure you can imagine my emotional state when the sample CDs arrived with a few faults on them, it honestly felt like the end of the world. To hell with my tough cookie image, I honestly spent most of that day in tears. All it would take from that point was the slightest misunderstanding and reason would fly out of the window. And maybe it did.



I think that combination of events was always going to be a recipe for disaster, he couldn't understand why I'd gone at him so hard, I couldn't understand why he wouldn't co-operate because I couldn't understand why he didn't understand why I'd gone at him so hard. You following this? Then, quite tragically, my father died four days before the court hearing on March 11th 1996. Of course, none of these awful events were Mark's fault. Okay, possibly he could have showed a little more compassion under the circumstances, but the truth is that we both could have handled the whole thing considerably better. In the end, we are both very pleased that we've been able to reach an amicable conclusion to it all.

Mark and I both firmly agree that the courts themselves have a lot to answer for in aggravating matters, he was no happier with the way they conducted the case than I was. Mark points out that as the defendant, he had a legal right to have the case heard at his own local court. This is absolutely true. To be honest, I couldn't understand why the Aldershot court completely ignored this request either. Granted, Mark's original request was to have it transferred to a court in Wood Green that doesn't hear small claims actions, but it wouldn't have hurt the court to point that out and transfer it to the correct one. Mark made the application again soon after the preliminary hearing on March 11th. For some unknown reason, that application didn't reach me until May 10th, ten days before the final hearing was scheduled. Obviously, coming so late, I saw it as a delaying tactic, and Mark said he could understand why under the circumstances, so the inefficient performance of the court there did little to help matters along. Much the same story when Mark informed them the correct title for the defendant should be Amp Records Ltd, about three times in all. The main reason I thought this claim was a bogus excuse to evade liability is because the courts didn't act on it. Again, I have no idea why. I asked him why he hadn't attended his own appeal application hearing in Edmonton in November, he explained that he had felt the letter he had sent to the court laid out his grounds perfectly well and could easily have been dealt with in his absence. As it was, I have to admit the judge didn't really take a great deal of notice of it. I think Mark would readily admit that things would have moved along easier had he attended, but I fully agree that the courts were somewhat apathetic about the whole thing. From my own experience, they didn't perform that well. For example, I attended that first hearing in March, convinced it was a proper hearing, because that is what it said on the notice I'd been sent. Subsequent court papers kept stating "on hearing the solicitor for the plaintiff", when in fact I had always represented myself. Mark assures me he sent the courts adequate proof that F.A.M.E. is a part of Amp Records Ltd, none of this was ever sent on to me. I find the fact that the courts did little but delay matters quite ridiculous, that's not exactly what they're supposed to do, is it? All it took to sort this whole matter out was for me and Mark to sit down and talk to each other. Suffice it to say that if the courts had got their act together, we could have done that months ago, sparing both of us a lot of unnessecary grief.

Aside from printing my account of the legal case between me and Mark, I have also reported a number of other allegations about him. Mark feels that these stories have been very one-sided and unfair. A neutral party I spoke to a couple of months ago did suggest that a few individuals may have taken advantage of my own battle with Mark to air their own grievances with him. I obviously have no way of knowing if this is true, I would like to think not, but I am willing to concede it is a possibility. I think the fairest way to put this is that in all the various stories I have presented, there are obviously two sides and I have only reported the one. I have tried to check stories, wherever possible, with a couple of different sources. I have certainly never set out to print anything that I didn't believe to be the truth. But, to be perfectly fair about this, the way I felt about Mark at the time I wrote these accounts, I would have to agree they were written with bias. I offered Mark the chance to write up his side of the story, but he has declined because, I believe to his credit, he has no wish to get involved in slanging matches. I think, in this case, I would like to try to set the record straight on a few things. Mark has not asked me to do this, but from my own investigations I am already aware that there are alternative interpretations for most of these stories and would like to say what they are.

I accused Mark of "obtaining money by deception" from the organising committee of UK Electronica 1990, I accept that was a bit strong. It actually implies that Mark committed a criminal offence of some kind, which was not actually the case. There is no dispute that Dennis Emsley is the originator of the Electronica name. However, by the late 80s, Mr. Emsley and many others who had pioneered the UKE live event, had ceased to be involved. So, in 1988, Mark staged the event in London. He tried to do it again the following year, but for reasons unknown to me, the event was cancelled quite late on. The following year, members of earlier UKE committees decided to put the event on in Sheffield. Mark, feeling he had a legitimate claim to the event now, having staged the most recent one and having been involved in it as far back as the first one, and had earlier applied to register the UKE as a trademark. Again, for reasons unknown to me, Mark had not seen this application through. Anyway, because Mark felt he had a claim, he threatened the UKE 90 committee that he would take legal action if they used the name. Having taken legal advice, the UKE 90 committee's solicitors could not give a 100% guarantee that they would win any ensuing action, so they made Mark an offer, without prejudice to rights of ownership, to be able to use the name and go ahead with the event. The offer was accepted. On 4th March 1994, the Electronica name was registered as a trademark in the name of Surreal To Real Ltd. This may indeed have caused a bitter feud in the EM world, but it has to be said that if even a solicitor could not guarantee the success of one claim over another, then there must have been good arguments for both sides.

On the subject of Mark's bitter parting from his former partner, Ashok Prema, I know there are two sides to that story also. Mark has told me his, but has asked that I do not publish it, I will respect his wishes. As Mark has now issued legal proceedings against Ashok, it is probably best that way. I would, however, like to point out that these proceedings were initiated before Mark and myself had settled our own difficulties. I very much hope Mark and Ashok will be able to work this one out just as amicably, be nice if we could all get on with each other really, wouldn't it?

Previously, I reported that none of the releases on Mark's Amp label were properly licensed by MCPS. I now know that some actually are, and applications are being processed for some others. The suggestion that he failed to licence certain albums so he could pocket the royalties was mine, based on how I felt towards him at that time. Since this would constitute a criminal act that he would undoubtedly be held accountable for, it is more likely to be that Mark simply forgot there were only 24 hours in a day and took on a bit more than he could handle. I have now heard that MCPS have issued a summons against Mark for licencing irregularities, so he will have the chance to clear his name properly in court. I stress here that the implication there was criminal intent on Mark's part was only my view at that time, I no longer believe that to be the case. I was correct that no licence existed for the Tangerine Dream album, "Tyranny Of Beauty", though an application has, I believe, been filed. Tangerine Dream have stated that they originally licensed the album to Amp, then revoked it "due to a number of problems". It's a fact of life that there are problems in all businesses and they have made no accusations of fraud as might have been implied by my original article. I understand that Warner Chappell Music, Tangerine Dream's publishers, are taking legal action against Amp Records Ltd, so it is probably sensible if I say nothing more on the matter.

I hope that all of this will help set the record straight. Having now met Mark, I can honestly say he is nothing like as bad as I'd imagined. Like they say, there are two sides to every story. I would personally like to thank Mark for helping bring our difficulties to an amicable conclusion. If there is anything Mark would like to add to what I have written here, the offer for him to write a piece himself remains open, naturally. I would ask now that we all forgive and forget, let bygones be bygones, and that anybody taking action against Mark, of whatever nature, on my behalf, now please stops. If any M&E bands wish to use Mark's F.A.M.E. CD pressing service, I am no longer advising against it. He wouldn't offer to do one for me without advance payment if he had anything to hide. It's also worth noting that Mark manufactures the CDs for Sequences magazine and Mick Garlick has no complaints whatsoever. The war is over, I bear no grudge against Mark and wish him well for the future, let there be peace again in the world of music. If there's a lesson to be learnt from all of this, it has to be that rational negotiations are a better option than open warfare anyway. If instead of squabbling, we all stand together, we can achieve so much more. Let's all make a special effort to get along with each other, huh? The world would be a much better place as a result of it. Mick Magic

\*\*\*\*\*

**TILL  
NEXT  
TIME**

Well, due to this very pleasant turn of events, plus an accident with a cup of coffee (oops!), this New Year issue of the M&E News is gonna be a little late getting out. Sorry! It's likely then that the next one will be late April, around the time of my birthday (April 21st, I love nice marzipan choccy bars, hint hint), a bit later than I originally intended, but what the hell, this is the underground, after all. I don't wanna get kicked out for doing things on the advertised dates! I wish you all every happiness and success for the coming year and hope I'll be hearing from you all sometime in the not too far distant future. Hope our tenth anniversary year will turn out to be a really special one too. You lot take the very best of care, have lots of fun, and thanks to you all for your continued support for the M&E project. Catch yas again soon!