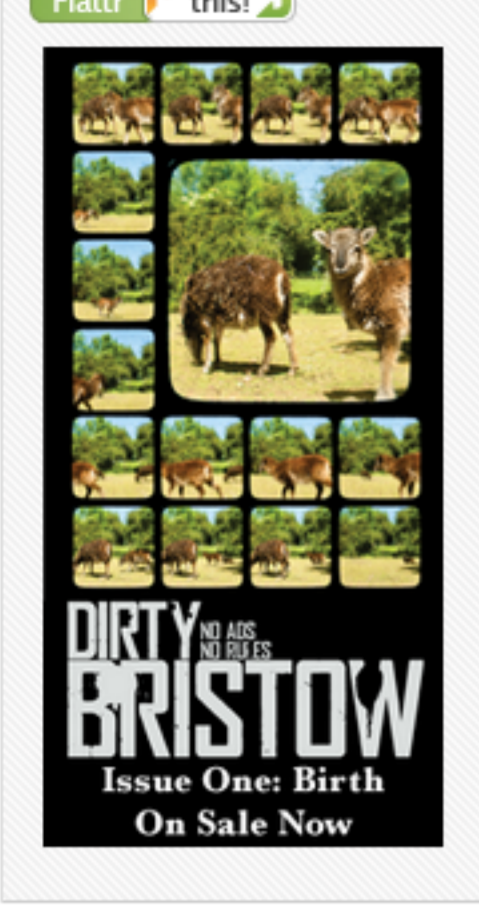


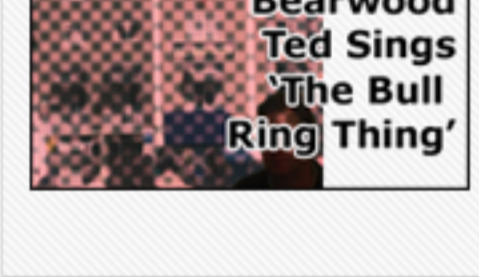


Birmingham: It's Not Shit loves Birmingham, its people, arts, animals, buildings, parks, grass verges, factories and bus stops. We've even got a soft spot for the Black Country.

BiNS runs The Brummie of the Year Award, Talk Like a Brummie Day and organises odd stuff like spending all day on the eleven bus.



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Martin_red If it was still open, I'm sure the Custard...
The Baron What a bunch of cocks. I gave up with it years...
Tamar Good ol red cage.... And they don't reply when...



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IS BRUM HAPPY? Birmingham's emotional wellbeing* on Saturday 28th of May 2011 07:30: 57.8 % (average)

Twice daily scores on Twitter. *Every ten seconds this site reads the 1000 latest Tweets from within a 10 mile radius of the centre of Birmingham and rates the words against a database.

How does this work?

Danny Smith: Glam Racket

16 November 2010 By Danny Smith

The opinions of Danny Smith do not necessarily reflect the views of the publishers of this blog, its affiliates, or any sane adult human beings. He currently lives in your cupboard, watching, always watching.

Is it weird to be nostalgic for a period of time you were never part of? Some would argue all nostalgia is this way: that your memory or perception of the events you pine for are rose-tinted by time. But, I yearn for a bygone age where men were men but dressed like women and women had massive lady-bush growlers that would require their own bottle of shampoo. I talk of course about the seventies—era of Glam Rock.

I suppose I've been thinking about it because one of the godfathers of Glam, Roy Wood, got his own star on the increasingly hilarious and ever-tenuous Birmingham Walk Of Stars. Seriously, if anything symbolises the flaw in Birmingham's self-perception better than the Broad Street Walk of Stars, I've yet to see it. Our struggling middle-child attitude of trying to emulate the success of others by copying what they do, our lack of confidence to trust in the emerging talent this city has in droves, our willingness to be what others want us to be rather than being proud of what we are. And it's all set in concrete and littered on an area of Birmingham that resembles a boozy crèche for the mentally violent and sexually weird four nights a week.

That's not to say I don't respect Roy Wood, or any of the Star recipients, although if I hear I wish it could be Christmas everyday with its usual frequency this holiday season I may climb a clock tower and start picking people off.

The greatest thing Glam ever did was bring theatrics and glamour to the working class: men wearing make-up and tight t-shirts, men actually making an effort. It also normalised to a certain extent the idea of homosexuality, the famously bisexual David Bowie being mentioned in the same breath as the very straight and gritty but just as fabulous looking Slade. If the sixties was the beginning of the sexual revolution, Glam rock was the glitter covered cavalry.

That glamour is sadly missing recently, grunge replaced any trace of effort with sneering distaste. 'Try-hard' became an insult somehow, and the the inclusiveness of dressing up and playing the part of an space pirate with rainbow genitals was replaced with a false notion of authenticity that people have been trying hard to fake ever since. Young people today look like they woke up in a jumble sale, glamour creeps in but is wore with irony and a sneer. The men resemble Guy Ritchie cockney toddlers, or Cambridge Dons having a nervous breakdown and the women confused slightly-slutty time travellers.

The authenticity that they aspire to? Off the peg, not one bothers to trawl the charity shops or visit the independent vintage clothing stores. They'll go to the Bull Ring and the newly arrived Forever 21 and point dumbly at the mannequins.

Forever 21 is the current cool face of global capitalism, it is The Man selling rebellion back to the kids. Three floors of vapid mix and match capital. With the very Christian message of John 3:16 printed on the bottom of the bag. WWJD? Not shop at Forever 21 probably—the money changers in the temple pissed him of a treat, I'm not sure how happy he'd be that consumerism has marginalised religion to the point of a footnote in a shopping bag.

Cool, Christian? In any case, the shop seems like any other global force: sweatshop allegations, numerous allegations of copyright theft... start at the Wikipedia article for more details.

I recently had the interesting experience interviewing a member of our Glam Rock-ocracy in Birmingham's other temple to Mammon, the Mailbox. He was everything you would want a English rock star to be: eccentric, slightly damaged, and really difficult to talk too.

I never expected him to walk in wearing five-inch platforms and silver flares, but the reality depressed me. And at the end. when he stared around and said: "It's nice round here, do you know how much the flats are?" a little piece of me withered. It's a law of the universe that everything heads towards entropy, but for me, that's what Glam was about, burning in a fabulous ball of glitter flame, the idea that playfulness, sexuality and fantasy can transcend the mundane decay inevitable in a drab world.

Tags: Forever 21, Glam Rock, Roy Wood, The Mailbox

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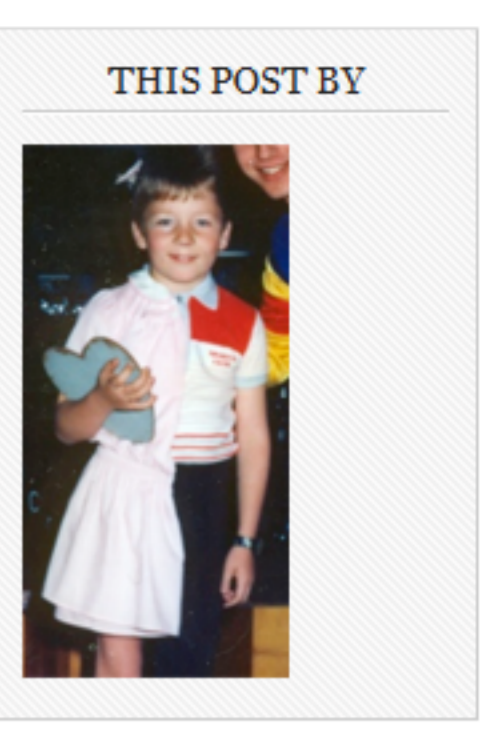
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BiNS is mostly by Jon Bounds, a Birmingham based social web consultant, producer and writer. You can hire him to work on your stuff, or follow him on twitter. There's also the odd bit of stuff from Danny Smith.

Feel free to send us anything you're interested in - or think we might be. If you've got gigs to promote, best to chuck them on the talk board.