

N:which was good for the time, but we lost money on it, we lost around £30. Anyway a good few others helped, so that was in a sense the first 'Hope' gig even though 'Hope' didn't go on the poster. After that more bands started contacting when they heard Fugazi had come and got paid their travel expenses, which most bands couldn't have done before. DI, No Means No came over through that, then we started putting 'Hope' on the posters. At that stage it was Myself, Fergus and Paddy doing stuff, I was taking a lot of the phone calls. Jabbs sent over some bands and more bands started contacting me 'cos through the whole independent thing they'd get to hear about stuff. We just kept doing gigs as well in Not Our World at the time it meant Not Our World could play loads of gigs (Cork, Limerick etc.). People would come up at gigs and go 'this is great! - New Ross how can we do it' and I'd say 'If you're from New Ross and can put on a gig, the next band that comes over we'll send down to you' and that worked, there were gigs in Arklow and Cork through the same kinda thing. (the odd time you'd get a gig in Galway or Letterkenny). Ourselves and the people in Belfast would be in touch with the people in bands, we'd always try and say if you think what's being done is good well then try and do it yourself 'cos that's all it is - no big deal. That was the whole idea behind Hope promotions as such.

L: You should write a book on all the stuff that happened.

N: No, but I wouldn't mind trying to list the history, like detailing a period of x amount of years on what went on in independent music here, be it through posters and having a few words about each gig. For instance like the first Fugazi gig: we'd never done a gig like that before, we'd hired a venue (McGonagles), we paid whatever like a few hundred pound out, and that was a lot of money to us, and at 9.00 Fugazi hadn't arrived. We were up the wall, 'cos the gig was on, it was 9.00 that night and they still hadn't turned up, so the gig had to start without them and we had to hope they'd arrive. I think they came at about 9.30 so luckily they did arrive, just in time, they actually walked up, put their amps on stage and played straight away. There was all stories like that. Another story about D.I., who are still going now, who were due to play in the New Inn and cancelled a few days before, so we actually got a band over from Wales called The Flapps to play the gig. The Flapps came to play and we had to pay their travel expenses and somebody came and kicked the tiolet in, meaning the gig couldn't take place anyway, so there was whatever £200 lost - the gig never happened because someone decided to go in on the night and kick in the tiolet for the fun of it and the water got into the electricity and there was no electricity for the gig then, so the Flapps came over for a cancelled gig, a gig that D.I. had cancelled - the rearranged gig and they didn't even get to play anyway. So there's all stories like that. In '89 I got sick, 'Hope' as such was doing quite a bit and Not Our World as well was playing a lot of gigs, but I got sick so we had to stop for a couple of months then No Means No asked to come over, so I made a couple of phone calls and Fergus and Paddy got involved with that. I couldn't actually go 'cos I was sick, it all kinda slowed down a bit after that. But I think the following November or December, I was feeling a bit better so I wanted to do something - at that time I wasn't working 'cos I wasn't able to, and I had an hour or a half an hour a day where I could do stuff (and be fairly tired for the rest) 'cos I was into the music and all + the Hope thing was gathering momentum so I thought I'd do this newsletter called React, just try to encourage people to listen to the same music as I listen to, or to get involved in the same things, it was just as a way of passing on all the stuff that I was reading etc. that maybe other people might want to know about, in the form of a free newsletter, which would also publicise whatever gigs were coming up, 'cos at that stage we decided to organise 5 benefits coming up to Christmas in the ttitic so we got all Irish or Dublin bands to play (Therapy, The Whipping Boy, Killerkrust, Sloth, 3-Ring, Phschosis, the Umbrellas and loads of Dublin bands etc.) and each gig was a really big success - they all raised between £70-£250 (which was grand for a gig in the ttitic). From that, 'React' kept going every month and at one stage there was 2,000 issues of React going around (it'd go to places around the country which were doing gigs as well). It was really gathering momentum and we thought

but then I went to Canada so obviously React stopped and Hope kinda had a hiatus for awhile. Then we came back from Canada and I was talking to Derek (from Gearhead nation zine) and we were saying that it'd be good to maybe start up the Hope thing again, this time it'd have to be done differently, as a collective that people would get involved with, where as before I'd always say to people that they can get involved but alot of times they didn't, whether they felt threatened or not I don't know but they just didn't, so this time we decided to ask more people -there were alot more fanzines & freesheets going around, alot of people in bands, so we said get all those people together and club all our ideas and maybe something can come from it. So the Hope Collective came from that.

A: What do you find inspires you to keep doing all the stuff you're doing?

N: I suppose the people around me. What keeps me inspired now is just to see that other people are active, that keeps me going that theres people who want to do it. Its kinda like keeping you on your toes though 'cos its very easy, I don't want to sound a very cold cynical old man, but its very easy to stop everything, you can just get out of the habit and stop. So its just to see that people are doing stuff around me and I want to be part of that community. What inspired me in the first place was seeing bands like Fugazi, the Ex (in Holland), or Dawson (in Scotland) who them-selves were going out and doing stuff. I think one thing - I was really into a band called New Model Army and when they came over to Ireland they played in the TV-Club and it was £6 in or something like that, and that inspired me cos I didn't want that to happen to all the bands that came over, I wanted bands to come over and it wouldn't be that expensive - 'cos I wasn't working, I was in school £6 at that stage was like 4 weeks pocket money - so people can afford to see bands that they like that kinda gave me the interest in starting the whole Hope thing.

A: Now its kinda taken for granted that bands are £15 or £20.

N: Yeah, now its accepted that if a band plays the Point it has to be £15 in or whatever. Its accepted by alot of people, but I'm not saying whether its right or wrong, I'm just saying for me, I think its crazy. But I mean if a band wants to make a living, if thats their job I'm not saying that they should workat something else, but people should realise that it is their job, they're not messiahs or anything or holding out the future, if its their job they're not particularly concerned with who goes to gigs or what ever, once they have the numbers there, which happens alot if its £15 in -

it loses sense of identity you have a load of bouncers with the band up high and people down low. Its not the way I'd want it to be, I want the band on the same level or whatever as the crowd, cos the people on stage are just the same the people off stage, they just have guitars.

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same things for nearly 10 years and I go "aw well, I said that 10 years or 2 months ago or whatever", its not that I'm repeating an answer but I don't want to sound clichéd. It is brilliant, but just because I think its brilliant and someone else dosen't I'm not saying they're stupid, I just think its brilliant that people do things independently, that people choose to do things independently is great. But you're faced with choices every day so whatever the proper road you go down, but it is brilliant that people go down the independent road. I think for anyone, you should look at doing things yourself you should look at having control of your own life as much as possible, and thats kinda the whole independent thing. Well that you should be in control, there may become a time when you're not but deal with that when the time comes, when you feel you can't be in control of your own destiny. But while you are or while you feel you can control your destiny then maybe you should, and thats kinda what the DIY thing would be. A lot of people would bring out a record or fanzine and wouldn't care, like charge expensive for it, or a band might play anywhere just to play whether its £5 or £9 etc. it wouldn't bother them. I know a few years ago it bothered people, people would make the conscious effort not to play gigs that they thought were over priced and in turn I think that kept gig prices down.

A: You know the way in Heartattack (fanzine) and other places, it says punk is a community, do you think it is?

N: I think it is, but its a very fragmented, splintered community. There's lots of different people and lots of people who don't have the same viewpoint. Its

A: Aswell when its cheaper the band is giving more and yet they don't want so much materialistically, I think thats amazing. Thats me coming from the point of view thinking bands are always £15.

N: Its a big question like that whole kinda thing about how much it is into gigs etc. the way I'd view it is that I'm involved in the Hope Collective and that we're doing stuff at affordable prices. But thats grand we're doing what we're doing and if a band dosen't want to do that as far as I'm concerned, ok then don't do it, but don't do it for a couple of months with us and then move on, just don't do it and let everyone know straight away, then thats fair enough.

A: What does DIY mean to you and how important do you think it is?

N: I think its very important. But I find when I'm giving answers that I'm saying the

kinda 'cos you have someone who you might think is part of the same community, but could be racist or sexist but yet they'd be part of the same community, listen to the same music, go to the same gigs. Its a question that is there a point being over concerned with a community thats like that. I think though theres alot of people doing good stuff and I think its important for them to join together, but I've thought that since I started listening to music, since I've been going to gigs, since listening to what could be called punk music , and that people should club together, the same way there should be unity etc., but in real terms whether there can be or not is a completely different thing than whether there should be, cos we can all say there should be unity and call for it but whether it works in the reality, like at the next gig thats a completely different matter, but I think there is a community of people who are doing fanzines and who are in bands, bringing out records or tapes or whatever, and I think it is important for them to help each other out in their community and hopefully grow and encourage other people to get involved, but if you're on your own doing a fanzine its alot harder than if you're part of alot of different people, which maybe you felt when you started Loserdom, maybe you might feel more involved now which is just community.

A: I was reading somewhere and it said that punk is divided into creators and consumers, do you think thats true at all?

N: I don't know, but I'd say if punk is like that creators and consumers well then so is rave, so is jazz so is everything, punk mirrors every facet of life, I think, whether people want to accept that or not. Its just a different group of people, part of a culture and in Ireland if you go to a gig theres going to be a broad spectrum of people. Consumers and creators -you'll get that any group, if you go to Major Tom's Disco Bar on whatever night and you have some people who are consumers and some people who are creators, I think. I don't think punk can be singled out for that, if you go into your work theres some people who are consumers and some people who are creators I think. Every walk of life, you know. I suppose I'd like to think that people who go to gigs theres more of them who'd be concerned with certain things in their own lives, than maybe if you walk into any bar on a weekend night. But you might be surprised at the results, you might be surprised that it could be the same amount of people. A lot of times we think, we've got this community, but the community is just as messed up as the rest of the world.

A: I was reading in Fucktooth fanzine about this guy who wanted to organise this festival where all these different elements of punk would come together, and

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some people came and they were causing loads of violence and they gang-raped some girl, anyway your man was real disillusioned by the whole thing

N: Yeah, unfortunately its probably no different, than whatever else in society, maybe just that the people concerned with things are more vocal. If you go into a workplace you'll find people who are caring and find people who don't give a damn, the same as going to a gig, but maybe people in a workplace wouldn't be concerned with doing things independently, 'cos they'd be more concerned with getting on with their own life, & getting ahead. But individually when it comes to their own concerns or whatever, they could be just as caring as most people at gigs.



A: conditioning?

N: Well it depends it seems that people are conditioned, you've got to get your 9-5 job and you've got to get your house and 2.2 children or whatever - that that's what life is about. But for alot of people that is what life is all about and who are we to say its not, just because we may have a different view of what it should be about, it all comes down to harming other people because you don't wanna harm other people. Its conditioning, but maybe punks are conditioned to a punks way of life, I don't think so but maybe they are you know. Maybe punks think I shouldn't want to do this or I shouldn't pay £4 into a gig, without actually thinking it out for themselves, you know.

A: You know you've said in places, in React, the Statement 12" etc., that people shouldn't put their faith in things, what do you mean by that?

N: Well I don't feel people should put their faith in me, I'm struggling to put faith in myself so.. But like anyone, you shouldn't put faith in Derek or Sinbad who writes Gearhead Nation, or Anthony who writes Loserdom, these people have to sort their own lives out, but also if you do you could end up being disappointed if you do. I'm not saying its stupid to, I'm just saying try not to and watch out if you do. I know I've done it, and to a certain extent I still might do it, its probably a natural thing to look up to other people and in a way see what they have done and try and follow what they've done, but you still have to put your own angle/slant to it, cos if you have to formulate your own opinions rather than let them do it for you cos if you do they're not real then, obviously you read stuff and you're influenced by whats going on around you, but you need to formulate your own opinions. Its like people who turn vegetarian cos everyone else is, cos they thought they should have rather than thought it out why.