

Liverpool and The Scaffold as scene from the US (pun intended).



1967 Student's Guide to all things cheap and interesting in Liverpool.

No doubt about it Jonathan Horovitz is The Most Untidy Man in New York, maybe on the East Coast, I don't know, but he does give an illuminating insight into those loveable Scousers and Untidy favourites The Scaffold, standing as he does with one foot in the Mersey and the other in The Land of The Free. These reminiscences are probably best read after you've been through the ever growing main Scaffold story otherwise you may not know what The Phil, O'Connor's and The Everyman are, and if you don't know what Double Diamond was then think yourself very lucky.

Jonathan writes and reminisces, reminisces and writes, the following is a conjurbation of various e-mail and offers, to me, a priceless selection of insights from both sides of The Atlantic:

"By a stroke of luck I recently found your comprehensive Scaffold article on the web. It was a joy to read, especially as I had known so many of the principals.

I have been suffering from a bad case of nostalgia from digitizing thousands of old photos including a few dozen from December 1973 in Liverpool.

During the 1960s I was a student at what is now called *Carnegie Mellon University* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I started making brief trips to Europe and the U.K. in 1964. The following summer I met Colin Hitchmough, a Liverpool art college student while in London. He came to the States the next summer and I found myself in Liverpool for a few weeks around Christmas time 1966. I dragged a friend along as revenge for a bus trip to Wichita, Kansas. I did some flat-sitting for Celia Mortimer on Princes Street and my buddy Ron got the couch at Roger McGough's (if memory serves) on Canning Street. Ron arrived a couple of days after me and left a few days before me. Colin thinks that Celia Mortimer might have arranged it. Oh well, perhaps I was just far more charming in those days. Before long I became friendly with Adrian and Joyce Henri, Mike and Sue Evans, and of course Roger. I spent many hours drinking Double Diamond at the Phil where I naturally met John Gorman and Mike McCartney. Other rising Scouse poets such as Brian Patten crossed my path but, at that time, he was better known for things other than poetry.



- . The Canning Street building (L'pool 8) with the red door, snapped in late 1973, was the home of Adrian and Joyce Henri (top flat), Mike and Sue Evans (middle), and Roger McGough (street level) during the Liverpool Scene days and early Scaffold (1966-67).

The Students' Guide that heads these memories was published in August 1967 in time for the fall term at the University of Liverpool. For two bob you got a thin 42-page B&W magazine on glossy paper with adverts, photos and articles. The only colour is on the front cover. It measures just short of 7"x9". Page 9 contains a piece about entertainment which mentions the Liverpool poets and Everyman Theatre. Below is a good chunk of that article that I have tried to highlight in Photoshop.

the merely commercial in order to keep the finances reasonably healthy. Between September and January the Company plan to mix Osborne, Colette, Wesker, Shakespeare, Noel Coward, Robert Louis Stephenson and Vanity Fair.

The two largest theatres, the Empire and the Royal Court are the most disappointing. The Empire, with a vast and imposing interior and an extremely depressing Lime Street facade, is the home of 'Student Prince' sixteenth revivals, understudy 'My Fair Lady', and jolly pantomime. It does, however, occasionally provide such delights as Sadler's Wells and the Bolshoi Ballet. The Royal Court, though it has presented the National Theatre Company, is largely a tryout spot for pre-London runs of the more commercial type.

Probably the most significant theatre in the City is the Everyman. Housed in an old Methodist Hall in Hope Street this exciting company has struggled for years with help from the City Council and now from the Arts Council. This new fillip to the budget has made things more comfortable while they continue to produce good and original theatre. The company is young, many of the actors university graduates. Last year's work ranged from a modern dress 'Julius Caesar' with all the trappings of the modern military dictatorship to an original improvised documentary on the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Liverpool has no "art cinema". The nearest one can get is the Jacey, in Clayton Square, whose somewhat erratic programmes sandwich Bergman and Godard, and even more rarified delights, like Varda's 'Le Bonheur' and Mai Zetterling's 'Loving Couples', between sub-Hammer horror and sterile sex-epics. The one good thing one can say about Liverpool's other cinemas is that there are a lot of them. They show the best commercial films very soon after their release, and give you ample opportunity to catch the ones you missed at return houses such as the Majestic on London Road. There is the Abbey Cinerama at Wavertree, for those who like the more conventional kind of epic.

The University Film Society caters for the masses on Sunday and the keener few on Mondays with an unfortunate tendency to duplicate the efforts of the Merseyside Film Institute which shows good films in the Bluecoat Chambers on Monday and Tuesday evenings—membership is free to University students. The Extra-Mural Department runs occasional weekend schools at the Royal Institution in Colquith Street—free to students and well worthwhile.

The music scene, like the curate's egg is good in parts, but woefully inadequate in others. With one of the top symphony orchestras in Britain, and the Phil-

harmonic Hall, the 'serious' music lover is well catered for, with everything from the St. Matthew Passion to Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring', visiting artists, such as John Ogden, guest conductors like Barbirolli, and a conductors competition each year. There are also chamber concerts at the Bluecoat, organ recitals at St. George's Hall, and Hoffnung style concerts by Fritz Spiegl's Liverpool New Music Group.

'Folk', is enjoying a boom in Liverpool. There are 'Folk Festivals' at the Philharmonic Hall, once yearly, helpings of Dylan and Baez at the Phil, Empire or Odeon, very often unadvertised until all the tickets have gone, and permanent fixtures such as the Spinners club on West Derby Road.

Jazz in Liverpool has shown a recent revival. Until

Theatres / Cinemas / Poetry / Galleries / Music
A CRITICAL REVIEW BY MIKE SNAITH

recently, the big tours avoided the City and the Students' Union provided the only big names. But the Philharmonic Hall has attempted a number of concerts but poor houses may curb this activity. The Students' Union kicks off the year with an ambitious Dave Brubeck concert but a gap remains in the middle ranges of the jazz world.

Liverpool is home to a number of artists but the exhibition facilities are varied. The Walker Art Gallery is a fine, nationally respected gallery but suffers the provincial fate of chronic lack of funds. The Liverpool Academy annual show and the biennial John Moores exhibition are the highspots and last year saw an impressive Millais collection. Small exhibitions, badly publicised make occasional appearances at the Bluecoat. The Centre Arts Club in the Everyman basement combines decoration with sales pitch and brightens up the interval-drink with a number of paintings and sculptures mostly by local artists.

The Everyman basement is also the weekly Tuesday night venue of the Liverpool poets—the new 'Mersey Sound'. Adrian Henri, Brian Patter and Roger McGough form the core of a group of poets, guitarists, folk singers and occasional beat group which perform a vigorous new kind of entertainment transcending the normal divisions between the arts. They sponsor the occasional poetry reading at the Bluecoat, bringing

While I feel I knew the core of the *Liverpool Scene/Scaffold/Grimms*, I only met Mike Hart, Andy Roberts, and John Megginson in passing. Brian Patten's creative role was small at first but grew in time.



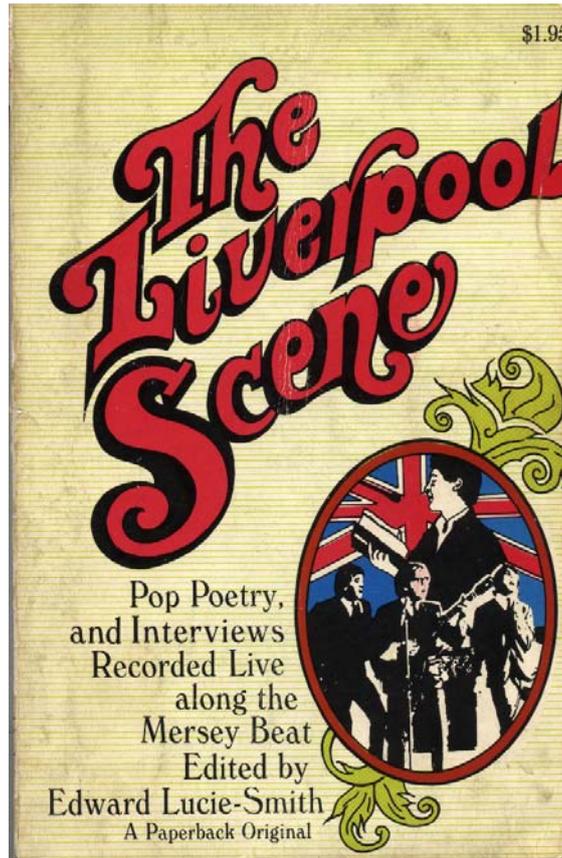
Contemporary photo by Jonathan, The Everyman is on the left with a van parked in front of it.

By the following autumn I had returned to New York and was finishing a job on the New Jersey shore when I heard the call of Merseyside. I spent most October and November 1967 at the Phil and O'Connor's trying to work out what the Aintree Iron was. Gorman wouldn't talk! In my wanderings around Liverpool 8 I thought I found the source for the Beatles' lyric "4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire." We agreed to a trade of information. He took out a sheet of paper and wrote on it. He folded it, gave it to me and made me promise not to look at it until I left the Phil. Assuming good faith I gave him my tidbit, which he agreed was both novel and pretty reasonable. Once outside I found I had been given a blank piece of paper!

For the first month I had a rental car and then a rusty green 1948 MG TC. I became very popular, especially when it came to transporting people and beer to parties.

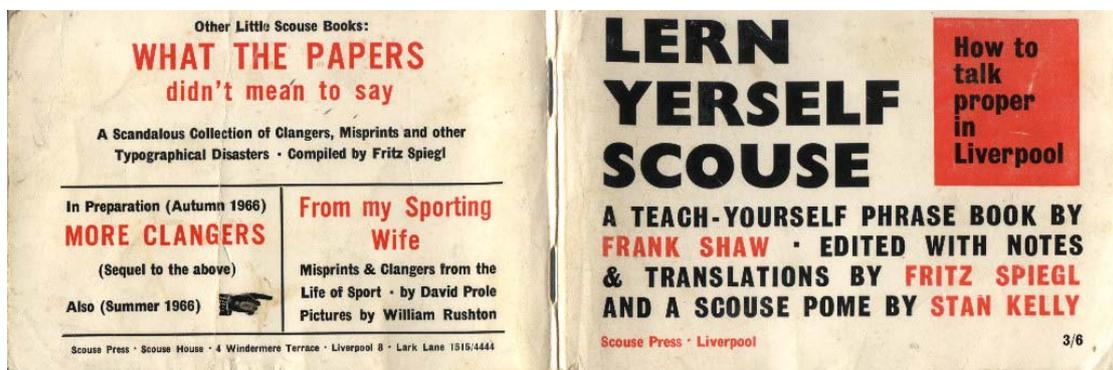
Besides being tossed into a group of friendly people I think I was accepted for some things over which I had very little control. Allen Ginsberg had been there before me and made his famous remark about Liverpool being the center of consciousness of the universe. I was a young bearded (non-religious) overweight New York Jew and was frequently asked whether I knew Ginsberg. Of course I did not. A few years later when, by chance, I did meet Ginsberg I asked whether he knew Adrian Henri. Of course, he did.

As a *Scaffold* fan in the U.S.A. I always felt a little isolated. The same goes for the *Bonzos*. My vintage vinyl collection includes three *Scaffold/Grimms* albums and a pair of colorful *Bonzo* discs. My bookshelf sports *Clowns on the Road*. Over the years I have had several copies of Edward Lucie-Smith's *Liverpool Scene* but all have developed legs and wandered off.



The cover from my paperback American edition (Doubleday, NY 1968) of *The Liverpool Scene*. Compared to the original British edition, the cover design is quite different (by Robert Aulicino), it is portrait rather than landscape orientation, and the paper is cheaper. The inside text and B&W photos of the 128-page volume are pretty much the same.

Having not been in the U.K. for ten years I have missed many newer things including *Said and Done*. Back in 2004 I managed to replace my long-gone copy of *Lern Yerself Scouse* using the net, Colin and his future wife handed it to me as I got off the train at Lime Street Station back in December 1966. I learned a lot.



Needless to say, the Scaffold are almost completely unknown in the U.S.A. I had dinner with Scaffold in New York in 1969 (or maybe '70). I don't know if they played anywhere else in the States besides Greenwich Village. *Thank You Very Much* briefly surfaced as part of an American beer commercial.

I don't remember how I found out about *Scaffold's* Greenwich Village Show but I was living on the west side of Manhattan at the time. In any event I phoned the theater and requested the name of *Scaffold's* hotel. After some explaining they gave it to me. (It was a simpler, gentler time.) I rang Roger, since I knew him the best, and he invited me to dinner before the show. It was during the "Paul is Dead" controversy and I wanted to ask Mike about it but was afraid of making an idiot of myself as I thought it was just nonsense. Before the meal was over I just blurted it out and he responded with, "Please pass the ketchup." In addition to the ketchup remark, Mike added that Paul was alive but he (Mike) was dead. After dinner I saw the show which featured more comedy than music. It was well received. I don't recall whether I bought my own ticket or they gave me a pass. The theater was small as were most in Greenwich Village.



The Village Gate is less than a block from The Bitter End (#158 vs. #149 Bleeker Street).

Roger's date [from *Said and Done*] of arriving November 4, 1969 is well within my best guess so I will not argue with it. I didn't know (or forgot) they stayed in town as long as two weeks. The Scaffs had my number but never called. Hanging out with Tom Rush was probably more fun than hanging out with me. They were all having a better with Tom and his folk singer pals than with me in my tiny flat on West 56th Street. The Chelsea Hotel is a legendary place for musicians and other artists. If they were staying with Tom Rush I can see why Roger never called me back. Roger also mentions [in *Said and Done*] that their jokes fell flat. I warned them about that at dinner and was willing to work with them on tuning the jokes. A 21st century American audience would have had fewer problems with British humour but much of theirs was regional.

As a small diversion but purely in the interests of research Jonathan took himself off to Tom Rush concert that happened to be on close by to see if he had any better memories of The Scaffolds New York trip:

It is often said that if you can remember the sixties you weren't there. Tom Rush must have been there.

The show was a 95% sellout at The Birchmere at the northern end of Alexandria, Virginia. The dinner-theater seating layout can hold close to 500 people and their food. Tom Rush was in good voice and good spirits. The enthusiastic audience was largely "mature" fans who had followed his career since the 1960s. The songs ranged from silly to ironic to poignant. Switching acoustic guitars between nearly every song, he reminisced about the Boston folk music scene in the mid-1960s.

The Birchmere contains its own souvenir and CD store. After the show Tom signed CD inserts. I got in the signing line but was unable to tease any remembrances of New York in 1969 or The Scaffold.

As promised I got to a local library over the weekend (two weekends ago) but could find no evidence that *Scaffold* had ever been in New York. While there were dozens of entries for *scaffolds*, frequently associated with accidents from high places, the lads from Liverpool were nowhere to be found. *The New Times Index*, like everything else, has gone electronic, so finding a common word like *Scaffold* is not as easy as with the old hard bound printed volume.

When all my searches failed I fell back to a couple that had to work. I wanted to be sure the system was working correctly. Using Roger's name only I was pointed to a September 1967 list of new books including a Penguin anthology that included his poetry. That was all of it.

For comparison, I did a search on *Bonzo Dog* with and without the word *Band*. The same system came up with a dozen hits. Many of those hits mentioned the band or their song titles but were about other topics. One, for example, was about a new release of a programming language.

Speaking of the Bonzos, I was discussing this matter with one of my co-workers. He is close to my age and from the New York City area. He is aware of the Bonzos but had never heard of *Scaffold*. All of my *Scaffold* and Grimms material was purchased in the UK (EMI Parlophone) but both of my Bonzo albums are of American origin (made in L.A.).

I am not a music critic nor do I play one on TV. My opinions are likely not as well informed as those of the Untidies nor as well reasoned. The first conclusion I come up with is that the *Bonzos* made a bigger impression on this side of the pond than *Scaffold*.

The second is that *Scaffold* was a regional phenomenon at a time when all things Liverpudlian were in vogue. *Scaffold's* lyrics are marvelous, though occasionally obscure to a southern (Brit) or an American. At dinner, before the Greenwich Village show I suggested they change a few nouns for the locals but they did not. In 1969 common British (and northern) slang was not as well known in the States as it is today. Words like *randy*, *scouse*, *git* and even *loo* were meaningless in New York (despite the Monkees).

Roger can turn an unexpected phrase and John has a great sense of whimsy. Mike provided adequate and competent musical backing. Together they produced an outstanding product. They had synergy. You can't write them off as "one hit wonders," a common left-handed musical compliment.

In my humble opinion *Scaffold* was more of a hobby for its members than a vocation. *Liverpool Scene* had been a casual endeavor with performers coming and going. They didn't do it for the money (or did they?). I sensed the same for *Scaffold*. I never knew the new guys who made it *Grimms*. Frankly, I don't think that *Grimms* had the spark of the earlier line-ups.

I always felt that the Bonzos were more serious about their music. As I never met any of them, that's just an impression. The Bonzo's had multiple musical giants. Viv and Neil were both melodic and hilarious. I sense I am starting to ramble so I will quit. I bumped into lots of people in the music business between 1962 and 1976. I guess I was in the right place at the right time.

Musical Note 1: I recalled that Scaffold made it to Billboard's (American) Top 100 singles for few weeks. Billboard's web site confirms that on March 9, 1968 Thank You Very Much had been on the U.S. singles charts for five weeks and peaked at #69. Maybe Bell [Scaffolds US Record label] just didn't try hard enough.

Musical note 2: Two tenants before me, Randy Hobbs of *The Real McCoys* occupied my West 56th flat. I became friendly with the McCoys (of *Hang on Sloopy* fame) at the Woodstock Sound-Outs in 1968. The Sound-Outs were modest affairs in Saugerties, adjacent to Woodstock, they inspired the megafestival of 1969, The Sound-Outs resumed in 1970. The core of the McCoy were the Zehring brothers Rick and Randy. For some reason they though *Derringer* to be a more marketable surname.

Before the 1969 Woodstock Festival there were the Sound-Outs. These were very informal outdoor affairs with well known and obscure performers. During the Sound Outs I got to meet lots of people including the members of the *Real McCoys*.

The *McCoys* (of 1965-68) consisted of brothers Rick and Randy Zehringer, Randy Hobbs, and Bobby Peterson. I got to know the Randys and Bobby fairly well both in Woodstock and later in New York City.

After the McCoys disbanded (c. 1970), Rick Z became Rick Derringer who then had a solo career and worked with both albino Winter brothers as a performer and producer. Randy Z kept his surname and also worked with the Winters. Randy (Jo) Hobbs, like the Zehringers, continued a blues and hard rock career until a premature death in 1993. He also worked with Johnny Winter for a time. Bobby Peterson, who was a very quiet keyboard player, just vanished. This is a very superficial summary.

Musical Note 3: While looking at the history of Bell Records I note that *Tom and Jerry* first signed with Bell. This was the name used by Simon and Garfunkel while they were still attending Forest Hills High School in Queens, NY. I entered the school three months after they were graduated.

That Bell Records address of 1776 Broadway kept rattling around in my head today. I lived a short walk from there from late 1968 through most of 1971. My employer might have even had offices in that building! I recall that during on blizzard I walked to work without any problems.

The linkage between Bell Records, Capitol and Parlophone in the 1960s was parent corporation EMI. Over the years EMI also did business with CBS (Columbia). Unfortunately I don't think I have any of my original U.S.A. pressings of Beatle albums but I am sure they were released on Capitol (EMI). My remastered Abbey Road is labeled Capitol-EMI.

That was terse and concise!

I briefly showed my face in Liverpool a couple of more times in the 1970s or '80, running into Roger McGough. I didn't have my own camera in Liverpool until a short visit in very late 1973. Had I owned one earlier I might have gotten to know Mike McCartney better.

During the academic year of 1995-96 I decided to complete my long-delayed university degree. I did that at American University in Washington, D.C. This school accepted my old university course credits and allowed me to write life experience papers for additional credit. My best received of these papers was a cross-cultural tome on my time in *Liverpool 8*. Who would have guessed that all my time in the Phil could be turned into college credit?



The Gents in The Phil, circa Christmas 1973. This Merseyside monument was used by the *Liverpool Scene*, *The Scaffold*, most of *Grimms*, and the *Beatles*. I have reason to believe that a glam rocker named himself after the famous model urinals on the left.



Mike and Sue Evans who were still living in that historic Canning Street building.



Windermere Terrace one time residence of Roger McGough is currently (May 2008) For Sale and according to the Agents blurb "has featured in a number of television series including? Lost Empires? and ?Sherlock Holmes?, in addition to having further 'show-biz' political connections including one of its previous owners Mr Roger McGough of The Scaffold and having been frequented on a number of occasions by The Beatles. The grand piano located in the dining room is reputed to have been utilised by Paul McCartney.

Jonathan recalls: I had forgotten the house name until I saw a photo (*Said and Done*) of Roger in front of it. One afternoon in late 1973 (or was it spring '77?) I gave Roger a lift from The Phil. The kitchen used to have a wonderfully ornate wood burning stove. Roger's wife admired it from an early age so he bought it for her when he could. Well, that's what he told me.

As an addendum he then suggests:

If you want to get into the spirit of Liverpool 8 in the 1960s locate a book called *A Picture to Hang on the Wall* by Sean Hignett. I bought a copy in New York some time in 1967. It was the first novel I ever read in which I recognized most of the thinly disguised fictional characters. The Phil crowd seems to think I should have known Hignett but, even then, I had no memory of meeting him.

And finally offers:



Were these the 4,000 holes?

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