McNabb Rag



Yes, yes. I know, late again! What can I say? I did warn you this might happen way back in June '95! With Ian and the Afterlives being couped up in recording studios for the second half of last year, and the consequent lack of contributions coming in from your good selves, chances of a 'timely' issue 8 were slimmer than a Kate Moss ankle bracelet!

So apologies for the delay and once again I hope you find this issue worth the wait. Thanks to everyone who sent in contributions and I hope more of them follow so that the next issue can appear before the next millenium!

With some 14 months between this issue and the last, there's plenty to catch up on. Here's a brief review.



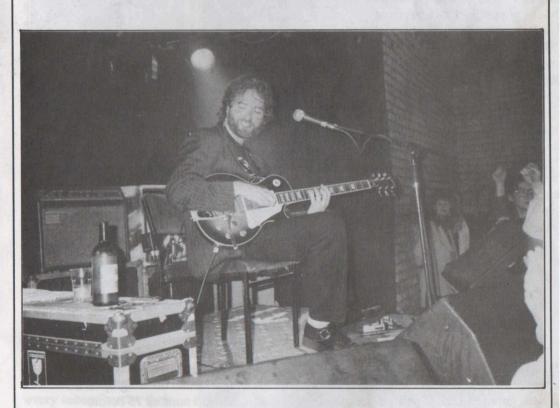
June/July '95 - Ian and Co. work on 'Merseybeast' at Rockfield Studios in Monmouth, Wales, working on about 16 tracks.

September/October '95 - Not entirely happy with the Rockfield versions, the band works with Bruce Lampcov on four of the album's tracks: 'Merseybeast', 'Camaraderie', 'You stone my soul' and 'I'm a genius', After mixing at the legendary Air Studios the album was complete. (Mid-October saw me sitting next to Ian in the This Way Up office listening to the completed 'Merseybeast' which had only been finished some 24 hours earlier and to say I felt a little priveliged at being practically the first fan to hear it is an understatement. I only got to hear it the once all the way through and then had a tortorous six month wait before I would hear it again.)

November/December '95 - With no possibility of the new album being released so close to Christmas, Ian spent some time putting his production skills to good use when he twiddled some knobs for Liverpool band, Telefon. He also maintained his recent tradition of playing over the Festive season. A good turn out at the London Borderline saw Ian and the Afterlife play a great set as part of a night in support of the charity, The Core Trust.

February '96 - For the second time to my knowledge, the BBC used 'Sad Strange Solitary Catholic Mystic' as a sporting backdrop. For the rugby fans out there, it was used during the player by player introduction to the England versus Ireland home international. The first time had been during a European Athletics Championship montage. This also followed the 'Toys R Us' campaign that used part of Evangeline in their Toymaster ad.

March '96 - Much fun was had on March 12th during the making of the video for the first single, 'Don't put your spell on me'. A whole day was spent shooting it at the Marquee club where about 40 members of the 'T'n'T Society' who lived in the area were invited to play the part of 'people in audience' for the live band parts of the vid. The theme was based loosely on black magic/voodoo and featured, among others, a red Indian lookalike, a black voodoo man and a little boy in school uniform. Although it never got as far as being on the Chart show, I'm told it did make a couple of appearances on VH-1.



April '96 - 'Spell' was eventually released on April 15th and, despite some good reviews, charted at number 72 before slipping. Chances of chart success were restricted by the fact that the Our Price chain refused to stock the single in their shops! To coincide with the single, five dates were played in the South of England. They went largely unpromoted and were consequently poorly attended but served as good warm up shows for the forthcoming major U.K. tour. Despite the poor attendance, the gigs were well received and, according to one long time fan, Reading ranked as one of the best McNabb shows he'd ever seen.

May/June '96 - The long wait for the new album finally ended on Tuesday May 7th when 'Merseybeast', complete with free live CD 'North West Coast', hit the shelves. Reviews in the main were very favourable (Alan 'fluff' Freeman was even heard to rave about it at great length!) and sales were healthy enough to get it into most album charts. A couple of appearances on GLR (including a one hour special with Bob Harris) followed before the band played a handful of showcase gigs in Europe. June's 'Record Collector' featured an excellent eight page feature and discography on Ian.

And so to the tour! Ian's largest, probably since the 'Damaged and Hurt' tour by the 'pantomime Icicle Works' in 1990, began at the Bristol Bierkeller on Tuesday 14th May. The next 22 days saw the band play 17 dates in England and Scotland plus 2 festival appearances in Munich and Cologne. Almost universally the tour was heralded a great success and saw Ian, Russell and Daniel, together with 'Mocker' on keyboards, play some of the most energetic, enjoyable shows that I have ever witnessed in my 13 years as a fan!



Less than a week after the end of the tour the band were shooting a video for the second single, 'Merseybeast', which, among other things, featured Daniel dressing up as a garden gnome!! Like 'Spell', it peaked in the first week around number 75 before disappearing.

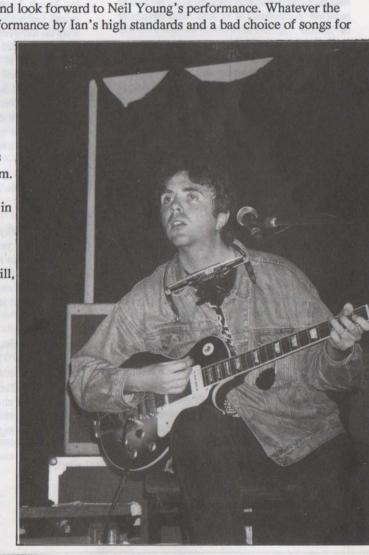
July '96 - The band play a couple of dates in Galway and Dublin before appearances at the 'T-in-the-Park' and Pheonix Festivals. As a warm up to the latter, they played a short set at Tower Records' 10th anniversary party celebrations. Newly arrived in the country, Billy Talbot and Ralph Molina were present in the audience and spent the rest of the evening with Ian before they all travelled to Stratford Upon Avon for the Pheonix. Ian's performance on the main stage on Friday was a bit lacklustre. Having his set cut short because Neil Young demanded a long one, the band only played 3 songs. I was not alone in thinking that Ian missed a great opportunity to impress a large mid-day crowd. A cover, 'Who do you love?', was not the obvious choice to kick off proceedings but a good rendition of 'When it all comes down' made up for this. Ian once again chose 'Child inside a father' to end his set. All good stuff I know but I would have preferred that he replace it with 2 or 3 shorter songs. Maybe he was still tired after the long U.K. tour, or from staying up all night getting reacquainted with Billy and Ralph or maybe he just wanted to get it over with and look forward to Neil Young's performance. Whatever the reason, this was a poor performance by Ian's high standards and a bad choice of songs for

August/September '96 The decision is made not
to release any more singles
from 'Merseybeast' so Ian
spends some time
contributing backing vocals
to the new Mike Scott album.

the audience.

October '96 - ? - Ian went in to Parr Street Studios, Liverpool to work on new material written since the tour. Assisted by Roy Corkill, some 23 new songs were demoed and many will no doubt appear on the next studio album which could see light of day as early as late Summer '97!

A big thank you to the following without whom etc.:- All at This Way Up, Bryan Johnson, Rosi Knight, John Grant, Gary Logan, Steve Howdle, Anthony Nola and every subscriber for their patience! Paul Warry



<u>Ian McNabb Interview - 13 June '96</u> <u>Gary Logan</u>

- G 'Head Like A Rock' was very much a rocky 'in your face' album, the new album is much softer and more 'poppy'. Was it a conscious decision to do a more mellow album as the follow up?
- I Well I didn't think that I could get any heavier, having songs with two minute feedback intros. After 'HLAR' I sort of wondered where to go next and as a lot of people liked 'Truth and Beauty' I thought I would go back to writing a few more pop songs and do more structured, less free fall, type things. I wanted to have the 'poppyness' of 'T & B' with the power of 'HLAR'.
- G It seems to me to be a case of 'less is more'. The songs seem to be much more simple than some of the overblown production of 'HLAR'.
- I Yeah, that was deliberate. I wanted to rein it in a bit, and cut out the guitar work outs. There is still some of that in there but I wanted it to be more poppy and direct, a little less autobiographical. I just wrote some songs without telling my life story with every track.
- G Did you feel that you were lyrically exposing yourself too much, that before long you will run out of things to say?
- I Somebody said that about the last album. 'Fire inside my soul' was your life story in the first track, what do you do after that, write your life story Part 2? Well I would need thirty years to do that, so that is why I wrote a song like 'Merseybeast', something that is funny.
- G It is certainly the most 'tongue in cheek' lyric you have done.

- I Well it's a limerick really, I just wanted to do something that is a little more me, because a few people thought the last album was a little po-faced and grandiose so I wanted to immediately have a track that there is no way you can say it is pretentious.
- G Were these songs left over from the 'HLAR' period? You always seem to have plenty of songs in reserve.
- I No, I wrote these songs about a year ago, last March. I just sat down in my cellar for a month and went at it 'hammer and tongs'. There were no left over from 'HLAR' really, although there is a couple of songs written around the time of 'T & B' which I have not been able to fit on any album yet, and they'll hopefully turn up on the next one. Usually when I write a batch of songs the best ones obviously end up on the album, some songs are used as b-sides and then there are those songs which are a load of rubbish and should never see the light of day.
- G There was quite a gap between the two albums, did you find it difficult to follow up 'HLAR'?
- I No, not really, like I said I had the songs written over a year ago. Once the album was recorded it was too late to put it out last year so it was shunted to this year. It is quite difficult to get records released when you want them to be, they have to fit into the record company's schedule.
- G And with other groups on the label.
- I Yeah, you don't want it to come out at the same time as The Cranberries album. Also, This Way Up were changing from Polygram to Island which took a while, and of course I had to put the new band together.

- G Was it easier to record this album? 'HLAR' must have been a difficult album to record what with the logistics of going to the States, and the numerous guest artists.
- G 'HLAR' was like a piece of piss to make and 'T & B' was pretty easy. This was the hardest album to make for a long time. I really loved the demos that we did, and then we recorded the album and I ended up not liking half of it. So we had the material but it took a while to finish it off.
- G You could not get the songs right in the studio.
- I I wasn't with the right producer and I was not being inspired. It was in the middle of the heatwave last year and I couldn't give it my full attention. So we ended up re-mixing and scrapping stuff, things that I never do. I usually go in, bang it down and usually that is it. But I ended up saying this is not very good, what is wrong with it? I would then play the demos and they just shone because they had the magic - so I then had to find out why the magic was not there, and it was because I was not as enthusiastic and I was not putting as much energy into it. So we scrapped it and went back into the studio with Bruce Lampcov in September, and then I was into it and it became easy. We then had it finished by October of last year.
- G Was it difficult getting the new band together?
- I It took quite a while to get the right guys. I figured that it would be a good idea to get a new band together and do the next album with them, spend time with them, get friendly with them and then go out and tour with them. So the album that is out we have all played on.
- G The new band seems to be musically very tight and you obviously seem to be enjoying yourselves on stage. Can you describe the personalities of the new band members.

- I When you want to find a band you have to obviously find somebody who can play what you want, somebody who looks cool and somebody that you know you are going to get on with. Obviously you spend a hell of a lot of time together and most of that is not on stage. So I got this drummer Daniel to come along who is from Switzerland, and is quite an eccentric character and also a really nice guy.
- G With a dry sense of humour apparently.
- Yeah I get on great with him and he is a great drummer. He brought Russell along and they played really well together and I didn't want to break that partnership because to find a bas player and drummer that lock in is really difficult. Russell is this East End guy who is very street wise, he perfectly compliments my brash scouser persona. The band feels good and works really well on stage. We have played together a lot now and we know when we get loud and when to get quiet. It is still exciting and there is always room for the unexpected. that is why It is still a buzz. I want to impress them as much as they are trying to impress me. The irony of it is of course I have now got my mate Mocker playing keyboards with me.
- G The legendary Mocker.
- I He is my longest running mate so although I have got two strangers in the band I have also got Mocker who has known me longer than anyone.
- G What happened to Stan?
- I He just got offered loads of money to join The Prodigy. I think he was getting a little frustrated playing with me because I think he expected me to be playing in stadiums by now.
- G With Crazy Horse it was the first time you would have played with a band that did not include any fellow Liverpudlians, was it important before to have scousers in the band?

- I Well one of the things about getting this new band together was that several people said to me why did I give Roy the kiss-off. I didn't really give him the kiss-off, but I felt I needed a couple of new faces around and I knew what Roy was going to do with my music, he will do a very good job but I wanted people in where I did nit know where they would take it and may even take it off on another tangent. Also I was really into not having scousers in the band because I have distanced myself a little from the scene in Liverpool. What I didn't want is my bass player or drummer going into town and bumping into everyone and telling them what I am up to. I wanted my privacy back.
- G Did you find that was not happening before?
- I Well everyone knew what I was doing, and even if I did not go out people knew what I was up to because everyone natters in Liverpool. It was really important to me that this didn't happen, and it has worked out great now because no one in Liverpool knows where I am or what I am doing.
- G Is the record making process any different with the new band? Are the new members contributing more than previous band members?
- I All I am interested in is the song and the words, I do not think about what the bass or drums are going to do. I have a rough idea but that is not my thing. I just play the song to them and they then go off and have a little work out, and then come back with their ideas Hopefully we will stick together but they know it is quite likely for the next album that I might want to use someone else, we are not joined together at the hip. But I would like to think that they are going to be my Crazy Horse, my constant band, because it feels so right.
- G How has 'Merseybeast' done chartwise?
- I Well it went in at 30, and then to about 50 the next week, so it is about what I usually do. The Mercury nomination pushed the last album, so we need a little bit of help with this one.

- G It seems to be the same old thing where on the whole you get excellent reviews but radio play is non existent.
- I It's that thing where I am too old to be the 'hot new thing in town' but too young to be the 'Mojo' staple. I am between the poles but the idea is that we keep banging away with it.
- G Do you feel that there are any songs on the album which stand a chance of cracking it for you?
- I Yeah, I specifically wrote a couple of songs with that in mind. 'Camaraderie'. 'Love's young dream', 'Stone my soul' and 'I'm a genius' were all contenders for singles.
- G Very poppy.
- I Yeah, but people tell me other songs are more likely. I love 'Don't put your spell on me' and thought it would get played, but I only heard it on Radio one once. I was really surprised that nobody played it.
- G The album version is great and it is a great live track. I am not sure about 'Camaraderie' as the new single, it does not seem as accessible as something like 'Stone my soul'.
- I Everyone really liked the 'Merseybeast' track, so we did an edit of it and a really wacky video. Who can really say what will get played and what won't..?
- G Do you have much control over what gets released as a single?
- I I could stamp my feet and get my own way if I wanted but I am allowed to do pretty much what I want. When I get pluggers saying you have got to put this out as a single then I have got to let them have their way to a certain extent. They are the people who are trying to get me played on the radio. It is necessary for me to get across to a wider audience and the only way of being able to do that is to get some

TV and radio and that is out of my hands - I will do everything I can to support that but I have done my bit, I have just done a 24 date tour for instance. Radio exposure is proving difficult, Radio 1 only caters for people between the ages of 14 -25, I don't listen to it. Virgin are like really MOR. GLR are great to me and play the records but they are only a local station. I need National exposure. We recently got the knock back from the Jools Holland show who said that I was 'Musically unsuitable' whatever the fuck that means.

G Have you noticed any more enthusiasm from the audience for the newer material? At the Empire gig you still had people shouting for 'Nirvana'.

I Yeah, but they do that to wind me up, it is like their way of saying they know me better than someone who has just bought the last album. I am used to it now, I used to get a bit narked by it, but most of them have been to every gig and they know what I am and what I am not going to play.

G Are the audiences increasing?

I Oh yeah, I was pleased that I have got to a stage where I can play a place like the Empire, because the last time I played London it was two nights at the Borderline, so the graph is definitely going upwards. It has taken me a long time to get back to this level, 5 or 6 years. There is still some work to be done but I am happy with the progress so far.

G I really like 'Don't patronise me'. Who is it about? I thought it may be Noel Gallagher or Ian Broudie.

I It's funny that because it is not about anyone in particular. I had the title and just wrote some lyrics around that, and people assume that it is about Noel or Ian. I don't mind people thinking that because when they think there is something going on that they don't know about, they talk about it.

G Well Noel wasn't credited on the King's College CD.

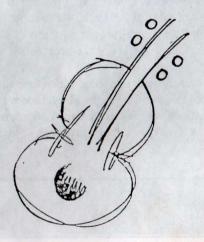
I He is on it though.

G But why is he not credited - Is it because you think people might buy it just because he is on it?

I I didn't fancy doing six months of interviews about Noel Gallagher so we just left his name off. The people who matter know that he plays on the track and if you listen to the whole of the album there is guitar, bass and drums, one guitar either side of the stereo, then all of a sudden there is another guitar in the middle. Also if his name was on the album it may look as if its a cheap shot to get people to buy it because they want to buy everything he is involved in.

G What are the future plans? I know that you have only just released this album but are you planning for the future?

I We are still banging on the door with this album, we'll have to wait and see how the new single does. We are going to be doing 'The T-in-the-Park' in Glasgow in July and the Phoenix festival. There are also plans to do a few shows in Australia and the Far East which will be great because I have never been to Australia. There will be another single, and I will be doing some more shows before the end of the year - we have just got to keep bashing away.



Guitar Corner - Returns - Sorry!

Well folks, at last the new album is with us and, lets be honest, the great man has never sounded better. Eveab a totally sad devotee like myself has always had one song per album that I wasn't too thrilled with. Last time it was 'As a life goes by'.

The day 'Merseybeast' came out we got the wee ones off to bed, got in some refreshments and sat back hoping that after the last gig (see last Guitar Corner) we weren't going to be disappointed.

The good lady and myself were completely dumbstruck. I remember saying after 'A little bit of magic' that it would have to tail off a bit as what we had heard so far was better than even I had imagined, but as you know the quality is there all the way through. Its difficult to pick out individual tracks as they are all exceptional but, if pushed, I would go for 'Affirmation' today. Plenty of nice, twangy, jangly, rocky, wah-wahy bits for spotters like myself and his best tunes to date. Cheers Ian, this Summer's going to be brilliant, despite the cold and rain, it's started already.

Sadly, Guitar Corner didn't make it to any of the gigs in May to see the new band but we've got tickets for the Pheonix so see you in the beer tent!

It was difficult to choose which tune to spot this this time as the Firey, Stoney Souled One gave us so many options, but here's the one with my fave solo: Coming soon to Guitar Corner, Piano Corner - yes folks - my Mum played the piano on the radio (local) when she was at school so some chords for 'A Little Bit Of Magic' are possible but she hasn't tickled the old ivories for some 30 years so don't hold your breath!

Also for you young lovers out there, Ricky is hard at work doing the chords for 'You Stone My Soul' for those special romantic 12 string moments.

Ricky Marshall

LOVES YOUNG DREAM

G C D-C
I went down to see the Gypsy
G C D C
The sun was shining and I felt that I belonged
G C D-C
A boy and girl were stood together
G C D C
I saw them kiss and then I wrote this simple song

G C D-C

Ah loves young dream
G C D C

New beginning, promises, fulfilling and serene
G C D - C

I ran and told the old man what I'd seen, he said
G C D-C

Ah loves young dream

R I McNabb 1996





Merseybeast - The Tour

(A comprehensive list of songs performed - as supplied by drunken McNabb fans in the audience!).

APRIL

15th - Southend Pavillions

16th - Newport Filling Station

Hollow Horse

You must be prepared to dream

You stone my soul

Great dreams of heaven

I'm game

What she did to my mind

Not lost enough to be rescued

Understanding Jane

Don't put your spell on me

17th - Reading Alley Cat

I'm a genius

Affirmation

Merseybeast

Evangeline

I'm game

Great dreams of heaven

That's why I believe

You stone my soul

When it all comes down

Don't put your spell on me

Child inside a father

Understanding Jane

18th - Wolverhampton The Varsity

When it all comes down

Evangeline

Great dreams of heaven

I'm game

Still got the fever

You stone my soul

Hollow horse

You must be prepared to dream

Child inside a father

Love is a wonderful colour

Understanding Jane

20th - Oxford Zodiac

Who do you love

When it all comes down

Merseybeast

Evangeline

Child inside a father

You must be prepared to dream

Still got the fever

You stone my soul

Great dreams of heaven

I'm game

That's why I believe

Don't put your spell on me

MAY

3rd - Paris Erotika

4th - Zurich Albani

6th - Wiesbadeb Hops

7th - Cologne Between Club

9th - Hamburg Logo

10th - Amsterdam Paradiso

(cancelled)

11th - Brussels Botanique

14th - Bristol Bierkeller

Affirmation

Merseybeast

I'm a genius

You stone my soul

Don't put your spell on me

Still got the fever

Evangeline When it all comes down

That's why I believe

I'm game

Great dreams of heaven

Child inside a father

Permanent damage (solo)

Hollow horse (solo)

Camaraderie (solo)

Understanding Jane

Onderstanding Jane

Who do you love ? (medley)

15th - Birmingham Foundry

16th - Manchester University M.D.H.

Affirmation

Merseybeast

I'm a genius

When it all comes down

Evangeline

Still got the fever

That's why I believe

I'm game

Child inside a father

You stone my soul

Don't put your spell on me

Who do you love ? (medley)

18th - Liverpool Royal Court

Affirmation

Merseybeast

I'm a genius

When it all comes down

Evangeline

Still got the fever

Hollow horse

That's why I believe Great dreams of heaven

Child inside a father

Child inside a father Fire inside my soul (solo)

I'm game

You stone my soul

Out of season (solo)

Camaraderie (solo)

Don't put your spell on me

Understanding Jane

Who do you love ? (medley)

19th - Stoke The Stage

Affirmation

Merseybeast I'm a genius

When it all comes down

Evangeline

Evangenn

I'm game Still got the fever

You stone my soul

You must be prepared to dream

Hollow horse

Goin' back (medley)

Child inside a father

Cilia inside a rather

Great dreams of heaven

Don't put your spell on me

Understanding Jane

Who do you love ? (medley)

20th - Sheffield Leadmill

Affirmation

I'm a genius

Evangeline

When it all comes down

That's why I believe

I'm game

Still got the fever

Hollow horse

Child inside a father

You must be prepared to dream

You stone my soul

Don't put your spell on me

Understanding Jane

Who do you love ? (medley)

21st - Glasgow King Tuts

Affirmation

Merseybeast

I'm a genius

When it all comes down Evangeline That's why I believe Still got the fever

You must be prepared to dream Hollow horse Child inside a father

Out of season (solo)
Fire inside my soul (solo)
Don't put your spell on me
You stone my soul

Who do you love ? (medley)

22nd - Edinburgh The Venue

23rd - Nottingham Rock City

25th - Munich Rock Im Park

26th - Cologne Rock Am Ring

Affirmation
Merseybeast
I'm a genius
You stone my soul
Evangeline
When it all comes down
Still got the fever
Motorcycle rider (part)
You must be prepared to dream

28th - Hull The Room

Child inside a father Don't put your spell on me Understanding Jane Who do you love? (medley)

29th - Leeds Irish Centre Fire inside my soul (solo) Hollow horse (solo) Love's young dream (solo) Child inside a father Evangeline When it all comse down Still got the fever Breathe

Affirmation

Merseybeast
I'm a genius
Don't put your spell on me
You must be prepared to dream
You stone my soul
Understanding Jane

Who do you love ? (medley)

30th - Middlesborough The Crypt Fire inside my soul (solo)

Camaraderie (solo)
Little bit of magic (solo)
Child inside a father

Evangeline When it all comes down That's why I believe

That's why I believe Hollow horse

Still got the fever Don't put your spell on me

Affirmation Merseybeast I'm a genius

Get back (with Glenn Tilbrook) Who do you love? (Medley)

31st - Newcastle Riverside Evangeline

When it all comes down That's why I believe Still got the fever

You must be prepared to dream

Hollow horse
One true love
What she did to my mind

Great dreams of heaven Child inside a father

Merseybeast you stone my soul

I don't want to talk about it Don't put your spell on me Who do you love? (medley)

June

1st - Northampton Roadmenders

2nd - Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms

Fire inside my soul (solo)
Out of season (solo)

They settled for less than they wanted (solo) Child inside a father

Evangeline

That's why I believe When it all comes down

Hollow horse

You must be prepared to dream

Understanding Jane Everybody's been burned/ Goin' back/Little girl lost/

Love is a wonderful colour (solo medley)

You stone my soul
I put a spell on you
Don't put your spell on me

(inc. Satisfaction)
Who do you love? (medley)

4th - Shepherd's Bush Empire

Affirmation Merseybeast I'm a genius

When it all comes down

Evangeline Still got the fever

That's why I believe

You must be prepared to dream

Hollow horse

Child inside a father

I put a spell on you

Don't put your spell on me You stone my soul

Fire inside my soul (solo)

Camaraderie (solo)
Great dreams of heaven

Little bit of magic (Piano-solo)

Understanding Jane

Who do you love ? (medley)

6th - S. London Goldsmiths College

When it all comes down

Evangeline I'm a genius

That's why I believe

Still got the fever You must be prepared to dream

You must be prepared to dream Ticket to ride (part-solo)

Hollow horse

Child inside a father
I put a spell on you

Don't put your spell on me

You stone my soul Get back (with Glenn Tilbrook)

Who do you love? (medley - with Glenn Tilbrook)

? Dublin

? Galway

14th Glasgow T in the Park Festival

Who do you love ? (medley) When it all comes down

Evangeline

Understanding Jane Child inside a father

18th - Tower Records, Piccadilly Circus

Who do you love ? (medley) When it all comes down

Evangeline

Understanding Jane Child inside a father

19th - Pheonix festival

Who do you love ? (medley)
When it all comes down
Child inside a father

'Merseybeast'

When last heard from in 1994, Ian McNabb was realising a long-nurtured fantasy and getting grossly over-familiar with his heroes. "Let's hurry up and tape this before Billy's slippers wear off", we heard him saying just prior to 'May you always', the last of the four tracks on McNabb's 'Head Like A Rock' album to feature Neil Young's hallowed rhythm section, Crazy Horse (bassist Billy Talbot and drummer Ralph Molina).

Earlier on in the album, he'd summed it all up on the one song (and single), 'You must be prepared to dream' - how, with considerable amplification and a notebook full of lyrics (and a certain amount of bottle) a dreamer from Liverpool could go to L.A. and plug in with one of the world's most formidable twosomes and not blow it.

In fact not only did McNabb not blow it, he hit such heights of enthusiasm and dizzy-headedness on 'Head like a Rock' that one unexpected result was a shortlisting for the Mercury Prize. Another was a healthy sales "showing" (as they say) that returned McNabb to the position he'd been in with his versatile band of the 1980's, The Icicle Works.

Because it would have proved impossible to tour with Crazy Horse (although they did do Glastonbury and a few British dates), McNabb has laid low since then, "doing the folk circuit" as he puts it, and getting a new band together. They are: Russell Milton (bass) and Daniel Strittmatter (drums) and they've recently been unveiled in London. Right now if you want to see a man being elated by his own band, an Ian McNabb gig is the ideal place to go.

McNabb (guitar, vocals, piano and harmonica), Milton and Strittmatter form the backbone of 'Merseybeast', which represents the homecoming after 'Head Like A Rock'. Permit McNabb to explain:

"Wondering what to do after 'Head Like A Rock', it was one of those things where it could have become a 'writer's block' scenario.

People were saying 'What can you write about now? You've realised your dream, what else can you do? - I thought to myself: 'Do whatever you want'."

'Merseybeast' is thus McNabb's most musically varied album to date. It ranges from a "black comedy of disasters" (the epic title track), through soul ballads and charming pop songs, through summery, Lovin' Spoonful - type shuffles (the wonderful 'Camaraderie') to vague and unexplained songs about lost rock stars ('Too Close To The Sun') to full on gospel spirituality on 'Available Light'. Among the musicians who guest on the new album are Andy Finton (flute), Henry Priestman, ex-Christians (organ), Don Richardson (stand-up bass) and the orchestra that This Way Up labelmates Tindersticks use. The string parts are arranged by Craig Leon.

The production is shared between Ian and Pete Schwier (who mixed 'Head Like A Rock') and Bruce Lampcov who is best known for his work with The The. Musical reference points - so baldly and proudly Neil Young - - esque on 'Head Like A Rock' - are harder to second - guess on 'Merseybeast', as each defiantly different song passes by.

"The reason I'm so eclectic, "McNabb says, " is because of all the music I've absorbed over the past 20 years (he's 35). I'm the next generation on from the Beatles. They were influenced by the American records that came up the Mersey in the 50's. But there are loads more influences now: Sly Stone, Randy Newman, Van Morrison, you know, soul....So what I am is this total mongrelisation of all the music that's come up the Mersey, and I'm the product of this, the Merseybeast, for better or worse."

The album was recorded in Britain (London, Liverpool and Wales) and indeed the title track begins with McNabb in Sefton Park, although the scenery soon shifts to Miami and back to Liverpool again. If the song 'Merseybeast' is a



mad travelogue of woe and decapitation ("the words are actually a limerick," he points out), the album as a whole settles quickly into a typically positive and uplifting vocabulary, as befits a man who titled his first solo album (1993) "Truth and Beauty".

The two McNabbs - the man in person; and the songwriter - often appear to be mutually exclusive animals. The former is a cynic, a city-dweller and a sarcastic observer of musical trends. The latter, though, is a near-mystic; a lover of fields, elusive women and gentle beliefs. Actually, they are one and the same person.

"I do tend to debunk my songs before other people get in there first," he concedes. "It's something I'm trying to learn not to do. Some people think my songs have overtly religious tones, but its not meant that way. It's more Star Wars than Jesus Christ. It's like ...the force is available to all. I'm interested in kinetic energy, positive and negative forces. 'Available light' is my way of saying that there is a force there to be used, by all of us."

A free CD (with the first run of 'Merseybeast') catches McNabb live with Crazy Horse at King's College, London in 1994.

"The main thing I learned from working with Crazy Horse," McNabb sums up, "is you've got to capture the moment. That's my attitude to recording now - and some of the songs, like 'Heydays' are also about that. There are plenty of people making records that are dark. I want to make records that make people feel better, not worse."



London Borderline December '95 (Confessions of a sad individual)

What lengths would you go to to see your favourite musician?

December 5th saw the band's only show in the second part of '96, a benefit appearance for the CORE TRUST Charity at the Borderline.

Earlier that day I had 'flown in from L.A.' (as you do), having just spent four days throwing all my money away on red in Las Vegas! The only reason I was at the gig in the first place was that my Aussie - U2 loving - flatmate had laid down the challenge: - he had bragged about flying all the way to Sydney just to catch Bono et al on the 'Zooropa' tour, then flying all the way back home again the next morning.

Not to be outdone (sad individual that I am), I immediately cancelled my plans to fly from Vegas to Dallas on business and caught the nearest flight out of California bound for Heathrow. 14 hours of travelling later I was back in Blighty. It was 12pm and I was to be at Gatwick airport at 8am the following morning for a 10 hour flight to Dallas, Texas!!!!!

This gig better be good, I thought!

Jetlagged to the eyeballs I made my way to the venue with my grinning Antipodean friend! Opening up the evening's entertainment was Jackie Leven (ex Doll by Doll and the charity's founder) who played a short acoustic set. With it being a charity event and all, I happily purchased some raffle tickets while Jackie was playing and, lo and behold, actually won the bottle of Moet & Chandon, complete with autographs that was up for grabs. Walking embarresedly to the stage to collect the bottle of Champers, I could almost hear the 'RAG' readers in the crowd cry 'FIX'!

A set by Grant Hart (ex Husker Du) followed this and before I had had chance to down my first pint of Moet, Ian and the band appeared on the small stage and played an energetic 'Hollow Horse' (Always the best set-opener for me!). 'When it all comes down' followed and the tempo is kept up with the perennial crowd singalong 'Evangeline'. But I'm not dancing - I'm barely standing. Doris Day and Sir Matt Busby get name checked in 'Still got the fever' before Ian performs acoustic versions of 'Great Dreams of heaven' and 'Camaraderie' while the band take a breather.

New song 'You Stone My Soul' is well received and is performed in between two classics from 'Head Like A Rock': 'Dream' and 'Child'.

Although only a short set, it was not surprising to see the crowd call for an encore and they were granted their wish with the band returning to play 'Young man blues'. Yet another great gig ended with Ian's ode to his favourite Liverpudlian barmaid.

Heading home after 'Understanding Jane' and feeling completely exhausted at this stage, the prospect of having to be at Gatwick in 7 hours time was not in the slightest bit appealing. The half hour traffic jam on the way home (at midnight!!) and the airline's two hour mechanical delay in Gatwick didn't make me feel much better either! Still I guess it was worth it to see Ian and the Afterlife play their first full headlining gig. JUST!

PW

Set: Hollow horse/When it all comes down/Evangeline/Still got the fever/Great dreams of heaven (solo)/Camaraderie (solo)/You must be prepared to dream/You stone my soul/Child inside a father/Young man blues/Understanding Jane.

Merseybeast - The Lyrics (R.I.McNABB)

Merseybeast

I went down to the fishin' hole, with a line and a pole.
The ice gave way and I fell in, the Police went to inform the next of kin.
But I didn't drown, I held my breath,
I figured that I'd fake my death,
as I drifted down the Gulf stream to Miami.
I dried off at the bloodbank,
got a rental with a full tank,
headed south, not even thinkin' I was Jammy...

Chorus
I'M FUNKY AND I'M FREE
THIS IS HOW I PLANNED TO BE
I'M A ROCKIN' GOOD TIME BOY
AND I CAN'T CONTAIN MY JOY

I had a friend who took a wife did too much junk and lost her life. He ran away to kill the pain, such a shame he didn't see the train. They found his legs in Wavertree, his arms were in Fazakerly, the doctors somehow put him back together. Now he lives down in the Dingle, says he's happy being single, smokes a lot of dope and rambles on forever.

Chorus

One day I plan to own a boat, on bright blue water I will float.
A good strong woman by my side, on life's sweet ocean we will glide.
For the unknown is the wonder, though you're frightened by the thunder, it's the danger that appeals and keeps you goin'. Though it's hard to know the answers, or the names of all the dancers, just as long as this delicious wine keeps flowing.

Chorus

R I McNABB Warner Chappell Music Ltd.

Affirmation

Every day's a mystery, a chance to grow, a chance to be every day's a chance to see the sun every place y'want to go 'n' everyone y'come to know think about them when the day is done. Yesterday is dead and gone though memories will run and run place and faces you've become love is like a melody that's hard to hear but plain to see times you thought you'd lost you'd only won

Every day's an open book take time to care, take time to look every day's a new step in the dance take your partners dosey-do get on the floor, now here we go only opportunity and chance and it feels good

Beautiful Old Mystery

Its a beautiful old mystery, it's the feelin' in a song. It's a beautiful old mystery, it's a new love growin' strong.

Now if you believe in the power of dreams and a magical uncloudy day if you believe just as I do, in time that a rainbow must come your way

It's a beautiful old mystery, how two lovers become one. It's a beautiful old mystery, how you want her her when she's gone.

Now if you believe in the soft summer breeze and the waves that will crash on the shore when you acheive what you could not conceive you're not lonely anymore

Now if you believe in the power of dreams and a magical uncloudy day if you believe just as I do, in time that a rainbow must come your way

It's a beautiful old mystery it's the feeling in a song it's a beautiful old mystery, it's a new love growin' strong.

Love's Young Dream

I went down to see the gypsy, the sun was shinin' and I felt that I belonged. A boy and girl were stood together, I saw them kiss and then I wrote this simple song.

Ah! Love's young dream

New beginning, promises, fulfilling and serene
I ran and told the old man what I'd seen
He said:

Ah! Love's young dream

I was walkin' in the country, drinkin' lemonade and filling up my soul. A man and woman stood together, I saw them bring each other in from the cold.

Ah! Love's young dream
What've you got to give me from y'purse of velveteen
Run and tell your mother what you've seen
She'll sav:

Ah! Love's young dream

I was ridin' by the river,
I propped my bicycle against the abbey wall
and somehow I just got to thinkin'
'bout life's mysteries, the wonder of it all.
I think our children will grow old here,
don't think the world is gonna burn the way they
said.

A boy and girl are stood together, a man and woman sleeping soundly in their bed...

Ah! Love's young dream
Every place you're going to
And every place you've been
Run and tell y'lover what you mean
She'll say:

Ah! Love's young dream

Camaraderie

Camaraderie,
there's somethin' special between you and me
somethin' you can't see
'n' if you'd like to test it you can call on me
You're out on the street,
no place to go,
the whole world has let you down
y'wishplant didn't grow
well its camaraderie
a friend of yours is somethin' it's not hard to be

Camaraderie cannot be bought or forged easily you can have a key make yourself at home, make yourself a cup o' tea when I return we can talk it through I've always had a deep respect for your point of view that is Camaraderie can I put my arm 'round you protectively'?

Camaraderie
There's somethin' special between you and me somethin' you can't see
'n' speakin' as a friend I love you desperately we've been to hell
we've been to war
'n' maybe now the time is right to make this a little more than just Camaraderie
'cos there's somethin' special between you and me
More than Camaraderie

AN McNABB

Merseybeast

(This Way Up/Island/All formats)

OUICK, BEFORE this gets too embarrassing, lan McNabb, furrowed brow architect of the Icicle Works and a man so steeped in rock classicism he gets his kicks from jamming with Neil Young's backing band, has made in 'Merseybeast' a near-glorious album. Practically every song here, drenched variously in shades of Scott Walker, Arthur Lee and Mr Young himself, is the sound of perfect craftsmanship, but that said, there's still something for us here. After all, lan's too much of a wag to let his love affair with all things



lan McNabb: scally wag retrosexual get in the way of some well-honed spite.

The title track is a sprawling six-minute crush of self-induced mishaps, 'Little Bit Of Magic' a fully-blown Bazza Manilow affair – lan crooning away at Carnegie Hall – and 'You Stone My Soul', a faultless blue-eyed rehash of Sly Stone at his slinkiest, smooth as you like. Then there's

'Camaraderie', a dreamy acoustic shuffle which could be John Martyn (ask yer grandad) playing The Byrds; all acoustic guitars and boozy love-rites.

and boozy love-rites.
Shit, if only 'Merseybeast' had some pointless rancour to make it as dour as you'd imagine an lan McNabb solo album to be. But it hasn't, not unless you count the peculiar 'I'm A Genius', anyway. Instead the title track ends with lan crooning "I'm a rockin' good-time boylAnd I can't contain the joy", still a doe-eyed dreamer staring out of the window of rock's reference library. So, this is classicism the old-fashioned way.

May The Lightning Seeds quake in their cagoules. (8)

Don't Put Your Spell On Me

You just blew in looking like you killed something Who exactly do you think you are?
The way you light your cigarette
The way you're likely to forget
You take your time, you don't walk, you ride

There is no fat upon your bones, you stand so tall, yo stand alone, Your eyes could melt the coldest heart, your presence here, a work of art.

Chorus
HEY! HO! WHADDYA KNOW
LET THE RAIN FALL, LET THE WIND BLOW
OO! EE! WHADDYA SEE
DO WHAT YOU WILL BUT DON'T PUT YOUR
SPELL ON ME
DON'T PUT YOUR SPELL ON ME!

Now what you see is yours just for the taking, what exactly are you gonna do?
The way you snap your fingers so, the way you whistle as you go, hungry lovers wait at your command.

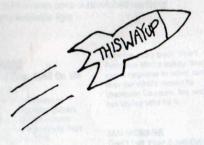
Your magic is a mystery Your act is such a sight to see very few resist your charm no one here is safe from harm

Chorus

The light is dim, the night is fast approaching A nightmare wind is howling through the trees I won't play your voodoo game 'Cos I don't even know your name Take your sparklin' repartee to hell

Y'razor wit, your brilliant mind You listen well, you're cruel and kind I would tell you where to go If I didn't want you so!

Chorus



Heydays

Ain't it good to wake up in the mornin'
Ain't it good to fall asleep at night
Ain't it good to stand up in the sunlight
n' have y'baby tell you it's alright
Hanging out with just a few companions
No one on the take or on the make
Gettin' into trouble at the weekend
Gettin' into somethin' for the sake

Chorus
Here in the...
HEYDAYS, GREAT DAYS,
NOW DAYS, GOOD DAYS...

Everybody's talkin' 'bout the old times Everybody's livin' in the past Everybody's tryin' to recapture Somethin' that was never meant to last Treasure every moment you hear music Let the laughter fill you up inside Think about the precious time y'wasted Waitin' for a good thing to arrive

Chorus

Think of all the things y'might be missin'
Cryin' 'bout another rainy day
Time is tickin' by and you're just wishin'
before you know it life has slipped away
Think of all the souls who got tired
And what they wouldn't give to be around
So many seem to leave before they're ready
So many things are lost and never found

Chorus

Little Bit Of Magic

I'm lookin' for a little bit of magic
I'm lookin' for a sign to show the way
I'm hopin' that a dream is gonna find me
I'm hopin' everything works out okay
I'm longin' for the spark that lights the evenin'
I'm waitin' for the shivers down the spine
I'm dreamin' of a velcro heart that's open
one that I could fasten onto mine

So I hope you find a little bit of magic
I know it's comin' soon, you gotta wait
'cos sometimes what you need ain't what you're
getting
'n' you may think you've run a little late
I hope you find a little bit of magic
hope you find a little bit of magic

You Stone My Soul

How about you and me, takin' a ride together I'll take you down to the beach, let's get outta town

I been thinkin' about you baby, I've been away too long

You're a very special lady, so I put you in a song

Chorus

DON'T YOU KNOW YOU STONE MY SOUL YOU STONE MY SOUL...

Y'know, I can't believe it's true Sometimes it gets so hard It's hard just gettin' through But it feels just like the first time Every time I see your face I don't ever want to lose you No one's ever gonna take your place Don't you know you...

Chorus

Make me feel so good, y'make me feel alive And I'm thankful for the time, we're together in this life So I got somethin' to tell ya Yes I've got somethin' to say It'll only take a moment And I'll be right on my way

Chorus

When we get back home this evenin'
When we've seen the sun go down
I'm gonna take you to the bedroom
I'm gonna lift you off the ground

Too Close To The Sun

You flew too close to the sun
You touched almost everyone
You were young and you were special
Had the whole world at your feet
You were like a shining light to all the people you
would meet
Now it feels a little colder down the dark end of
the street

You flew too close to the sun
You knew, some wars cannot be won
You conceded that your fragile heart was never
meant to last
You decided you would make your mark
So brilliant and so fast
And it so hard not to miss you, now your sad
sweet life has passed...

You flew too close to the sun I cried when I heard you were gone Though it was not unexpected I just had to hang my head If I only could have reached you If you'd listened to what I'd said May these angels wings escort you From your sleepy, dreamin' bed Too close to the sun

They Settled For Less Than They Wanted

They were doin' great they were young and keen Now they sip root beer on the mezzanine

It was lookin' good, movin' right along They were their own people singing their own song

How many people are makin' plans
That no one else can understand
How many times can a joker beat an ace?
How does it happen, where does it go?
Y'fire it up then the engine blows, like
Someone turned a light off, I suppose...
Pickin' the numbers, makin' the plans
The future was held in their very hands

He was gonna be big, gonna be a star But he married a pig, 'cos she had a car

He promised her kids and a bigger house But soon the man became a mouse

Up in the mornin' and off to work Liftin' the load for any jerk Whatever happened to all the plans y'had? Where is the beauty? Where is the dream? You say you got tired, but what you mean Is your got too lazy to stand up straight and scream He had an affair with the au-pair

What happened to Billy? What happened to Jane?
Will I ever hang out with the gang again?
Guess they settled for less than they wanted

They couldn't be happy, they didn't care

I'm A Genius

I'm no use around your house I can tell you how to fix your engine I can't mend your broken fence I'll let in a goal if I'm defending

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO LOVIN' YOU BABE I'M A GENIUS

can't help you mend a leak won't take you shoppin' on a Monday 'm no good at speakin' French 'm not one for prayin' on a Sunday

can't find my way around can't tell you how to find the highway don't know where you come from just hope you'll soon be comin' my way

Available light

I stood at the foot of the mountain and I cried at the height of the peak I feared that the climb would destroy me I was tired and my spirit was weak from the shadows a soft voice did call me my heart beating faster in fright Fear not, I'm with you it told me

For I am the Available light

CHORUS

Available light
Available light
Leading me on, causing my fear to take flight
Available light, there in the night
I stood at the foot of the mountain
In the only available light

I ran to the edge of the water
with my enemy so close behind
and I knew that I'd need re-inforcement
for the battle at hand to be mine
through the fog into view came a searchlight
a vessel perched high on the tide
carryin' my love to conclusion
with a wonderful feelin' inside

Chorus

We are children with arms outstretched reaching for the only available light

Don't Put Your Spell On Me

A POWERFUL evocation of dread rising – slashing guitars, paranoid words and a chord pattern borrowing heavily from Dylan's 'All Along The Watchtower'.

McNabb, of course, doesn't care any for fashion, yet his real rock credentials may lead him in a Weller-like trail back into public acceptance. He has many of the valued attributes: Scally wit, a cool musical history and famous admirers. As if to head off any such moves, lan counters

with the extra track 'Don't Patronise Me', a spikey, Beatlesesque response to some current pop star who's chosen to champion his cause. No, we're not saying who he is.

IAN MCNABB Don't Put Your Spell On Me

This Way Up/Island
These first fruits from a new album,
following up '94's Mercury Prise
nominated Head Like A Rock, finds
the former Licile Works frontman in
strong rockin' form. McNabb has
always constructed solid song
structures, and the master craftsman bolts Spell On Me tightly
toeether.

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TO BE RETAINED

Blind - U.S. Edition

Of all the Icicle Works vinyl offerings, 'Blind' is by far my favourite. The original Icicle Works swan-song album contained a diverse variety of musical styles, which but for the distinctive vocals of Mr McNabb could easily be mistaken for a various artists album.

This album had it all, rock, pop, reggae, calypso, heavy metal and some of the most beautiful ballads since 'The Small Price of a Bicycle'. The album should have been a huge success, but as usual a McNabb masterpiece went unnoticed and unrewarded. Thanks to a chance discovery in a York record store bargain bin, I now have a copy of the US version of 'Blind'. I soon discovered that there are several differences to the US and British versions.

The differences are immediately apparent with the sleeves. The US version was surprisingly voted number one sleeve in the last 'McNabb Rag' poll. (Are you serious?). The sleeve design consists of an unshaven Matt Johnson lookalike, with a couple of fish covering his eyes! This surreal image coupled with a dark background made the cover unusual but ultimately dull. I personally prefer the British version which at least includes pictures of the band. Perhaps a better result would have been achieved if Jacuzzi had been asked to design the sleeve.

The track listing of the album varies markedly on the US version. It includes two single b-sides 'Sure Thing' and 'Tin Can' and 'Hot Profit Gospel' from the

'Little Girl Lost' 12". The tracks which were omitted are 'Intro', 'One True Love', 'Two Two Three' and 'What Do You Want Me To Do?'.

The result is a harder, rockier, perhaps more balanced album, which was obviously geared to the American market. The album starts with the Princelike 'The Kiss Off', which should have been more appreciated both sides of the Atlantic, The singles' funky b-side 'Sure Thing' is a worthy addition to the album, but surely no Icicle Works fan can honestly say that they prefer 'Tin Can' and 'Hot Profit Gospel' to 'One True Love' and the calypso rhythms of 'What Do You Want Me To Do?'.

For my own particular musical taste, the UK version of 'Blind' is the more satisfying. It is true that the US version is a more balanced, cohesive album but I like the diverse nature of the British version. I do not know, however, if the different track listing justifies McNabb fans buying both versions. When the album first came out I played it to death and it still justifies repeated plays. I would be interested to find out how the US version fared in the charts, is there anyone out there who could let me know? Gary Logan London

U.S 'Blind' Tracklisting

The Kiss off/Shit creek/Little girl lost/Starry blue-eyed wonder/Blind/Sure thing/Hot profit gospel/High time/Stood before St Peter/Here comes trouble/Walk a while with me/Tin can.

Do You remember the first time?

The first time I saw the Icicle Works was in the wake of the the 'Blind' album. Up until that point of time I had bought the records but never got round to taking in a live show. Okay so I was a late starter but I was up against a lack of money, transport and decent venues in the Home Counties!

On Saturday 28 May 1988 at Exeter College, Oxford I finally managed to rectify the situation. It was a benefit concert in aid of Greenpeace and there were four other bands on the bill that evening. All of these bands now fall into the 'Where are they now?' category of the musical archives. Chatshow (Oxford's great hopes at the time), The Wood Children, The Waltones or the Corn Dollies anyone?

Some people in the audience appeared to have the wrong idea of what the evening's entertainment was about. I saw at least one couple walking around in evening dress and dinner jackets. Obviously hardened gig goers!

The Icicle Works performed in the open air on a stage built in the college's quadrant, which would have been just fine if it had not been raining so heavily. When the band came on they opened up with a fine rendition of 'Blind', but just as the song was coming to an end the power went off with a disconcerting bang. Chris Layhe smirked and said "Thank you and goodnight" while everyone else, both on and off stage, stood around looking sheepish and unsure. After several minutes wait the power was back on, but that did not stop me wondering whether this was going to be a gig with lots of false starts and annoying gaps. I need not have worried because the rest of the gig was power-cut free!

It was not very long before I was overcome by the band's performance and ahd made my way to the front of the crowd. I then proceeded to spend the rest of the set dancing like a madman. My dancing appeared to claim at least one victim. The guy stood next to me in the crush was wearing cricket whites (which was just asking for trouble!) and he ended up taking a dive into the mud during one of the evening's more boisterous numbers. If the wearer of the cricket whites is reading this, I apologiise for any part I played in a hefty cleaning bill!

The songs themselves have become a bit of a blur over the years, but a storming version of 'Evangeline' (always one of my favourites) still sticks in my memory. This could have been the song during which the cricketer took a tumble!

After the band left the stage for the last time I was exhausted and drenched, but also exhilarated at having finally experienced The Icicle Works in all their live glory. To this day when conversation turns to memorable gigs, my eyes glaze over, I think back and remember that rain soaked night in May 1988 as one of the best. You never forget your first time!

David Peters Oxford

Set List
Blind
When it all comes down
Evangeline
Little girl lost
Wild mountain thyme
Solid ground
Starry blue-eyed wonder
Like weather
Kiss off
High time
Birds fly

Understanding Jane Roadhouse blues (including 'Rock & Roll' - Mr Glitter's versh).

P.S. Not only was this the last gig of the 'Blind' tour, I'm reliably informed that it proved to be the last ever performance by the original Icicle Works!!

Merseybeast - The Video

On the advice of many of the people who've been working closely with lan, an edited version of the album's title track was chosen as the second single. The location for the shooting of the video for 'Merseybeast' was but a stone's throw away from 'McNabb Rag' H.Q. in Hanworth, Middlesex (9, 11, 13 and 15 Winchester Road, Hanworth, Middlesex to be precise!) so I went along to check it out.

Not having seen the finished product at time of writing, I would hate to have to even describe the video's theme based on the sight that confronted me as I turned the corner into this normally leafy, quiet side street. Soon I found myself surrounded by a Vampire, an American footballer, a bloke in a spacesuit, three dancing girls in pink dresses, a headmaster complete with cloak and mortar board and half the residents of Winchester Road!

Needless to say I think the idea was to shoot a 'fun', wacky kind of video that would be at home on the Chart Show, and consequently doesn't feature any shots of the band playing.



lan and Co. march up Winchester Road for the video's finale.

After Ian had stopped taking the piss out of me for being sick after the Empire show a few days earlier, I managed a quick chat between takes. He talked about how well the tour had gone; how he didn't feel this was the obvious choice for the second single and the possibilites of the album getting a release in America. When I asked why he went quiet for practically all of 1995, he replied, grinning, that he did it to "add to his mystique"!! So there you go folks, that's why this issue is long overdue - lan's mystique!

I pushed for one of the most popular tracks on the tour, 'You Stone My Soul', to be released as the next single. It's the perfect Summer song - 'Long Hot Summer' for the 90's if you ask me!

It was about 5pm and I had to leave. Ian, Russell, Daniel and Mocker had been there since 6am and still had a load more wacky shots to do before darkness. Indeed, as I left the scene the spaceman was being lifted onto the roof of one of the houses by a large crane!

Whether you ever get to see the video largely depends on how the record buying public takes to the single. Just in case you don't, here's some shots I took of the day's proceedings.





Daniel poses before donning his garden gnome gear!

Russell 'Uncle Fester' Milton with the 'Merseybeast' single.

Be Careful What You Dream Of. Again

As I peer out of the jet's window and see the San Francisco landscape rushing below me, I am reflective of the past ten days. I have traveled 12,000 miles, made some new friends, drunk some excellent beer and driven a car on the left hand side of the road. If that was all I did, that would be an amazing trip unto itself. However, I've left out the epiphany of the trip. The chance to see Ian McNabb play live four times in four different cities within ten days in England and even have Ian buy me, a Yank, a beer to boot. Ian put it poignantly when he said, "Be careful what you dream of. It may come up and surprise you...!"

About 13 years ago I was riding in my neighbor's truck to school. He said..

"I like Men At Work. What bands are you into?"

"I like that song. Whisper To A Scream, but I don't know who it is by?"

A few days later we were riding together again and he turned up the radio and said... "Isn't this the song you like."

"Yeah, it sounds good. Turn it up a bit more."

So, we rode along and I stared off into the California morning and wondered what the words Whisper To A Scream really meant? As the song ended the D.J. chimed in and stated that the artist was the Icicle Works. All I remember thinking was what the heck is an Icicle Work...

That was my initial introduction into the Icicle/McNabb World. As the ensuing years passed, and I purchased each progressive album, I found myself entranced by Ian's voice and the lyrics that I seemed to relate to so easily. While others were claiming U2 was the band of the 80's, I was retorting that those listeners must not have spun an Icicle Works disc. I whole-heartedly followed the band and the man... (Extra thanks to Paul Warry). I continually collected the available vinyl records/compact discs as they came out and even purchased a personalized California License Plate, (SOJRNIN), as a tribute to Ian's lyrics. SOJRNIN stands for sojourning, as borrowed from "Saint's Sojourn". As I collected each album I hoped I would eventually see a live show in San Francisco.

In 1987 I was talking to my university housemate. He said...

"Hey what band are you listening to right now?"

"The Icicle Works. Why? Do you like them?"

"Yeah, they're cool. Some buddies of mine saw them in San Francisco last month."

"They played last month. No way."

"Yeah, I'm sure they did."

Needless to say, I did not know about the show and did not get a chance to see the "Icicle Works." I made it my mission to look through the newspaper periodically in the hope of finding a note stating that the Works were playing. It never appeared...

In the early 1990's, I formed an alternative band and tried my hand at writing lyrics. Though not as profound as lan's lyrics, my music supported a solid fan base in the college town of Davis, Ca. I performed a few lcicle Works covers and cited lan as a major influence when local newspapers interviewed my band. All along, I followed lan McNabb by buying his solo imports as they came into the Import section at the local Tower Records. I still dreamed of seeing lan McNabb play live, and it was when I purchased Head Like A Rock that I got a lucky break. On the inside cover of the insert was a note describing how to join the McNabb Rag. I thought to myself, "This is amazing. I've been trying to figure out the

status of Ian McNabb for five years and here, in my hands, is the name of the person with the all the answers."

Paul Warry and I wrote a few letters back and forth during the following months. I asked him to tell me when Ian was going to tour. He wrote and told me that Ian would be touring in mid 1996 and that I could come say with him if I wanted to make the trip across the pond. I talked to a friend of mine, Brett, and he said he was game. In March, 1996, we talked to Paul about a time when there would be a few concerts grouped together so we could fly over and see more than one show during our limited time away from the world of nine-to-five. Paul said that another friend of his, Perry, was going to fly in from Los Angeles at the same time and see the shows with us. I knew Perry from the few phone conversations I had with him concerning some rare recordings of lan's that Perry owned. (You should recall the article Perry wrote in McNabb Rag #6 about lan's visit to Los Angeles to record HLAR.) I then waited anxiously for the date when I would actually get to see Ian McNabb play live...

Saturday, May 11th -

The plane left San Francisco International Airport and landed at London Heathrow on...

Sunday, May 12th -

Brett and I met up with Paul Warry and had a lager. Brett and I then slept most of the day away. We finally woke up around six at night and went with Paul to Earling Broadway and had some traditional fish and chips and English bitter. Quite greasy but 'brilliant' as I learned. I think the English Beer is a cure all. It's really good stuff. I was afraid Paul was going to be really serious, but 10 minutes after meeting me he started to harass me and I realized he was a great guy. He, as many of you know, is quite a genuine person. He let us crash at his place outside of London, showed us around, and let the This Way Up record company know we were coming from the states to see lan play.

Monday, May 13th -

Paul had to work so Brett and I rode on the 'tube' and spent the day rambling around London and drinking more bitter, of course. At Tower Records in London I purchased a copy of lan's <u>Merseybeast</u> album which is not available in the US. I had a nervous energy the entire time just knowing the big event was only one day away.

Tuesday, May 14th -

I woke to the smell of a traditional English breakfast. My head still clearing from the bitter the night before, I realized I was in Hounslow, Middlesex and that I would be seeing Ian play not but 60 miles away that very night. I felt sick most of the day and kept downing Alka-Seltzer and Pepto-Bismol. Perry met up with us at Paul's house and then all four of us went to the airport and rented a Ford Escort to use for a few days. I wanted to drive, but changed my mind when I tried to open the door on the left hand side of the car and get behind the steering wheel. Instead, Paul drove and let us listen to a tape he had of the Merseybeast album. We arrived at the Bristol Bierkeller about two hours before the show. We decided to get a drink at a nearby pub, but I was too sick, or maybe just too excited, to drink anything. When we got back to the Bierkellor I went up to the window to pay for the show, but Paul stepped in front of me. I said...

"I'm not going to let you pay for me!"

"Don't worry about it mate, you're on the guest list."

Dumbfounded, I stuttered, "No way. Well, thanks a lot."

"Don't thank me. Thank Judith (lan's manager). She put you on the guest list."

Once I was inside, I looked around for a while until I recognized Judith (I remembered her

from the picture that accompanied Perry's article) and I thanked her for the passes. She was very friendly and told me that she would make sure we had passes to the next show. As I walked towards the stage for the start of the show I was speechless. The Trash Can Sinatras opened the show and played a good set. I had been a fan of TCS for about five years since their first album came out, so it was fun to see them live. After the TCS finished their set, the four of us stood around without saying much to each other. I was having a hard time doing much except pondering the idea that in fifteen minutes something I had been waiting 13 years was about to happen. The dry-lcicle-Worked-fog started to pour out over the floor and out from a space behind the drum kit appeared Ian and his two person Afterlife. They proceeded to play for two hours which contained one encore. Included were the songs When It All Comes Down, an acoustic version of Hollow Horse and most of the Merseybeast album. Having Brett drive us back to Hounslow after the show made me a little nervous. But, I was so excited from the show, there was no way I could have slept in the car anyway. In fact, I could not sleep that entire night, I was just a Starry-Blue-Eyed-Wonder.

Wednesday, May 15th -

Paul could not go to the Birmingham show that night, so the three Americans had to drive across the English countryside without a guide. Paul gave me a quick driving lesson and said I rated about a 6 out of 10. A decent enough rating so I elected to drive to Birmingham; surviving most of the turnabouts, and not wrecking the car in the end. I paid \$30 in gas for a fill-up and \$8 for a chicken burger, both of which were pricey by American standards. Brett phoned ahead and reserved the three of us a B+B just North of the concert venue. We took a 'Hackney' cab to the Burmingham Foundry and arrived about an hour before the show. Adjacent to the Foundry is the Victoria pub and considering all three of us were hungry we made are way over to it. I started to walk into the front door, but Perry motioned that we should enter around back. I caught up with the other two and as we entered the back door at the same time we glanced to our right. Sitting about two feet from us was lan, Judith and lan's drummer, Daniel. Perry had met lan before, so Perry did the introductions, after which lan invited us to sit down and he bought us a round of Gunniess. We sat around for an hour and talked mostly about music. At one point we all joined in and sang Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody as it played on the pub's jukebox. 'lan was amazed that we flew 6000 miles to see him play and he dubbed us, "McNabbheads". The concert that night was similar to the one the previous night in Bristol, but it seemed better. It probably seemed better because I actually met Ian just before the show. The show lasted just under two hours and at one point during lan's encore, a medley rendition of the Who's Magic Bus and George Thorogood's Who Do You Love, they turned the house lights up. Ian was livid and refused to quit until they turned the house lights back down and let the band finish. They did and lan finished in fit of fiery energy. It was quite a sight to behold. Once they put the lights back up, they pushed everyone out the door. We called a cab and four pounds later we were relaxing at the B+B. Again, I could not sleep. Actually meeting Ian in person went well beyond being 'careful of what I dream of.'

Thursday, May 16th -

We woke up at nine, had another traditional English breakfast and headed for Manchester. We got lost on the way to the next B+B, had to call for directions and didn't get settled in until about 1:30 in the afternoon. Since we got lost in Manchester looking for the B+B, we decided it would be a good idea to find the concert venue during the day. We left the B+B on foot and headed towards the center of town to the University. After some questioning of the locals, we were able to locate the University building in question, the Student Union. Once inside we noticed a few posters showing that lan was playing at the student union that

night. We carefully removed a couple of the posters and rolled them up for safe keeping. We then enjoyed the afternoon in downtown Manchester while remaining cautious not to wreck our sacred posters. About 7:00PM we made it back to the Student Union. The friendly guy selling the T-shirts, Emile, held our posters and we made our way into the show. Again, we were quite lucky to find our names on the guest list. TCS opened again and when their set ended we asked their roadie if we could talk to them. We went backstage and had a chat. They were very humble and willing to talk to us for about ten minutes. While backstage, I thanked Judith for the guest passes. She responded by saving she was going to find me after the show to let me backstage to hang out with lan and the group. Thirty minutes later we were standing at the front of the stage as lan offered another lively musical event. At the end of the show, Daniel, the drummer, threw his drumstick into the audience and believe it or not, I caught it. After the show, Judith found me and led Brett, Perry and I backstage. We sat around with about 15 of lan's closest friends and had a few beers on the band. Soon, Daniel came out and we started talking to him about life in San Francisco. He was being guite jovial and even signed the drumstick I caught. He told us he wanted to come out to S.F. and have us show him around. Five minutes later lan came out of the dressing room, opened a beer and started mingling with the group. He came over to the three of us and said.

"Hello chaps, how'd you like the show?" "It was great. Really enjoyable."

"Well that's good to hear, now isn't it."

I pulled the concert ticket and a pen out of my pocket and asked lan to sign the ticket. He wrote, "Ian McNabb XOXO." I looked at the ticket and asked what XOXO meant. He said. "It means..." and proceeded to kiss my cheek three times... "hugs and kisses." Then, in a contrived American accent lan said, "You got a problem with that, man." This was slightly alarming, but in the context of the jovial atmosphere, made me laugh like a crazed tourist. We left a few minutes later and rambled back to our B+B for another night of wide-eyed sleep.

Friday, May 17th -

lan took the day off from playing. We had a relaxing day eating another English breakfast and driving to Liverpool. We spent most of the afternoon locating our next B+B and then walking around Liverpool's city center. It was incredible for an American to walk through so much history. I was overwhelmed by the fact that Liverpool is not only the home of the Beatles, but also the home of lan himself. A local pub waitress talked us into trying a local drink called, "Guinness In Black." Guinness is a wonderful beer, however, I believe black currant juice and Guinness beer do not belong together. It was like pouring the syrup from your waffles into your beer. It was something this American did not understand. Perhaps. someone can write me and explain what it is about that combination that people like? I remained excited throughout the day because I realized Ian would be playing in Liverpool the very next day.

Saturday, May 18th -

We spent the daylight hours looking through shops and drinking Newcastle Nut Brown Ale. Liverpool's Royal Court was about a five minute walk from our B+B. We showed up at the sold out Royal Court just before 8:00PM and once again found our names on the guest list for entrance into the show as well as on the list for the after show party. We took our places about ten feet from the front of the stage. TCS played for 40 minutes followed by lan who played for two hours and twenty minutes. This was the best of the four shows we saw. Ian played electric versions of You Must Be Prepared To Dream and Hollow Horse.

but even more incredible was the event which occurred at the beginning of the first encore. Ian sat in a chair by himself and played an amazing acoustic version of <u>Out Of Season</u>. It was stunning. After the show we made our way to the after show party where we chatted with Ian and the band. Ian even took a few moments and introduced us to his mom, thanked us for making the trip and told us he would see us in California the next time he was on tour in the states. On the way out the door, Judith gave all three of us free concert T-Shirts and told us to keep in touch. Brett, Perry and I walked back to the B+B and reveled at how lucky we had been to have had such an experience. Having accomplished what I had always dreamed of doing and so much more, a relaxing sleep finally came over me.

Sunday, May 19th - Monday, May 20th -

Brett and I parted ways with Perry and spent two days driving up to Edinburgh and then back to London. Paul let us stay at his house on Monday night. We had a few beers and recalled the events of the past week. We noted that over the course of the four shows lan played the following songs from his repertoire:

Out Of Season Hollow Horse When It All Comes Down Evangeline Understanding Jane Permanent Damage Great Dreams Of Heaven I'm Game That's Why I Believe You Must Be Prepared To Dream Child Inside The Father Still Got The Fever This Time Is Forever Merseybeast Affirmation Camaraderie Don't Put Your Spell On Me Heydays You Stone My Soul They Settled For Less Than They Wanted I'm A Genius



Tuesday, May 21st -

Brett and I boarded the jet bound for home. The same jet that is about to land back on California soil. To sum up this English Sojourn in a phrase, "When it all comes down, you must be prepared to dream because it can turn a quiet whisper into a wonderful scream and that's why I believe!"

"Good luck to all who sail with lan!" Feel free to write me at... Anthony Nola

Diamonds in the dust...

Andy Gilman has a copy of 'Seven Horses' double pack (excellent condition) and 'Evangeline' 12" (v. good condition) for sale. Prices are 4.50 and 4.25 pounds respectively, which includes P & P. 50 Emision Street, Electhorpes, South Hamber DN35 7HU.

Dave Scott has a number of Icicle Works imports (7" and 12") and some McNabb promo's for sale. Contact him for more details at 18 Windwhistle Lane, Western Super-Mare, Avon BS23 4PF.

CD'S/12"S wanted! Anyone with a spare copy of 'Motorcycle rider', 'Melanie still hurts', or 'I still want you' can make a few quid by writing to Neil Woodhouse. Let him know your asking prices for either format. 25 want Street, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR219BN.

Wanted/trade - live Icicle Works/McNabb tapes. Your list gets mine. I'm looking for the following items to complete my collection: - all official cassette singles, 'Melanie' (c.d. single), any promo's/oddities. I also have a large selection of Neil Young and related items if you're interested. Please drop me a line. Jim Greig, 40 Please Water, Manchester M40 9PR.

I'm looking for 'Seven singles deep' on CD (since I only have it on tape) and 'Permanent Damage' on CD (or tape or anything since I have no copy at all). Even if someone could knock out a tape of the latter. Please let me know what it takes to complete the basic Icicle Works set. Austin Lill 16.1144 yike Rise, Ware, Herts SC12 6DT.

Ten for Today

1 Everybody loves to play the fool

- 2 Slingshot
- 3 Windfall
- 4 Story of my life
- 5 Potency
- 6 High time (acoustic)
- 7 Like weather
- 8 Conscience of kings
- 9 In the cauldron of love
- 10 Shit creek

(From an incomplete collection....)

Austin Lill

- 1 Potency
- 2 These are the days
- 3 You stone my soul
- 4 Hollow horse
- 5 That's why I believe
- 6 When it all comes down
- 7 Still got the fever
- 8 Beggar's legacy
- 9 Starry blue-eyed wonder
- 10 Presence of the one

(ten for always)

P.W.

Ian McNabb & The Afterlife The Room, Hull 28.05.96

Having not seen Ian McNabb play for about 18 Months it was great news to hear that he was back on the road again and coming to a decent local venue.

We got there early to avoid the rush only to find that there wasn't one (!) but The Trashcan Sinatras soon came on to play an impressive opening set, their songs melodic yet punchy. It was a shame that most McNabb fans were seemingly still sampling the wares of local hostelries. They missed a good band.

A larger audience had assembled by the time Ian and the Afterlife took to the stage, Ian promptly announcing that he was going to rock for us tonight. Good news, it's what he does best! They promptly rocked through four songs from 'Merseybeast', including a storming 'Genius', and the rapport between Ian and his new band was soon evident. Long songs and plenty of guitar histrionics, this was good stuff!

They then delved into Ian's back catalogue to play a stonkin' 'Evangeline' (without Gloria!), 'When it all comes down' and later on my own personal IW favourite, 'Understanding Jane', which included several brave and nostalgic attempts at pogoing from an audience that bit older than your average Blur or Supergrass fan.

'Prepared to dream' and 'Don't put your spell on me' both fizzed energetically,

the latter interspersed with a few bars of some song called 'Eleanor Rigby', but the highlight of the night was 'Child inside a father', powerful and magnificent, it lasted for about as long as an episode of Inspector Morse which is fine by me.

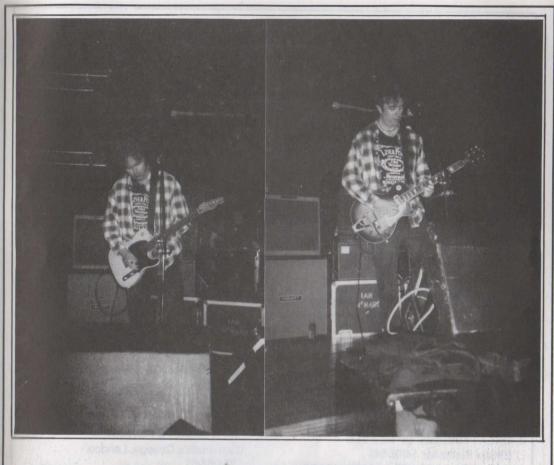
Ian jumped into the crowd during the final encore, a pretty heavy medley of 'Who do you love' and 'Magic Bus', before leaving triumphantly with The Afterlife having conquered a small part of Hull on their way.

Ian showed he's still one hell of a performer and I hope The Afterlife stay on board for some time yet because they were bloody spot on tonight.

One smokin' gig.

Setlist
Affirmation
Merseybeast
I'm a Genius
You stone my soul
Evangeline
When it all comes down
Still got the fever
(Motorcycle Rider - a few bars only!)
You must be prepared to dream
Child inside a father
Don't put your spell on me
Understanding Jane
Who do you love/Magic Bus

Steve Howdle





Ten memorable moments from the Spring/Summer 1996 tour

To call this a top ten of highlights of the six shows I saw would be unfair - as there were no

'lowlights'.

Each show was truly amazing, with something special happening to surpass the night before, just when you thought it couldn't get any better! I could wite pages on each night but, for the sake of space (and me getting writer's cramp) I have listed below ten moments which stand out in my mind when I look back on those gigs. For those of you at these shows, you'll know what I mean. If you went to some of the other gigs - I hope you had as great a time as I did, see you on the next tour.

1 I'M GAME

(Newport Filling Station 16/04/96)
There was just something about the way lan sang the line about the cheap red wine!
Brilliant!

2 NOT LOST ENOUGH TO BE RESCUED

(Newport Filling Station 16/04/96)
A great mean and moody blues track. I hope this doesn't stay lost for too long!

3 I'M A GENIUS

(Reading Alley Cat 17/04/96)
Best ever version. Ian opened the show with this by playing the entire song on the guitar and then, after about five minutes, sang it again. Awesome!

4 GREAT DREAMS OF HEAVEN

(Bristol Bierkeller 14/05/96)

A great rockin' version with everybody singing along. Judging by lan's reaction afterwards he obviously enjoyed it as well!

5 OUT OF SEASON

(Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms 03/06/96)

Totally unexpected, this was played in a slow, acoustic rendition as part of a three song opening sequence. One I never thought I'd hear performed live. Thanks Ian.

6 YOU STONE MY SOUL

(Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms 03/06/96

THIS IS THE NEW ANTHEM!

I had never seen an audience react in the way that they did until this show - the whole place went crazy!

7 AFFIRMATION

(Shepherd's Bush Empire, London 04/06/96)

What a way to start a show. The last line of the song "AND IT FEELS GOOD" sums up THE AFTERLIFE perfectly.

8 A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC

(Shepherd's Bush Empire, London 04/06/96)

The one thing that sticks in my mind is that for the first time at a London show, the whole audience were listening to every word. Long may it continue!

9 CHILD INSIDE A FATHER

(Goldsmith's College, London 06/06/96)

Until this evening, the best version i'd heard of this had been at Reading. Tonight the Afterlife took it to places it has never been before, especially in the 'rock out' ending. Tremendous.

10 GET BACK

(Goldsmith's College, London 06/06/96)

With special guest, Glenn Tilbrook. This brings things full circle as the first time I saw The Icicle Works they played this as the last encore. CAN THIS BAND PLAY OR WHAT!!!

Thanks to Ian and The Afterlife for an amazing six shows, looking forward to the next tour.

Bryan Johnson, Bournemouth

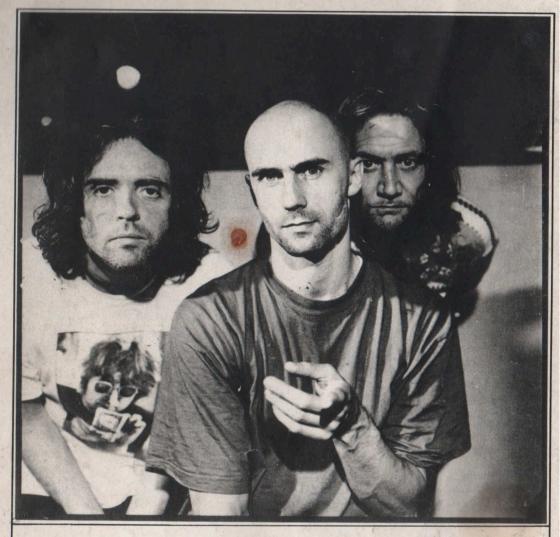
The Icicle Works Radio 1 Sessions 1982-1985

Recording Date	Broadcast Date	Tracks performed
11 Jan '82	26 Jan *82	In the cauldron of love/A factory in the desert/ All is right/When winter lasted forever. (John Peel)
14 Nov '82	25 Nov '82	Bird's fly (whisper to a scream)/Lover's day/ As the dragonfly flies/Love hunt. (David Jensen)
26 Feb '83	02 Mar '83	Love is a wonderful colour/Reverie girl/ Reaping the rich harvest/In the dance the shamen led. (John Peel)
30 Oct '83	29 Nov '83	Chop the tree/Nirvana/Mountain comes to Mohammed/Out of season. (David Jensen)
13 Feb '84	03 Mar '84	A factory in the desert/Scarecrow/Ragweed campaign/In the cauldron of love. (Janice Long)
08 Aug '84	15 Aug '84	Hollow horse/Deep in the woods/Conscience of kings/When you hear the mission bells. (John Peel)
20 Mar '85	24 Apr '85	Perambulator/All the daughter's (of her father's house)/Diamond in the rough/ Impossibly three lovers. (Janice Long)

Thanks to Russell Brill and Pete O'Hara for the above information and to John, David and Janice for playing 'em!

'McNABB RAG' c/o Paul Warry

(Please enclose a Stamped addressed envelope with all correspondence/contributions.)



Hey You!

Want more information on

IAN McNABB and The Afterlife?

Write to: 'T n T Society'
10 Kendrick Mews
London
SW7 3HG