



Cherry Red Promotions: Richard Jones' story

Transcription of excerpts from interview with Richard Jones

Richard: Really Cherry Red was sort of born out of our experiences, that was sort of Will and myself doing the Lansdowne Promotions. I was at Malvern Art College for two years, and I think it was that second year when Alan Hoida from the Pewke Band and John Williams did the first light show at Malvern Youth Centre, which is now The Cube. Having watched that that really sort of fired us up, and I don't think we did too many there before we sort of moved on and got a regular slot at Malvern Winter Gardens. There was a mutual friend of ours, Jackie Ellis that knew Will Atkinson, who unfortunately is no longer with us, but Will had got Sidewinder Discotheque, and I think she'd suggested to him that our light show would be a very good accompaniment to his disco. We did do selected dates with Will's disco where it was, you know, of benefit for both of us. Of course Will was also heavily involved with Lansdowne Methodist Youth Club. He suggested that Lansdowne should start promoting bands and, I think, somehow got involved in that. And the very first one that we did was Black Sabbath. This was Lansdowne Youth Club promoting, and that Black Sabbath date was the 30th May 1970. And when they were booked they were relatively unknown, and the fee was £50, which for a Methodist youth club was quite a substantial sum back then. But quite soon after they were booked they released the *Paranoid* single, and as soon as that was released it just took off and hit the charts. They came back and said, we're not coming for £50, £250 please. So that was a bit of a dilemma

as to whether we just cancelled the whole thing or whether we took a risk and went with £250, which is what we decided in the end. And fortunately it turned out to be a huge success.

I'd then moved to Croydon. I'd met up with Iain because he then came to lodge at the same house that I was living at. Iain was very interested in what we were doing, and he suggested to me that, you know, that would be worth pursuing, but done on a proper business footing. Now Iain was a qualified accountant, and he was London based, so he'd got, you know, good contacts. Although he started off in the film industry he then went into working for numerous record companies, and I think at that particular point he was at a, er, I think he was general manager at a record company. So he had a fair insight into that business. And that was really how Cherry Red came about.

Obviously, there were three of us within Cherry Red, that was myself, Iain McNay, and Will Atkinson. I sort of started things off by designing all the tickets, and I would then take that to the printers, which was Tilleys in Ledbury. I would then distribute tickets to the agencies, get the posters put up. And fairly soon, I think after that, we sort of developed a network of school kids to sell tickets. I guess the benefit there was that we didn't have to pay any agency fees for people selling tickets, you know, the school kids that sold the tickets would just get in free of charge, and I think they liked the kudos of selling the tickets. Looking back on it, it's sort of somewhat scary really because some of these young teenage girls would come back to the gig with hundreds of pounds worth of money [laughs]. It's just ludicrous now, but at the time, you know that was what happened and it was perfectly fine.

The very first one was Hawkwind, the 3rd July 1971. I think the reason we had Hawkwind was because I was heavily into them at that particular time, and that seemed the obvious choice. At that

particular time there was a guy called Harrison, who was manager of the Winter Gardens, and he was a Major, and he was the, you know he was quite short, stout, a moustache, very particular, and I guess having all these long haired guys playing really loud music was about the last thing that he really would have enjoyed. And of course, Hawkwind, I can't remember whether they had one drummer or two drummers, I mean they did at one point have two drummers. But certainly, I think the drummer played without any clothes on, which you know, I don't know how we managed to keep that from him, but we did.

I think the very last one was The Undertones, which was about, I think it was 1981. I think the reason that we stopped doing it was we'd started Cherry Red Records, and although we'd started Cherry Red Records quite a bit before then, probably '78, I think was the first release, which was The Tights. And Iain was concentrating quite heavily on that because that was his main source of income. By which time, I think I'd started No Future Records, which was the punk record label that I started with Chris Berry, and I think our time was more taken up with that, and the promotion thing had sort of started to fade away a bit really. And I'm pretty sure that's why it came to a conclusion.

I suppose I didn't really sort of understand it at the time, and I'm not sure anybody would, but you know what we did was the sort of backdrop to people's growing up, you know, it was a major part of their life.

*A transcript of the full interview with Richard Jones is available from
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