



## The Stuff of Legend

The Wonder Stuff. That very name conjures up so many great memories for me – normally involving way too much beer, some ridiculously entertaining gigs and me making a complete and utter tit of myself. In fact, this was probably the most important band that happened to me in my teenage years and pretty much provided the soundtrack to my adolescence. Therefore it was something of a pleasant surprise to learn that I would be interviewing singer, songwriter, guitarist and self confessed “gobshite” Miles Hunt.

Miles was in fine form, and we chatted about everything from the novelty value of “The Size of a Cow” to the invasion of privacy you feel when the public toilet you are using is completely empty and then someone comes and stands at the next urinal to you! Neither of these subjects made it onto the final draft of the interview – there were more pressing matters. Read on.

**AD: First of all, I just want to say thanks for providing me with some of the greatest nights out of my life back in the late eighties and early nineties! I mean, I know this is going to sound a bit sycophantic, but I was a fan from the very beginning right up until the bitter end, and as a result I feel like I “grew up” with you. So why do you think so many of us, despite not knowing you personally, felt such a close bond with the band?**

MH: Thanks for the compliment. I think it really helped that we weren’t JUST a band – we were four everyday guys out to have a good time, and I think people could relate to that. It was probably a lot to do with the area that a lot of bands were growing from at that time as well. I mean, I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone from the West Country that I didn’t like so that was probably in our favour too. Then Pop Will Eat Itself were getting some really good press at that time as well, and that kind of helped us because we were friendly with them. They were like us you see, just some ordinary guys with no pretensions. Just this likeable, approachable image that we presented instead of projecting ourselves as “rock stars” like a whole load of those mid-eighties bands...which quite frankly was ridiculous.

**AD: Talking about being likeable and approachable, I met you once, backstage at Leicester’s De Montfort Hall. I asked you politely if you’d mind singing my 12 inch copy of “Don’t Let Me Down, Gently” and you said “I’ll be back in a minute”. Next thing I know, we’re watching you fuck off in a taxi! So now I’m stuck with a record that’s signed by all the members of The Wonder Stuff...except for the lead singer!**

MH: Ha ha, sorry about that. There’s probably quite a few of them around...and then there’s the other ones, that I got my brother Russ to sign!

**AD: You didn’t!**

MH: Yeah. Well, I got him to sign them “Hunt”, so it wasn’t as if we were lying...

**AD: That’s terrible!**

MH: No, it was really funny actually. It was for me, anyway. It was probably good that I didn’t come back, because I’d adopted a John Lydon style “gobshite” façade for myself at that stage!

**AD: You were definitely always that! I remember an early gig that you played at Leicester Polytechnic, when some guy who’d been making a nuisance of himself in the crowd managed to get up on stage, run up to you and say “I love you! I think you’re brilliant!”, to which you replied “Well I think YOU’RE a fucking cunt”...**

MH: And he LOVED it!

**AD: Yeah he did actually, and the whole audience fell about laughing as you pushed him off the stage! So, how do you remember those early days?**

MH: Good. Very fondly. It’s funny you should ask that actually, because I’ve been thinking, these last couple of gigs have been really just like the old days. I was watching some of our old home movies recently and it’s been like watching them through a new pair of eyes. I think it’s probably easy to look back on the old days through rose tinted glasses, but then, my mate Matt from Karma Drive stumbled across these old photos of us from years back, and there was a picture of me and Bob Jones in a Jacuzzi sharing a spliff, hanging out in LA and generally just larking it. You just can’t look back at those moments without feeling a warm nostalgic glow.

But yeah, with these recent gigs it’s been nice to get back to basics – I mean, these days I only have to worry about one guitar change per night instead of six!



**AD: It's also given you the chance to revive a load of the old B-sides. Great to see "Ooh She Said" and "Goodbye Fatman" making an appearance in your set recently...**

MH: Yeah and we're thinking of bringing some more oldies back too. We were thinking about reincarnating "Astley In the Noose" as "Williams In the Noose", but then when I thought about it, I realised that the Williams creature was so vile that I couldn't even bring myself to sing his name! But we'll be bringing back some of the old, lesser played album tracks over the next batch of gigs, especially "Grin", seeing as over the years people have ALWAYS asked us why we didn't play it!

**AD: Excellent, I was always very fond of that one myself. Anyway, let's talk about the new album. It's called "Escape From Rubbish Island", which presumably is indicative of your growing frustration at the way this country is being run...and that you want out?**

MH: Well, I don't hate England. In fact, as soon as I get out of London, I realise that I DO like this country a lot. It's more to do with the fact that I voted these fucking morons into power and now I feel betrayed because they've done nothing of any value whatsoever. I hate the fact that Blair and his cronies are so "London-centric" as well, in that they very rarely consider anything outside the capital.

So, I love England but politically, it's a shithole. That's where the album title came from, and that still makes me laugh now – I think it's a great title!

**AD: I thought it was hilarious too, mainly because the word "rubbish" is just... well...it's rubbish really...**

MH: Exactly! My dad rang me up and said "Yes, well I like the album, but you've got to find a better word than "rubbish" for the title" and I was like "No Way! That's the BEST thing about it". I think most people will "get it" though – I mean, the word is insulting enough in itself and it just screams "I can't even be fucking bothered to think of anything better".

**AD: So what made you decide that, some eleven years after "Construction For the Modern Idiot", now was the right time to release a new album?**

MH: Well, I did carry on with my solo stuff, and the Miles Hunt Club, so it's not as if I was ever really "away", but when I was working with Clint from the Poppies on a couple of film scores recently, I played him some of the songs and he said to me that they sounded "more like the new Wonder Stuff album than anything else you've put out since you disbanded". The record company said the same thing, so we decided that it WOULD be a Stuffies record. We started having talks about reforming the band to make it, but obviously talks didn't go too well because Messrs Gilks and Bell decided to fall out with me in the meantime and stop returning my calls. I thought long and hard about it for ages – whether it was the right thing to do, putting the album out under the name of The Wonder Stuff...or "branding" as Gilks likes to put it when wants to take a swipe at me...but then when Malc said "Yeah, these are great songs! Let's do it!", I thought "Well, I haven't thrown anyone out of the band; those guys have decided to quit; we're all grown ups so fuck it – it's a Wonder Stuff record"!

**AD: Blimey. I wasn't going to press you on that matter. Didn't think you'd want to talk about it!**

MH: Well, I won't say TOO much about it because Gilks will just dispute and deny everything I said anyway, so I won't be drawn into the debate.

**AD: But it WAS always you and Malc that wrote the songs anyway wasn't it?**



MH: Sure, but I still think Martin Gilks is a fucking phenomenal drummer, and on all our previous albums he put his stamp all over them, so I can kind of understand why he's upset. Same with Fiddy (Martin Bell). Hopefully we can patch things up eventually but I think that's going to take time.

**AD: You've had bust-ups before that were eventually resolved though haven't you? I seem to remember your final gig at the Phoenix Festival in Stratford-upon-Avon...**

MH: Oh I was elated after that gig! I mean, I hated every minute of the show; I just had no interest in it whatsoever. I remember the band asking me afterwards "What are you going to do now?" and I was just like "No idea, I just want to get away from you lot!". It was great to play those three Christmas reunion gigs though, but I thought if we carried on doing that – wheeling ourselves out once a year and not releasing any new material – we'd just be taking the piss out of our fans.

**AD: And a fine album materialised as a result of that logic. My favourite track at the moment is "Head Count", complete with its unusual playground noise...**

MH: REALLY?!

**AD: You sound surprised...**

MH: Well yeah, because my dad (who I always use as a yardstick for what people are and aren't going to like) told me that he liked the album but that "Head Count" was, in his words, "absolute shite". I'm glad you liked it though – it was actually written for two of my best friends, Les Johnson and his son Luke (who played drums on this album), after Les and I had been butting heads again because we're both cantankerous swines! Once we'd settled our differences and were mates again, I decided to make the lyrics about Les.

**AD: I can't believe my time's nearly up already! Ah well, one last question – if you had to choose a favourite track from each album, what would you pick?**

MH: Off the first album "Ruby Horse"

**AD: Excellent, that's my favourite too!**

MH: Ok, from "Hup" I'll say "Can't Shape Up"...no, hang on a minute, I'll change my mind on that because I love the song but I think we fucked the recording up good and proper and made it sound really weedy, so I'll choose "30 Years In the Bathroom" instead. From "Never Loved Elvis" – this'll surprise you – "Maybe", which is a song I'm still really, really proud of, and finally from the last album, probably "Sing the Absurd".

**AD: I love "Sing the Absurd" but for me "On the Ropes" was the standout...in fact I thought that was the best track you ever recorded.**

MH: Oh shit, I forgot about that one. Yeah actually I'm with you there. That's the one track where I can listen to it and think "Yeah, this is where it all came together perfectly". So, are you coming to any of the shows?

**AD: Yes, I'm going to come to the Nottingham one, hunt you down and get you to sign this bloody half autographed record!**

MH: Ha ha. Nah, I'll just get my brother to do it!

**Well thanks a bunch Miles! Nice to know you haven't changed!**

The Wonder Stuff's excellent new album, "Escape From Rubbish Island" is out on 27<sup>th</sup> September at all good record stores.

Futhermore, Miles writes an hilarious column for the Nottinghamshire based web publication called "The Left Lion" that you may like to check out. Visit; [Left Lion](#) if you fancy taking a look.

Interview - **Tone E**

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