



THE BIBLE

WALKING THE GHOST BACK HOME

25th ANNIVERSARY EDITION (REMASTERED AND EXTENDED)

THE BIBLE:

Boo Hewerdine: Voice; Guitar

Tony Shepherd: Keyboards; Percussion; Drums on

‘Walking the Ghost Back Home’, ‘(Talk to Me Like) Jackie Kennedy’

with:

Dave Larcombe: Drums

Clive Lawson: Bass; Violin

Kevin Flanagan: Sax

Neill Maccoll: Guitar; Bass

Produced by:

Boo Hewerdine and Tony Shepherd (Tracks 9, 10 and 11 produced by The Bible)

Remastered by Denis Blackham at Skye Mastering

Originally released by:

Back's Records, St Mary's Works, St Mary's Plain, Norwich

Recorded at:

Red Shop Recorders, London. Engineered by Jim Preen

Spaceward Studios, Cambridge. Engineered by Mark Graham

Original Design: Pete Siree

Illustration: Tony Shepherd

Design (2011): Simply Marvellous Creative Ltd

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Cambridge 1985:

“I keep telling you, get together with Hewerdine. Do some stuff with Boo...”. So spaketh Michael Gott, old schoolfriend of Boo Hewerdine's, part-time matchmaker and full-time assistant manager of Andy's Records warehouse in Ross Street, which is where my Cambridge geography degree had taken me. As a jobbing drummer I was also playing with various early 80s Cambridge bands, including The Wobbly Jellies (briefly signed to Virgin) and Somewhere in the Foreign Office (featuring Chris ‘Brass Eye’ Morris on bass), as well as doing gigs on the southern jazz circuit. Boo worked in The Beat Goes On, the legendary Cambridge second-hand record shop that was also an outpost of the Andy's empire, and was well known as former frontman of The Great Divide, a highly regarded Cambridge band who had been signed to a real record label (Ensign, a subdivision of Chrysalis whose roster included The Waterboys and Sinead O'Connor) and who'd had real records out that you could buy in the shops.

Boo also had a publishing deal with Ensign and he initially invited me round to his house to play me two new songs that he was intending to demo, ‘King Chicago’ and ‘She's My Bible’. I was half expecting some slabs of 80s electro pop - similar to later ‘Divide’ material - but instead I heard something much more acoustic and organic, with lyrics that immediately pulled you in. Boo asked me to play on the demo, and we cut three songs in a small studio in Islington (one of which is included here). We also scheduled in some tentative writing sessions together at a friend's house in rural Thriplow, and here we would convene to wrestle with a faulty reel-to-reel Revox whilst searching for some common ground.

Initial songwriting sessions were promising although rather lacking direction, and we were sort of wondering whether or not to pursue things when a guitar riff, some chords and a line of vocals descended from the ether and coalesced into something much more solid. There was a strong opening line (“Bone-bleached and cloudless sky...”) with a chorus guitar part and harmonic shift that just ‘did it’. The song was provisionally called ‘White Hotel’,

and whilst it never quite got finished, it definitely made us want to explore further. The rest of 1985 saw us writing individually and collectively on a regular basis whilst quietly carving out our agenda as a stronger identity emerged.

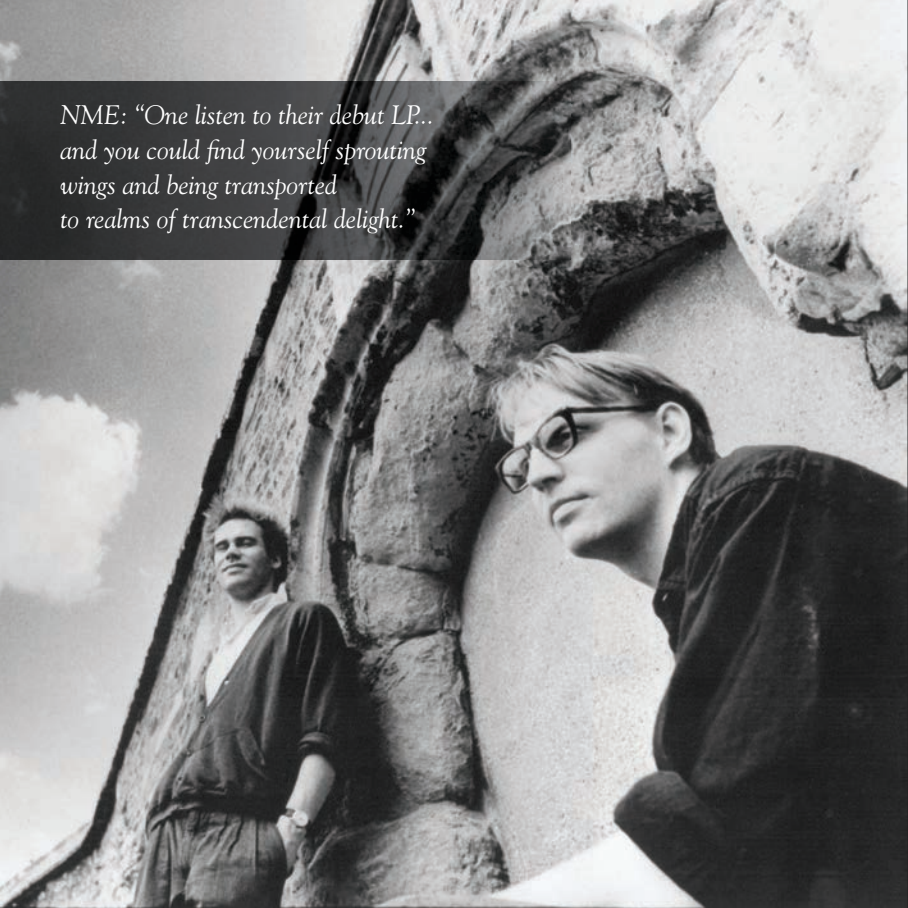
We were in agreement that most 80s pop music was very bad indeed and that a lot of this was linked to the rise of digital technology and it's generally soul-sapping usage in record production. We agreed that music should be based around the idea of performance and should be played on real instruments wherever feasible, avoiding the use of sequencers, drum machines and digital brass stabs. Backing vocals were to be used sparingly, and there would be no eye liner or foolish shirts. Songs should aspire to being durable in some way by containing elements in the music and lyrics that would hopefully draw people in and hold them there. Later, some people observed that Bible music had a 'yearning' quality, which we took to be a good thing.

At one writing session Boo played me a chord sequence that he'd come up with which worked well when cycled (G – D – A min – C). I changed the last chord to a G/C (implying C maj9) and worked out a contrasting section in E minor, and a couple of hours later we'd finished 'Graceland'. We went for an all-day breakfast at the cafe in Norfolk Street and then played through the song again to see if it passed the leave-it-for-a-bit-and-then-see-if-you-remember-anything-about-it test, and it still sounded pretty good. Soon afterwards we wrote 'Mahalia' together and found ourselves on a bit of a roll, and by the end of the year we had enough material to make a record. We also made some tentative live outings around this time (Boo on guitar, me on keyboards and snare drum), although our first gig at The Burleigh Arms on Saturday July 13th was rather patchily attended due to an unfortunate clash with Live Aid, the biggest musical event of the century.

Walking the Ghost Back Home (WTGBH) was recorded and mixed on a shoestring between October to December 1985 at Red Shop Recorders in Islington, and out in the misty fens at Spaceward Studios near Cambridge. Boo paid the studio fees out of his own



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NME: “One listen to their debut LP... and you could find yourself sprouting wings and being transported to realms of transcendental delight.”

savings (I didn't have any savings) and local musician friends were cajoled into adding their services as and when required, including drummer Dave Larcombe, bassist Clive Lawson and jazz saxophonist Kevin Flanagan. Boo and I produced it on the hoof, and tracks were laid down quickly, often as warts-and-all first or second takes. The album was also mixed quickly with a minimum of studio processing. And that was it - no click tracks, no sequencers, no Syndrums, no Pro Tools, no autotune...

I did the artwork for the album and singles sleeves, spidery inked line drawings that were heavily indebted to the Swiss artist Paul Klee. These seemed to be a good fit with the music, and above all I didn't want the sleeves to look tacky and commercial like so many musical products of the time.

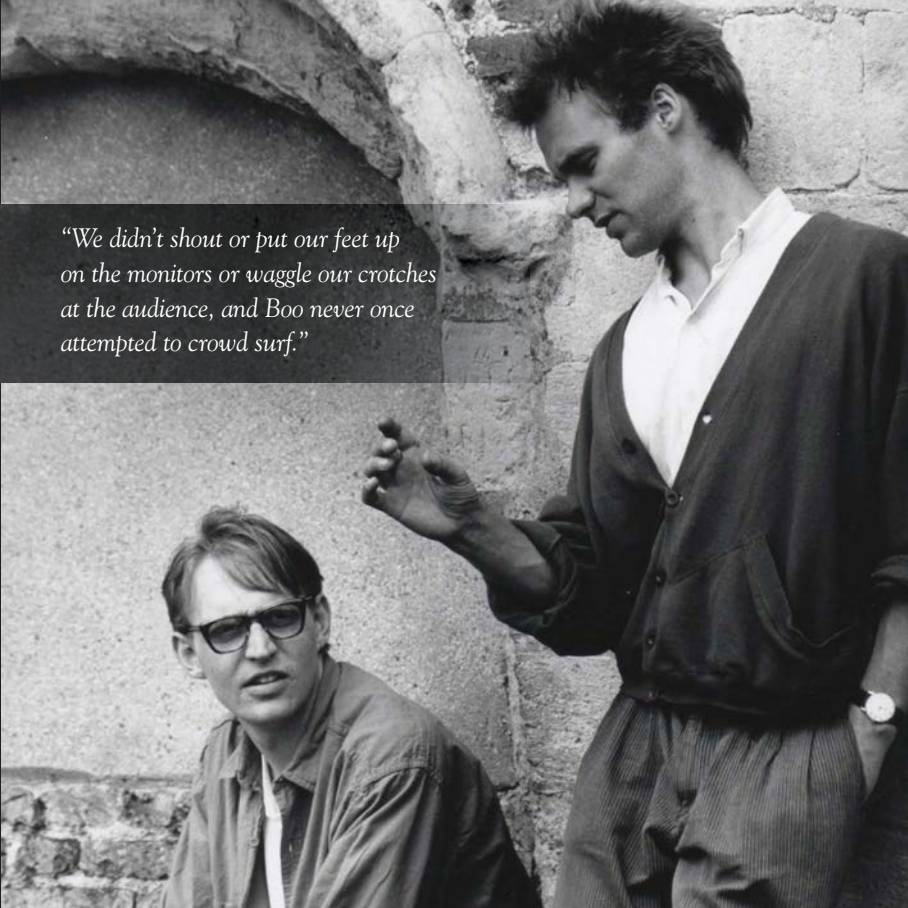
The album was released to little fanfare in mid-'86 by Backs Records, a small Norwich-based independent label who were part of the then-Cartel, and initial press reviews were enthusiastic and even slightly over-the-top (Melody Maker: “The freshest pop sound I've heard so far this year... The songs are all relentlessly classy.” NME: “One listen to their debut LP... and you could find yourself sprouting wings and being transported to realms of transcendental delight.” Music Week: “The best debut album of 1986... Patti Smith's 'Horses', Television's 'Marquee Noon'... now add to the list of greats 'Walking the Ghost Back Home' ”).

The lexicon that emerged included use of words and phrases such as “melodic”, “well-crafted” and “sophisticated”, and we were steered into the Quality British Songwriting pigeonhole with contemporaries such as Prefab Sprout, Lloyd Cole and the Commotions, Aztec Camera, Deacon Blue, Del Amitri, Danny Wilson and Microdisney. Smiths and Steely Dan influences were noted, and later on I was very pleased when we received a letter from long-serving Dan producer Gary Katz asking if he could do our next album. We started to get played on regional and national radio stations, and soon we had garnered enough exposure (much of it word-of-mouth) to enable WTGBH to enter the top ten in the Music Week Independent charts.

Marcus Russell (later manager of Oasis and creator of the Ignition empire) heard the album by chance in the bar of his rugby club in Harlow, and got in touch. We met up for some beers in The Mitre, and then we had a manager (no deals or written contracts, just a handshake, some belief, and a genuine love of music). Presently, we found ourselves being courted by competing record company A&R personnel who would get us pissed and then try to sign us, and people were after the rights to our songs as well. In the end we chose Chrysalis Records because their head of A&R Stuart Slater was (very uncommonly for an A&R person) a musician and a music fan, who (like Marcus) seemed to genuinely like our stuff and get what we were about.

By this time, we had assembled a more permanent band line-up including guitarist Neill Maccoll and drummer Dave Larcombe, and shortly afterwards we embarked on the 'Walking the Ghost' live tour which took us the length and breadth of the UK, performing in venues such as the Aberdeen Beach Ball Room and the Wendover Wellhead Inn. We weren't expecting very much, but people started to show up to the gigs, people we'd never met before who knew the words to our songs and who even stayed until the end of the set. Some came with specially-constructed frog hand puppets, an odd response that we chose to ignore. Live, we could all play our instruments, and whilst reviewers usually commented on our musical competence, some would also lay into us for being just a bit too ordinary on stage, too studiously 'muso', not quite extroverted or opinionated enough. We didn't shout or put our feet up on the monitors or waggle our crotches at the audience, and Boo never once attempted to crowd surf. We didn't seem to be quite playing ball in the era of 80s high showmanship, preferring, of course, to let the songs speak for themselves.

Despite the occasional flack, things continued on an upward trajectory in the wake of the album's release: C4's 'The Tube' broadcast a specially-made video of 'Mahalia'; we played in Europe, acquiring some German fans who stalked us for the next two years; we were voted Best British Band of 1986 on South Africa's national radio station (!);



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"We weren't expecting very much, but people started to show up to the gigs, people we'd never met before who knew the words to our songs and who even stayed until the end of the set."

we got invited to Paul McCartney's party (!!) and sat quietly in the corner nibbling canapés. A few years later however, after our full-major-label-treatment second album 'Eureka' and subsequent re-releases had failed to produce a top 40 hit, we would go our separate ways after our sales statistics were deemed insufficient to support the mini-industry that we had created. And that, apart from one or two re-groupings and some further recording in the early/mid 90s, was pretty much it for The Bible.

Returning to the WTGBH recordings twenty five years on it is notable how well the songs have stood up to the test of time, and I'm glad that we followed our then slightly out-of-kilter traditionalist stance by playing our music on real guitars and pianos rather than succumbing to the digital blips, parps, thunks and handclaps of prevailing 80s production methods.

Above all, WTGBH was the result of a time rich and relatively stress free, pre-record company period in which we were basically writing songs to please ourselves. We never wrote with an audience or brief in mind, and if we didn't think something was up to scratch, we wouldn't do it. And when we had enough songs that made it through quality control, we put them out there to see if anything happened. And, actually, quite a lot did...

Tony Shepherd, July 2011

1. GRACELAND

Yes, it was written before Paul Simon's album came out, and this sort of coincidence is not uncommon - Boo also came up with the title 'Punch The Clock' for a potential Great Divide album.

Boo is a very good funk rhythm guitar player, and the 16th-note syncopated Bo Diddley-style pattern on 'Graceland' became a bit of a Bible trademark, being used to future good effect on songs such as 'Skywriting'.

The obvious first single choice, especially when a remix by producer Greg Walsh gave our original effort a little more sparkle. I later did some work with Oasis, and Noel Gallagher told me that he'd bought a copy of 'Graceland' in Manchester when it first came out and had always liked the song.

Would I give you money?
I don't know
The free-est things in life are best and so
Put me to the test now

And when I die
Will you build the Taj Mahal?
Wear black everyday of your life?
I doubt it
You will never see Graceland...

All my wanting, all my waiting,
all my working
All my wickedness
For all my yearning, inside I'm shutting down
You will never see Graceland...

So what am I doing
Without you?
Love at second sight would see me through
But not this time
You will never see Graceland...

All my wanting, all my waiting,
all my working
All my wickedness
For all my yearning, all my yearning,
all my yearning
You will never see Graceland...

2. MAHALIA

Homage to gospel singer Mahalia Jackson and the album's second single release which blends disparate elements (soprano sax, an Indian sitar sound, finger cymbals, a sample of Mahalia's voice etc) into an unusual whole, which somehow worked.

Some memorable images in Boo's lyrics here: as well as the blues and gospel references (e.g. to Robert Johnson) here is the "Kissing like statues" line, which always stuck. I think the "voice in my hand" is a telephone, although I could be wrong here. I was pleased with the repeating intro sax tune which I had to write quickly in the studio as an arrangement idea that occurred midway through recording the track. I was listening to a lot of Blue Note albums at the time and came up with a melody based around stacked fourth intervals, sort of influenced by Wayne Shorter tunes such as 'Witch Hunt'.

C4's 'The Tube' liked the song and made a special video of 'Mahalia' at the British Rail engineering depot in Swindon (another incongruous element) which was broadcast with an introduction by Jools Holland in 1986.

There are three steps to limbo
Step one, a voice in my hand
I will sleep with my sadness
Wake up before I hit the ground

Mahalia, sing my joyfulness
Mahalia, kissing like statues we will say
Mahalia, sing my joyfulness, my joyfulness

There are more things in heaven
Hey Robert, I hope you understand
Don't want to hear about
that hellhound on your trail
Hey Robert, I can't understand,
won't understand
I can't understand

Mahalia, sing my joyfulness
Mahalia, kissing like statues we will say
Mahalia, sing my joyfulness, my joyfulness

Mahalia, I forgot who I was
Just for a moment, I forgot who I was...

3. WALKING THE GHOST BACK HOME

I spent an unholy amount of time writing the changes, re-harmonising the tune and generally agonising over the chord voicings for this, the laid back title track of the album which turned into a bit of a blow for Cambridge jazz saxophonist Kevin Flanagan.

I'm still pleased with the descending altered changes at the end of the last chorus, and I finally got an opportunity to do my Bernard Purdie impression on drums over the half-time shuffle feel.

Now I might be lying,
and the names have been changed
But someone got wounded
by that wicked tongue of yours

And out in the world, I find there's life going on
Have I been missing the point for so very long?
Looking like murder, I left here alone
Walking the ghost back home

Am I a mouse or man, is it a kingpin or a clown I am?
I don't know, but I'm alone
Walking the ghost back home

An all of these things, well they wouldn't matter at all
If I was half of the man that I claim, I claimed to be
Looking like murder, I left here alone
Walking the ghost back home

Am I a mouse or man, is it a kingpin or a clown I am?
I don't know, but I'm alone
And walking the ghost, walking the ghost back home

Walking...

4. KID GALAHAD AND THE CHROME KINEMA

Boo wrote the lyrics for this ballad after seeing an old advert for a long-vanished 1950s 'Chrome Kinema' which used to exist in the middle of Cambridge, and I always really liked the images he conjured up: movie houses have always doubled as dark, discreet locations for seductions etc. and here our lovers also see themselves reflected in the action onscreen.

This was murder to record due to the slow tempo and cavernous open spaces, coupled with a very irritating delay on the 'cinematic' string sound on my second-hand Yamaha DX7 keyboard.

You should have been there, you should have
Empires fell down
For the price of a smile
And an hour alone

You should have seen us, you should have
We were magnificent
Not since the last days of Rome
It doesn't matter now

No more, no more
Kid Galahad and you
In the clever shadows
No more, no more
Kissing in a chrome kinema

You should have known me, you should have
I was the valentine boy
You don't believe me do you?
Are you laughing at me?

No more, no more
Kid Galahad and you
In the clever shadows
No more, no more
Kissing in a chrome kinema

And now the world is upside down
I couldn't get arrested if I tried
Everything is topsy-turvy
Couldn't get arrested if I tried

No more, no more
Experiments in blue with you
And the clever boy
Who never knew how lucky he was
How lucky he was

You should have been there,
you should have...

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5. (TALK TO ME LIKE) JACKIE KENNEDY

I had a fine time beating the crap out of my old Slingerland snare drum on this, which we recorded live in one complete take. A vigorous live favourite to which members of the audience would sometimes trip the light fantastic.

Still trying to pay the rent
This sets a precedent
With money that you're making
You've got to bring home bacon

Come on, come on...

You've got me on a string
Hung up and everything
What message will you bring
When you talk to me like Jackie Kennedy...

What's got into my head?
Romance is in the red
What chances to be taken?
Look at me bring home the bacon

What made the Georgia Peach
Decide he had to preach?
What lesson could he teach?
Talk to me like Jackie Kennedy

Talk talk, talk to me
Speak words I can hear
In language plain and simple
Talk to me like Jackie Kennedy

Come on, come on...

You've got me on a string
Hung up and everything
What message will you bring
When you talk to me like Jackie Kennedy...

Soothe me, move me
And talk to me like Jackie Kennedy

6. KING CHICAGO

Three chord favourite with lyrics about paranoid obsession that people would cheerily sing along to when performed live. Features memorable intro riff with its implied Maj7b5 harmony (live, we would play this in unison and one of us would always fuck it up). Derek Chapman from Backs Records was at Spaceward Studios when we were recording 'King Chicago', and at one stage took it upon himself to produce Boo's lead vocals. He gave Boo a very hard time indeed over the first 'scary' line, insisting on about 15 takes of this until (of course) we ended up using the original.

Let's go driving in my new car
Over a cliff onto the rocks below
You never know
We might live to tell the tale

Let's go smashing windows
Watching the glass fly out at us
You never know
This tiny town might need the fuss

And I love you
A little bit more than I love myself
And that's scary
I've never really loved anybody else
King Chicago, king Chicago
Home of my heart

Now I'm running errands
You're ringing bells and running away
I'll never know
What makes me need to pay and pay

I'll meet you in summer
I'll meet you on the longest day
We'll remember the great big world

Say I love you...
I love you
A little bit more than I love myself
And that's scary
I've never really loved anybody else
King Chicago, king Chicago
Home of my heart

Who's that sitting in my new car?
Who's that laughing on the rocks below?
She'll never know

That I love her
A little bit more than I love myself
And that's scary
I've never really loved anybody else
King Chicago, king Chicago
Home of my heart

I say, King Chicago...

7. SHE'S MY BIBLE

Eponymous, up-beat (for us) staple of the live set featuring Boo's jangly Pretenders-ish guitar sound which became another band trademark. The E minor verse slides nicely into the 3-chord relative major chorus cycle here (G – D – A min).

Some girls are clever
Straight out of school
Some days are devils aren't they?
A golden rule
Some boys want to get you
To the church on time
This boy doesn't want to
Oh no, not him

She's my bible, yeah
She has no rival, yeah
No other girl could steal her thunder, oh no
She's my bible I'm her disciple

Some people know me
By another name
This girl don't know me no how
But all the same
I dream to get her
To the church on time
This boy isn't joking
Oh no, not him

She's my bible, yeah
She has no rival, yeah
No other girl could steal her thunder, oh no
She's my bible I'm her disciple

Can you trust a man
Who has no master plan?
I need to have my fortune told
Tell me, tell me, tell me now

Some girls are clever
Straight out of school
This girl is more than clever
Oh no, not now

She's my bible...

8. SWEETNESS

(Originally released on the 12" single version of 'Mahalia')

An early songwriting demo and the only time we used a drum machine (as a time saving device, although I ended up recording the hi-hat and cymbal parts live to give it some feel). A nice souly chorus on this, although it didn't really fit into the scheme of things and didn't make the original album.

And you want it, so badly
You barely know how to stand
So you have to be strong every step of the way

Bad money, wicked fun
Cigarettes, it makes me want to holler
Now you have to be strong, every step of the way

So this must be the sweetness
And the weakness of decay
Hey, this must be the sweetness
And the weakness of decay

Your twisting days are over
Get out now before time blows your cover
And you have to be strong every step of the way
Yes you have to be strong every step of the way

Hey, so this must be the sweetness
And the weakness of decay
Hey, this must be the sweetness
And the weakness of decay
Hey, have I lost my sense of timing?
I don't know
Hey, so this must be the sweetness
And the weakness of decay

Put on your glad rags
Put on your gladest rags...



*"We got invited to Paul McCartney's party
and sat quietly in the corner nibbling canapés."*

9. SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

(Originally released as the B-side of 'Mahalia')

"These are ten-a-penny days..." Upbeat pop tune written when we were under the spell of The Smiths, although the little two-chord slide at the end of the chorus was shamelessly lifted from 'Hey Nineteen' by Steely Dan. Unusual keyboard bass line in evidence here, possibly because it was a demo that we never quite got around to finishing.

Send him down a salt mine
Lose him, we don't need him
Won't come back here again
These are ten-a-penny days...

Good things always come in threes
Bad things, that was you
And I don't know what he had done
These are ten-a-penny days

But until such time as you are mine
I'm going to spend, spend, spend
I'm going to spend, spend, spend
Until such time as you are mine
I'm going to spend, spend, spend

You were always witty and
You were always smart
Here's one man who's eaten pride
Tell him once before he dies

So until such time as you are mine
I'm going to spend, spend, spend
I'm going to spend, spend, spend

Until such time as you are mine
I'm going to spend, spend, spend

Send him down a salt mine
Lose him, we don't need him
Won't come back here again
These are ten-a-penny days..

Shake it now...

10. HIGH, WIDE AND HANDSOME

(Originally released on the 12" single version of 'Graceland')

Strophic verse form reveals story of everyday sexual jealousy over a I to minor V chordal base. Features a solid 16th-note feel drum track from Dave Larcombe and some characteristic slide guitar work from Neill MacColl, both of whom became permanent Bible members. A band from the Isle of Wight sent me their cover version of this song and told me it was the high point of their live set, although I can't now recall who they were or what became of them.

Hey, is that Frank's car?
Are you going out with him
Like you did with me?
Does he go as fast
As I used to go?
Are you leaning out the window laughing,
laughing?
Ho, ho...

And so, if you see me walking
Turn to him and say
Now did you ever see
High, wide and handsome?

Hey, do I know here?
Is this where you live now?
Do you live alone?
Do you notice days
When the world's on ice?
Are you looking out your back door
laughing, laughing?
Well alright...

And so, if you meet me one day
Turn to me and smile
Now did I ever see
High, wide and handsome?

I'm going back to my roots..

11. GLORYBOUND

(Originally released as the B-side of 'Graceland')

Boo wrote this, and I re-jigged the Middle 8 and added the end section. Opens with a 2:3 bossa clave and contains some supple lead acoustic work from Neill. It was later re-recorded in posh Wessex studios for the 'Eureka' album, although we never managed to re-capture the feel of the original.

When we first signed to Chrysalis, they made a test video of the band playing along to 'Glorybound' to see what we looked like live and to generally check out their investment. I had a large swollen hand – a repetitive miming injury - and we appear shifty and uncomfortable in our new Gap threads, courtesy of the Chrysalis 'styling' department. Nick Hornby devoted a chapter of his book '32 Songs' to 'Glorybound'.

I said your name in a prayer last night
Though I knew it wouldn't be heard
Honest I will
I will be good but you creep
 round the house without a sound
Hold out your arms and I'm glorybound
Bound for glory, I'm glorybound

You took the weight of the world today
You look so skinny, are you okay?
And how will I know?
And what will I find when I creep
 round the house without a sound?

Hold out your arms and I'm glorybound
Bound for glory, I'm glorybound
And I say, oh yeah,
 bound for glory, glorybound

Some people are wild about you
Some people are wilder still
I know that I will fall for that line again
Again and again

And how will I know?
And what will I find when I creep
 round the house without a sound?
Hold out your arms and I'm glorybound
And I say, oh yeah,
 bound for glory, glorybound

Now you've seen the best of me
Come on and take the rest of me
Glorybound..

12. SHE'S MY BIBLE

(Demo - Previously unreleased)

Taken from our very first recording session on 11-3-85 at Red Shop Recorders, a songwriting demo for Boo's publisher (who didn't like any of it...). Boo sang and played guitar, I was on drums and Clive Lawson added fretless bass and gave it a folky edge with some interesting violin accompaniment, although at the time it would have been equally fashionable to use a crumhorn.

Postscript:

RED FLAG

(Track 8 on original album release, but not included here)

Sometimes, recording studios can be deceptive environments. You listen back in loud hi-fidelity sound to what you've just recorded, and you really want to like what you hear rather than having to beat yourself up about it (especially if you're paying for the studio time). We all thought this tune was sounding fine when we blasted it out at Spaceward, although later scrutiny supported our decision to quietly drop it from subsequent versions of the album. John Peel quite liked it though, and played it on his Radio 1 show, our first time on national radio.

Sleevenotes by Tony Shepherd.

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WWW.REDGRAPERECORDS.COM

GRACELAND
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WALKING THE GHOST BACK HOME
KID GALAHAD AND THE CHROME KINEMA
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KING CHICAGO
SHE'S MY BIBLE
SWEETNESS
SPEND, SPEND, SPEND
HIGH, WIDE AND HANDSOME
GLORYBOUND
SHE'S MY BIBLE (Demo version)



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