



Some 20,000 people attended the third Deeply Vale free festival in 1978, where they saw bands including The Fall, below left – being watched by Tony Wilson, stage right.

All pictures copyright Chris Hewitt

‘Something inspiring in both musical influence and community spirit’

A new book and CD box set tells the story of Lancashire’s free music festival scene, through the words and pictures of one of the movement’s organisers and great champions CHRIS HEWITT.

Tales of Deeply Vale is my attempt to describe my journey through the free pop music festival scene of Lancashire between 1976 and 1981.

The book features sections

on the Rivington Pike Festivals of 1976 and ‘77, the Deeply Vale Festivals (at the top end of Ashworth Valley between Bury, Heywood Rochdale and Rossendale) of 1976, ‘77, ‘78 and ‘79, and the two proxy Deeply Vale festivals held not

in Deeply Vale itself but at Edgworth/ Darwen, Pickup Bank, in 1980 and 1981.

Also covered is the huge Rock Against Racism Free concert to 40,000 people in Alexandra Park, Manchester on a Thursday evening and all

day Saturday in July 1978.

The story began with a group of community minded hippy type people from the Bolton/Chorley area putting on Lancashire’s first free pop festival in late July 1976 at Rivington Pike in the Chinese Gardens.

I attended, taking some bands along, and did the same again in 1977.

Bands that played at the Rivington festivals included Body, Here and Now, Tractor, The Damned and many more.

In September 1976, spurred on by the success of Rivington Pike 1976 festival, myself and four friends sat round a table in a commune in Rochdale and drew up our plans for what became the Deeply Vale Festival.

We asked a farmer if ten or so friends could camp in Deeply Vale with a bit of music for a birthday party and he agreed, renting us the land for about a fiver.

In the end about 300 people camped and another 200 day visitors came to watch

about 15 bands.

The next year the festival grew to 3,000 camping, 2,000 more day visitors and about 25 bands.

By 1978 some 20,000 were attending Deeply Vale for six days to watch more than 50 bands including several well known names Steve Hillage, The Fall, The Ruts, Here and Now and Nik Turner from Hawkwind

A crowd of 20,000 attended in 1979 also.

Deeply Vale was one of the first festivals to invite punk bands to a hippy festival with The Drones playing in 1977.

Two members of London funk band Hit and Run saw The Drones play and decided in their tent to form a punk band when they got back to London.

They were back the next year with their band The Ruts. The Ruts and the Fall maintained close links with the festival, playing at them for several years.

In summer 1978 myself and the Deeply Vale crew were

asked to build a big stage and provide a sound system for a couple of Rock Against Racism concerts one week before Deeply Vale.

The venue was Alexandra Park in Manchester’s Moss Side. On the Thursday night Graham Parker and The Rumour played and on the Saturday local heroes The Buzzcocks, Steel Pulse, and China Street.

Deeply Vale survived another two years after the 1979 festival, moving out of Deeply Vale itself and onto the moors between Edgworth and Darwen at a place called Pickup Bank in 1980 and 1981.

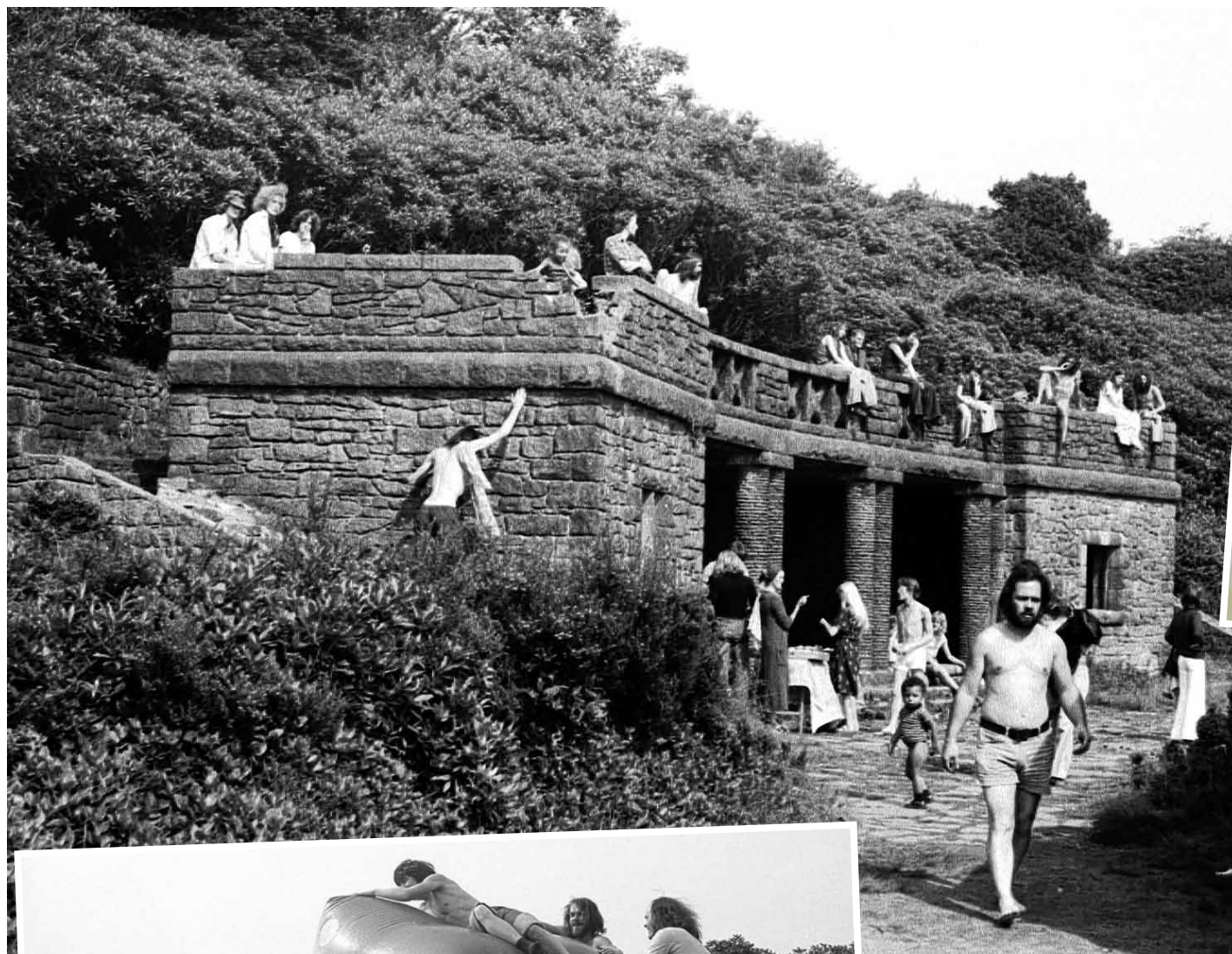
The common thread running through all these Lancashire festivals is that the bands played for free or minimal expenses and the audience could come and watch and camp for free.

There was even free food for people that could not afford to pay for it.

There was an amazing community spirit and overall these events played host to



LANCASHIRE HISTORY



The Rivington Pike festivals of 1976 and 1977 (pictures this page) inspired a series of free festivals in Lancashire which, over the course of six summers, attracted some 150,000 people

around 150,000 people from Lancashire and elsewhere over a period of six summers.

Somewhere in that huge audience, inspired to go on to form bands and work in the music industry were a teenage Ian Brown (The Stone Roses), a teenage Andy Rourke (The Smiths), Boff Whalley (Chumbawamba), Dave Gedge (The

Wedding Present) a nine-year-old Jimi Goodwin (Doves), five-year-old Luke Bainbridge (editor The Observer Music Monthly), along with future members of The Chameleons and The Mock Turtles.

Hopefully we helped create something inspiring in both musical influence and community spirit.

● The book Tales of Deeply Vale comes in a box with six cds and a pack of incense in a box set called The Deeply Vale Box.

The Deeply Vale Box is available now at £99 including postage from www.deeplyvale.com For more information call 01565 734577.

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