

THE WONDER STUFF

Posted by [claire](#) on Wednesday, September 5, 2001

Claire Dyer interviews Miles Hunt at this years The Longest Day festival.

Your little outings doing these gigs, is it just a reunion, or are you reforming?

Well, we've got a bit of a rule that we'll never say never, but I would be very surprised if we reformed permanently, so we're just going to do this week and then maybe something around Christmas and then my next album's out in February so I'll have no time for The Wonder Stuff then. But maybe it's something we can pull out of the bag later on, I don't know.

What made you decide to reunite?

I think it was pretty unresolved when we actually split up. It happened so fast, we were miserable for about a year and now looking back at it I think, "What were you miserable about you spoilt pricks?!" We just got excited about the idea of something different. I said "Right, I've had enough" and they were "Great, so have we", it was done, they stayed together and started another band straight away, I did MTV for a while and then got a band together and then me and Malc went to America to do some acoustic tours and of course we were doing loads of Wonder Stuff songs, and then started doing it here and then offers started coming in from a few promoters saying "Would you put The Wonder Stuff back together?" and every time I'd phone Fiddly and phone Gilksy and I'd go "I'll do it, I'm still playing these songs in acoustic gigs so it doesn't make that much difference to me" but one of them would always go "No". Me and Malc would always be up for it, not that we were looking to do it, but when the offers came in we were like "Yeah". It was usually Gilks that said "No", and then another offer came in and I phoned them all up again and they said, "Yes", which would have been summer 2000. And no one could think of an excuse not to do it, it was in typical Wonder Stuff style, rather than actually having a plan for what you're doing you know what you don't want to do. "I can't think of a reason not to do it, so lets do it".

The last time I interviewed you was during the Hairy tour you said that you didn't want to ever get a proper job because you have hands "like a fucking teenage girls".

Yeah, I mean obviously it pays the bills as well. I suppose when we did the Christmas stuff that might have been a larger motivation than it is now, "We can earn what a year, of course we'll fucking do it". ` But now what it's done is it's brought us back together as friends. Me and Gilks never since I've known him since I met him in '85 we'd never been to the pub together socially even when we were in the band, ever. And he doesn't even drink any more and he'll phone me up and say "Do you want to go to the pub?" and this is weird because we never did this. So on that front it's really nice, and now getting the offer to do this and some London gigs next week it's more like knowing how much fun it was when we did it in December. And everyone still gets to do whatever else they want with their lives. I think it would seriously change if The Wonder Stuff became our lives again, I think that would be miserable.

How easy was it getting back into doing the band after so long out?

It was really stupidly easy. The only difficult thing was we didn't want to use Paul the last bass player on my insistence I wanted a different bass player. I've known Stuie for ages, and that was the only difficult thing working in a new bass player, and it was a style that he's never played before because he was in a hardcore band. So that took a bit of time, but he learnt it really quickly. They were rehearsing while I was in the States, because I just got back from the States last week and they'd rehearsed on Stuart's insistence, "we shouldn't just do the same songs that we did in December for these gigs, are there more songs that I can learn?" So they'd been rehearsing, and that's like songs that I haven't touched since we recorded then on the album 7 or 8 years ago. I was



shocked, I didn't even know what the first line was, and I'd walk up to the mic and all the words just fell out my mouth and I knew the whole song. All the information that you carry round with you that you're just not aware of is still there, so it was really stupidly easy to be honest...now just watch us fuck up!

What do you think about the Neds reunion?

I never liked them to be honest; I always thought they were shit. I couldn't care less really. With them I don't understand, they said never, and then they did a gig last year in Dudley that was one more "no more" and then they're doing this. So I'm just like "oh fuck off".

If there was a band you'd like to see reform, who would it be?



It's just happened, Janes Addiction. I saw them in New York two months ago, unbelievable! I sobbed like a baby throughout the entire gig I did. And I didn't have tickets to get near the front and as soon as there was the rush to go to the front, there was like 25,000 people in this open-air amphitheatre on the beach and I just ran through security. I didn't even do that when I was a kid, I just put my head down and fucking ran and then I was four rows from the front, crying and singing along. I'd like to see Mike Scott from The Waterboys do something that sounds like he sounded around the time of Pagan Place and This Is The Sea, but I hate everything he's done since then. And I suppose we'd all have liked to have seen The Clash because we were all probably too young. Malc saw them I think, but I wouldn't like to see The Clash now.

Have you seen Joe Strummer?

No, I saw his TV stuff that he did for Glastonbury was it last year? And to be honest I didn't really enjoy it, however I've heard his new album and I think it's brilliant.



Where did you see yourselves fitting into that whole late 80's/early 90's scene?

I don't know really. When Give Me More came out in '88 that was when Radio 1 was still mono medium wave and I remember getting a phone call from my manager saying "Listen to Simon Bates at half 10 he's going to play the single". I put it on the little radio and I remember it all coming out the radio like Brrrrrggghh, 'cause everything was like Rick Astley, Mel and Kim and all that then, there was all these guitars and I thought this sounds terrible, I hate it. I thought Radio 1 is not going to be for us, but I guess it was in the end. I wanted us to be alternative, it sounds a bit pompous, but that's what I wanted the band to be and we weren't, we were a pop band, which I'm proud of, but I wanted us to be seen as different not mainstream.



I think you were.

I guess, I suppose our record sales reflect it. Oasis came along, they were probably knocking on the same door, you know guitars and pop songs, but they had stylists and date models and played the whole Rock n Roll part. We were just scruffy rag asses, the idea of living like Rod Stewart would have appalled me, which is what all those bands seem to be doing.

Do you have a favourite point or highlight of your career? A favourite song or album?

Not really no, one day just seems to run into another. I love it all, I think those Wonder Stuff gigs we did in December were probably the best time we ever had as the Wonder Stuff, cause I was a miserable little prick through the whole fucking thing, I made it miserable for myself, I don't know why. The Vent thing, to be honest I wished I was still doing it, of all the things I've ever done that was my very favourite thing. The drummer's here, Pete, he's gonna tour with me next year for the record I've done, it's the album I'm most proud of and the best laugh. I 'spose the early Wonder Stuff days when Bob was around were a laugh, but that's so long ago and then you think, well everyone was having a great time when they were nineteen. But to have got to 30 and then do Vent that was brilliant!



Do you ever wish that the Stuffies hadn't split up when they did?

Not at all. I think that we'd have either really spoilt it for ourselves and everyone else that liked and respected the band and we had a mutual respect for the audience, although there was that abuse thing between me and the audience, but everyone understood or at least I thought everyone understood that it was a laugh. I think if we'd have carried on at that point if we'd listened to the label here's what they wanted us to do, take a year off and don't do anything for a year and they come back, but when you come back its gotta be the fucking biggest thing EVER. It was like "Go away and relax" but even if that year you wouldn't have been able to relax because you'd have been thinking "I've gotta write the songs that fucking make it go boom" and I just couldn't possible have done it. I think the way we'd gone out was great because we were at the top of our game commercially and I suppose with the benefit of hindsight now seeing these big fucking guys crying at the Phoenix festival, now that was really weird because I just wanted it gone, I didn't even want to do the gig I just wanted done with it. And then having mellowed and understood what the band meant to people having done the gigs in December, it's like the whole Neds thing for instance from an observer of the Neds they had to split up because it was going away. They weren't selling out the gigs and they weren't selling the records anymore so it had to go away. So for the Neds to come back for me is not remotely exciting. Having now seen the way people reacted to the gigs we did as The Wonder Stuff at Christmas that was like "Wow, it really meant a lot to people". So even if just for that reason what an event that was for a lot of people in December, and I think we did it perfectly to be honest. As I say I think if we'd carried on at that time we'd have trawled through the embarrassing going to stylists and that, and the music scene changed and all these guitar bands were the biggest bands in England. I mean your Oasis playing Wembley to me is mind-boggling. Fair enough, I'm glad for them that it all happened but I could never have taken it that seriously. We'd have really been changing our game and I think the idea about The Wonder Stuff is that we were irreverent, self mocking and I think if we were to have done what the label wanted us to do that would all have gone and we'd had to have been presented to people in a very pompous U2-esque way and I think that would have sucked.



Your solo stuff, is it Flapping On The Pier your new album?

That was the working title and there's a song on the album called Flapping On The Pier.

Is that acoustic like Hairy On The Inside?

No it's a full band really. And I've dropped all the strings, but only because I recorded it in America and couldn't afford to take Fiddly there. And I met this guy called Michael Farantino who's a brilliant singer/songwriter from New Jersey and we've basically done it together with his drummer, bass player and producer. And the albums going to be called Everything Is Not Okay because I've redone that as a band. And the name is the Miles Hunt club and the artwork is all piss take, 1950's Mickey Mouse artwork, I've kinda thrown a stupid sense of humour back into it.

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If you were starting off from new today with the other members of The Stuffies, what do you think you'd sound like?

Probably pretty much the same. Gilksey manages bands that are all in that guitary pop song area. Malc will never change, he still likes The Long Riders. He was always into American guitar music, which I had no interest in until I heard Janes Addiction. It's funny because when we're rehearsing we jam out new ideas knowing that they'll go no where, but it's really funny because it sounds like The Wonder Stuff. It really amuses me because I'll play songs that I'm working on on my own and they just sound like my songs but then you get Gilkes playing drums on them and Malc playing guitar and fucking hell, we did have a sound. Straight away it's like "This wasn't the idea for this song, I'm going to do it with other people". So yeah, I think it would pretty much sound the same. I think we might avoid, no we wouldn't actually...I was going to say we might avoid all the dressing up in the videos but we were sitting in rehearsal the other day and we were going to wear tuxedos tonight, but Malc

was all "I hate suits, I'm not wearing a fucking suit" and then we were all going to go to a fancy dress shop and hire stupid bear costumes and I wanted that one where you've got an emu on the front of you and your legs are it's legs, I thought that would be nice to play in so I think we would be equally as stupid!!

Claire Dyer

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