

[00:00:00] **Jarek:** And I'll just do the formal announcements. So this is Jarek Zaba for the AMP Kingston project from Creative Youth exploring art, music and pop fashion heritage in the Kingston borough and beyond. Today is Tuesday, October 24th, 2023 and I'm with Julian Hickman. Julian studied at Kingston Polytechnic and was the Students Union Social Secretary from 1981 to 1984. Which saw him involved in the organisation of gigs, including The Smiths at Knights Park in 1983. Julian, do you mind just confirming your name for the tape, as well as your date and place of birth?

[00:00:32] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, hi, uh, Julian Hickman, uh, place of birth, Lutterworth, and, uh, date of birth is 21 10 62.

[00:00:40] **Jarek:** There we go, um, right, should we do the clap now?

[00:00:42] **Thomas Gibbons:** Yeah, give me a second, okay, recording, everyone happy?

[00:00:46] **Jarek:** Yep. Great. Um, so Julian, I wonder if you can just start with how you first came to Kingston Polytechnic. Are you a Kingston local yourself or did you arrive here by other means?

[00:00:56] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, I arrived by other means.

[00:00:59] **Julian Hickman:** I [00:01:00] didn't, uh, I went unfortunately to too many concerts when I was doing my A Levels, 16 to 18, and I didn't get very good A Levels. And so I went into clearing as that, which at the time was, um, really didn't exist. You were just ringing around the universities and polytechnics trying to get a place. And I think I got a place in Kingston two, three days before the start of term on social science course, which were back in, so that was back in end of September 1981.

[00:01:29] **Jarek:** So where were you brought up?

[00:01:30] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, in Northamptonshire. Midlands, so, yeah, we moved around a bit, but yeah. So not far.

[00:01:36] **Jarek:** So was music a big part of your upbringing? Was it in the household growing up? Were your parents music lovers?

[00:01:41] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, parents, not really. Uh, my grandfather was a singer and he could play, um, uh, piano and everything, you know, just not professionally.

[00:01:50] **Julian Hickman:** But, um, all my mates growing up at that time were, uh, joined bands and I was rubbish. I'm not musical at all.

[00:01:58] **Jarek:** What did you try and play?

[00:01:59] **Julian Hickman:** [00:02:00] Uh, I did try and play piano. I was taking piano lessons when I was 8 or 9. But, uh, the piano teacher had a quiet word with my mum to just say, Not cut out for this. Can you take him to football instead?

[00:02:13] **Jarek:** So what, um, when you did get into music, what kind of, what genres were you first, first took to?

[00:02:20] **Julian Hickman:** Very like my sis, my older sister, she was very much into glam rock and David Bowie. So we grew up a lot of that. Uh, around the house during the seven mid seventies and then, um, 1977 pl- punk happened and my sister, she was a, she was a bit of a punk and went and saw the Pistols, the Clash, and I sort of followed in her footsteps after that and started going to a lot of, um, early punk, reggae.

[00:02:46] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, two tone gigs right from mid, yeah, end of the 70s really, yeah.

[00:02:53] **Jarek:** And then it was, was it 1981 you came to Kingston?

[00:02:55] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, 1981, yeah, at the age of, yeah, I was 18.

[00:02:59] **Jarek:** So was your [00:03:00] first, uh, was your first time in Kingston just arriving for Freshers Week and all of that?

[00:03:04] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, pretty much.

[00:03:06] **Jarek:** What were your first impressions of the town?

[00:03:08] **Julian Hickman:** Um, it was, at the time it was very, very, very suburban. I mean you had, I think the Good Life was still on the television so you had all these views and I was quite close to Surbiton and yeah, it was uh, sort of quiet and suburban. There were, you know, not, not as much as my hometown of Northampton, like there wasn't any nightclubs here or anything.

[00:03:28] **Julian Hickman:** There's, so all the social activities with the students happened around the colleges, or unless you had a house and a house party, yeah.

[00:03:39] **Jarek:** Tell me about the, uh, the, the, the course, what are your memories of the course? Did you enjoy it?

[00:03:43] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, it was, I, I, the course I got onto was social science.

[00:03:46] **Jarek:** Is that Penrhyn Road?

[00:03:47] **Julian Hickman:** At Penrhyn Road. Yeah. Um, it was only had six hours lectures a week or contact time at the time. So we had quite a bit of time on our hands where you're supposed to be studying or, uh, reading up and, and [00:04:00] everything. Um, but as I got involved with the students union quite early on in my, I think within like a month or.

[00:04:06] **Julian Hickman:** And I was the Social Secretary just for Penrhyn Road by October, I think I was, uh. And then responsible for that, but yeah.

[00:04:15] **Jarek:** Yeah, was it, uh, yeah, tell us about that early involvement with the SU. Was it a case of someone approaching you and asking if you'd be interested, or did you approach the SU and say, I'm interested?

[00:04:24] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, you, believe it or not, you had elections for the positions on, and I was quite politically active as well at the same time, so. Uh, you know, it's in the dark days of, uh, Margaret Thatcher, uh, et cetera, et cetera. So, um, yeah, I was involved a little bit with, uh, uh, political activism and positions came up.

[00:04:44] **Julian Hickman:** And, uh, uh, yeah, I went for the Social Secretary to be part of the union, union executive.

[00:04:50] **Jarek:** Um, Did, um, did Social Secretary appeal because of this connection with music, or?

[00:04:56] **Julian Hickman:** Oh yeah, very much so. I mean, I still go regularly to [00:05:00] shows every week, like four or five shows, week in, week out. And by becoming Social Secretary, I realised it was a route to save my grant, so I didn't have to spend money on going to too many shows myself, so

[00:05:11] **Jarek:** So, I mean, how is your, uh, music, how are your music tastes developing over this time?

[00:05:17] **Jarek:** I mean, you mentioned the glam rock growing up and then, and then by the time you're at the Poly, has it, has it evolved? Are you into anything different?

[00:05:25] **Julian Hickman:** It was evolving. I mean, we were very lucky, I think, at the time for the music, because, uh, immediately after punk you had, um, ska and the two tone revival.

[00:05:36] **Julian Hickman:** Um, uh, so that led you into reggae, obviously, and old time ska, um, and then the, uh, The Clash at the time, who were, you know, an amazing live band. Best live bands I've ever seen. I used to follow them around the country and they were still playing regularly. They were embracing all sorts of music. Um, you know, going from R& B to, uh, a lot of reggae in their songs and sets and things.

[00:05:59] **Julian Hickman:** And [00:06:00] yeah, so it was really all. Um, encompassing, you know, with, um, different styles of music, which was, and so I just, you know, I just liked any good music, really. Um, the only thing that I wasn't too keen on was heavy rock. And, um, you know, uh, uh, you know, you didn't have, um, far, you know, uh, thrash metal or anything at the time, but, and also that was very early days of hip hop as well.

[00:06:28] **Julian Hickman:** Hip hop was starting to come across the, uh, Atlantic and yeah, you know, you had Northern Soul, which was fantastic music. So yeah, it was a very broad.

[00:06:37] **Jarek:** Did you find yourself with a group of friends who sort of shared in the same interests musically?

[00:06:42] **Julian Hickman:** Oh yeah, yeah, very much so. At college, yeah, we all met up together, we were going to concerts together and similar music tastes, but we had Beggars Banquet, obviously, which is still here.

[00:06:52] **Julian Hickman:** And you used to go down there every week to get the latest releases and very much a scene about, you know, buying records.

[00:07:00]

[00:07:00] **Jarek:** Yeah, I mean it's interesting, I do try and ask most people I interview about the main way of consuming music, because I think it shifts over

time. Um, I mean what would be the most common way for you to discover an act you like?

[00:07:17] **Jarek:** Would it be seeing them live? Would it be hearing them on the radio? Or would it be buying the records?

[00:07:21] **Julian Hickman:** Um, for me, NME, John Peel were very important. Uh, most of my, uh, friends were, were the same thing. Bit of word of mouth as well. And then you had magazines like The Face, I think, which had just come out, which was, uh, quite innovative and, you know, looking for new, new, uh, um, styles of music and everything, but it was really exciting times for, uh, music coming through, uh, you know, New York, um, America, over here, um, just, yeah.

[00:07:52] **Jarek:** And the live landscape, I mean, we'll obviously talk about the Poly gigs in a sec, um, but, um, outside of that, uh, the gigs that you were going to, [00:08:00] was it okay, was it travelling into central London a lot of the time?

[00:08:02] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:08:03] **Jarek:** Yeah, what were some of the venues that you used to frequent in London?

[00:08:05] **Julian Hickman:** Um, the Lyceum was fantastic, which is still there, but unfortunately doesn't do shows anymore, and that was a great place to watch bands.

[00:08:13] **Jarek:** Is that the Lyceum Theatre in Aldwych?

[00:08:15] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, where Lion King is.

[00:08:17] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:08:17] **Julian Hickman:** I mean, Bob Marley had a famous gig there. Uh, I think The Clash famously did a week of shows there, I think, of which I saw two. This was about the same sort of era, 81, 82. Um, bands like Stray Cats I saw there as well. Um, yeah, and there's a great Bob Marley live album, Live at the Lyceum.

[00:08:37] **Julian Hickman:** About 1975, I think that's, yeah.

[00:08:41] **Jarek:** So focusing on your role at the SU, I mean, tell me, what is the role of a Social Secretary? What does a Social Secretary do, or what did you do for three years?

[00:08:49] **Julian Hickman:** At that time, a Social Secretary was almost When I arrived at Kingston, they had an employed Entertainments Manager for the Students Union, [00:09:00] who was employed to do the job, he wasn't a student, he was a professional, a guy called Mick Gray.

[00:09:07] **Julian Hickman:** So I was working under him for the first year. Um, but the first year I was there, he, he put on a couple of concerts at, um, uh, Tolworth Recreation Centre. I think Bad Manners was one. And then there was an English funk band called Forest, and I don't think they, they didn't do that well in terms of, um, numbers to, uh, to go and see them.

[00:09:28] **Julian Hickman:** And so I think. That there was a loss, so he lost his job at the end of the year and they decided to go back to not being, so you have a student run, um, entertainments programme. So you'd had a professional I had been doing it for a year, then at the end of my year as Social Secretary, just for the Penrhyn Road, I was elected as Social Secretary for all of the colleges.

[00:09:53] **Julian Hickman:** So at the time we had Knights Park, the arts centre, we had Gypsy Hill up there and Canbury Park and Penrhyn [00:10:00] Road. So I had those four sites. Each of those sites had a venue and they needed regular programming. They needed something to happen because, you know, outside of the pubs and everything in Kingston, there wasn't anything else there.

[00:10:12] **Julian Hickman:** So, and your

[00:10:15] **Jarek:** Was it, uh, was it just music you were putting on?

[00:10:16] **Julian Hickman:** No, no, it was comedy. I think we had a film club as well. Uh, then you had a, um, a disco. Um, uh, yeah. So, yeah, we did a lot of, and plays. We, we bought theatre companies in. So, like, I think Hull Truck Company came down. That were quite popular at the time.

[00:10:37] **Julian Hickman:** Um, then it was the early days of stand up comic, uh, comics as well. So, yeah, we had. So a few of those down as well to Kingston.

[00:10:47] **Jarek:** Yeah. Um, yeah, in terms of the venues, how many did you say that, I mean, across, across the various campuses?

[00:10:53] **Julian Hickman:** We had two, we had the main hall and Penrhyn Road, which was about 600 capacity, very, [00:11:00] very much like a school hall with traditional stage.

[00:11:04] **Julian Hickman:** Then we had a bar at Penrhyn Road, which had a small stage and you could do discos and small things. The Knights Park had the refectory which we put a temporary stage in, just alongside the river there. Um, and that had a capacity of about 200, 250. Uh, then there was an old Nissan hut, which was an air raid shelter from the Second World War, up at, um, Gypsy Hill, which was the bar.

[00:11:29] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, and that had a nice stage up there, as I say, get a couple of hundred people in there. And then again, Canbury Park, um, uh, which was the mostly aeronautical engineering, they had a, a refectory and we used to do things there about two or three times a year and that was, that was about it.

[00:11:45] **Jarek:** That's the one on Richmond Road, is that right?

[00:11:47] **Julian Hickman:** I think so, yeah.

[00:11:48] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, as you go, yeah, beyond the station that way. Um, out of all of these, did you have a particular favourite for gigs, or least favourite? Did you have strong feelings [00:12:00] about any of the venues?

[00:12:01] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, Canbury Park was difficult, so we didn't tend to do a lot there. We did a few stand up shows there.

[00:12:09] **Julian Hickman:** Um, Knights Park was my favourite, just because we had the art school over there, and the fashion students, and they were That was a weekly event, you always had to put something on. I think we had Thursdays there. So every Thursday we had a band on. Generally through the two, three years of when I was there, which was good.

[00:12:30] **Julian Hickman:** Then, um, we couldn't do a lot with Penrhyn Road because it was a bit smaller. But, yeah, we used to put odd things on in the students bar. Then Penrhyn Road, which, you know, we use that for the festival, the RAG ball, the end of term ball, and about three or four times during the

year. When we had to get it from the, you know, you had to apply to the, uh, the college to, uh, get the booking in and get it early, so you're quite restricted on being able to use that.

[00:12:56] **Jarek:** I mean all these campuses, uh, [00:13:00] have very different subjects within them. So Knights Park is the art students. Um, you said that the, um, Richmond Road one would be more, uh, aeronautical engineering. Um, I think, wasn't Gypsy Hill, wasn't that the teacher training college? So did. Did this influence how the night would be, the sort of character of the nights, because the students would come from the, like, were the art students different to deal with than the social sciences or any of that, or was it all kind of similar?

[00:13:29] **Julian Hickman:** It was quite similar. Penrhyn Road and Knights Park, because they're so close together, people could walk easily back to each other. Whereas, um, Gypsy Hill was residential, so most of the students lived on site there. Uh, which they didn't at Penrhyn Road or Knights Park. And, um, yeah. And that was quite a trick to get up the hill to go and do anything there.

[00:13:48] **Julian Hickman:** Um, and, uh, yeah, so Cam, yeah, Cran, what's it called? Cran, Cranbury.

[00:13:53] **Jarek:** Canbury. Canbury, Canbury Park. Yeah.

[00:13:55] **Julian Hickman:** Cranbury Park. Yeah. Um, again, that was close enough for people to [00:14:00] walk backwards and forwards, but yeah.

[00:14:03] **Jarek:** Um. In terms of, I think one thing we're really interested in is how these gigs were organised, how they came to be, and why this student circuit existed for bands.

[00:14:14] **Jarek:** So, I know, I remember from reading the Alumni Magazine article that you mentioned that you were there for the Smiths, I think the Smiths were

[00:14:20] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, one of the bands I booked was the Smiths.

[00:14:21] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, so Maybe using that one as an example, do you want to just talk about the process? Like, does a promoter come to you?

[00:14:29] **Jarek:** Do you go and seek out these bands? How does it work?

[00:14:32] **Julian Hickman:** Um, that time, uh, you, uh, the agents, uh, the bands all had their own specific agents, unless they were a local band and, uh, and they didn't get to that stage. So I had numbers, telephone book full of, or you, what was produced is you had something called the White Book.

[00:14:48] **Julian Hickman:** So it's about that thick with everybody's, all the agent's numbers, all the PA companies, all the audio, and that was your bible of people's, um, uh, contact details and [00:15:00] everything. Um, and then the agents used to send you letters with their rosters. So you'd pick them up and they're representing these acts.

[00:15:07] **Julian Hickman:** And then you're on the phone ringing them up and making offers for, um, any of the artists. And then if the offer was accepted and the routing worked well. Uh, they'd issue the contract that would come in the post, um, then you read the contract and what you needed to provide in terms of sound, lights, you know, the rider, the, you know, and that side of things, which you had to organise and go on.

[00:15:30] **Jarek:** And in terms of paying for it, you had a central budget that the Polytechnic gave you? Is that right? Or?

[00:15:34] **Julian Hickman:** No, uh, the students, it's all through the Students Union then.

[00:15:38] **Jarek:** Which is separate, separate organisationally to the university itself or the Polytechnic itself.

[00:15:42] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. Um. Polytechnic didn't. I don't think they had any financial control.

[00:15:48] **Julian Hickman:** The Students Union had their own, uh, specific budgets for, um, for staffing. And obviously they had the bars, which was a very important source of revenue at the time. Uh, for most Students [00:16:00] Unions were making an awful lot of money on the, uh, on the bars. They had a central, uh, drinks deal, uh, with breweries.

[00:16:07] **Julian Hickman:** And, um, you know, they got it quite cheap and that's where they made their money on. And also we're instructed on the entertainment side that we have to break even and use the entertainment to bring people into the bars. Um, you know, generate a bit of revenue so you could run all the rest of the student services on that.

[00:16:26] **Jarek:** So is that where the bulk of the budget would have come from, would have come from bar takings and the like, or did, was there like government funding or anything like that?

[00:16:33] **Julian Hickman:** I think there is, there was a bit of government funding between each student had a certain amount and that went to the Students Union.

[00:16:38] **Julian Hickman:** I think that was, uh, the funding, but in reality you had to make sure the events, that generally broke even over the year, so you could have some loss, but we introduced while we were there a, an entertainment card, so if you bought an entertainment card from the Students Union, um, [00:17:00] you got a pound off every single event, and then any event under a pound was free, uh, and we, we sold about, I think, about a thousand, fifteen hundred of those to, uh, each year, so we raised, so we had a good sized budget to start with, so.

[00:17:18] **Julian Hickman:** So it's almost like a subscription method, which, uh, yeah, which worked quite well in Kingston.

[00:17:24] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah. Makes sense. Um, and yeah, going back to that Smith's example, do you remember, was that one out of the, the, the, the White Book? Do you, do you, do you, do you, do you happen to remember how that happened to be?

[00:17:37] **Julian Hickman:** I can remember there was a, uh, Rough Trade who, uh, the Smiths were signed to at the time. They had a division of Rough Trade, was a Rough Trade, um, uh, agency. So they had their own agency, so most bands signed to Rough Trade went to this one agent, which was Rough Trade as well. Then he'd be on the phone, and I had a pretty good relationship with him.

[00:17:57] **Julian Hickman:** I was booking a lot of Rough Trade bands to come to [00:18:00] Kingston. Um, and also, I ta- I, what I did at Knights Park with our Thursdays is that enabled bands from outside of London to come and play a Kingston show and then they could do a central London show on the Friday or Saturday. So I was quite- um, which wouldn't affect their London shows at all.

[00:18:21] **Julian Hickman:** So I was quite lucky in our geographical position of attracting some very good bands to come here and almost as a warm up for their London show the following day or Saturday. Which happened a lot.

[00:18:33] **Jarek:** I haven't, um, I haven't noted down the year here for the Smiths gig. Was that in your first year? Was that 81?

[00:18:37] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, no, I think Smiths was, uh, at the time of their first single, I think that was probably 82?

[00:18:45] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:18:45] **Julian Hickman:** '82?

[00:18:46] **Jarek:** Yeah, and am I right in thinking that between the booking of the gig and the gig itself, they sort of went big? They, they, they

[00:18:54] **Julian Hickman:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, they became flavour of the month and, uh, well I mean, you know, um, [00:19:00] This Charming Man was the song, and that was getting played everywhere, and by the time they came to us, yeah, it was, nationally and internationally, it was a really big deal.

[00:19:08] **Julian Hickman:** I think for the Kingston show at Knights Park, we had, uh, it was sold out and we had to lock the doors, it was, uh, a lot of people in there. Uh, we had Seymour Stein, who was, uh, who ran WEA, the Warners, in America. He came over to watch the Smiths at that, uh, gig to sign them and looked to taking them onto America, which they, he, I think, which he ended up doing.

[00:19:29] **Julian Hickman:** So he, he was quite a famous industry figure.

[00:19:32] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah. So, yeah. It must have been, yeah, a bit, a bit crazy. Um, when, yeah, the Smiths sort of exploded and you had this, this, this gig on your

[00:19:41] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah.

[00:19:42] **Jarek:** On your agenda. Um, I mean, was it a case of the venue, the, the venue getting swamped on the, on the night?

[00:19:48] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. A, a bit, but, uh. Yeah, uh, well I think we, we always sell tickets in advance as well, so, uh, and then reserved a few on the door. Um, but we weren't really supposed to have, [00:20:00] everyone was meant to really be, uh, student union member, I guess. So you had to show your cards again, so it's quite restrictive. But we were, uh, at the poll- at the Poly, we were quite, uh, lax with letting you know people in.

[00:20:13] **Julian Hickman:** So if you were living in Kingston at the time and you weren't a student, you could normally get in to see our shows. So, yeah.

[00:20:20] **Jarek:** Yeah, and in terms of how these gigs worked, um, how did it work with the Polytechnic itself? Did they show any interest in what you were doing? Did you have to get permission for various things?

[00:20:29] **Jarek:** Or was it just a case of giving free, free reign to do what you want?

[00:20:32] **Julian Hickman:** Pretty much free reign, I mean, yeah. Uh, Knights Park, I say, we had a regular booking. That was our booking for the refectory uh, every Thursday, I think we had it in mid afternoon to set up. Uh, through to, what, 11 o'clock at night, wasn't it?

You know, we couldn't do anything late. Uh, we didn't get any late licenses or anything. So, everything finished at 11 o'clock. So, everywhere.

[00:20:56] **Jarek:** And then in terms of, uh, how the [00:21:00] gigs worked practically, I mean, um, in terms of your tech and all of that, everything provided by the SU, were they students doing all the tech and all that sort of stuff?

[00:21:09] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, generally it's mostly students. If a band came and they needed something a bit more Uh, out of the ordinary that we didn't have, we'd have to go out for an outside, uh, contractor to, uh, to bring in. And there's a couple of local PA companies that we used that are still going. I think, uh, Scan that was in Reading.

[00:21:29] **Julian Hickman:** I used to bring them in occasionally and there's another couple of audio guys over that were like, I can't remember their names, but yeah, they had a few bits of PA that we used to bring in.

[00:21:39] **Jarek:** Did you get any particularly out of the ordinary weird requests from a tech point of view or anything to do with the gigs themselves from any artists?

[00:21:48] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, Not, not particularly, uh, strange. I mean, some of, some of the, uh, I used to book quite a bit of reggae and, uh, and very early hip hop as well. [00:22:00] And those, those, those were great, great fun gigs. I mean, we booked a band called Dillinger, who's Jamaica. Uh, and he played up at, uh, Gypsy Hill in the, uh, Nissen hut.

[00:22:12] **Julian Hickman:** And he turned up with a, uh, a carrier bag full of, uh, the finest Jamaican weed. And before his concert, he proceeded to sell it to anybody off the front of the stage. So we're, and of course you could smoke inside there, so, and you were well out of the way. So that was, uh, I think everyone, everyone really enjoyed that, show.

[00:22:33] **Jarek:** Ha ha! Presumably not one that you were reported back to the central university or Polytechnic about?

[00:22:36] **Julian Hickman:** No. No. Uh, I don't think they knew what was going on, but yeah.

[00:22:43] **Jarek:** And, uh, going back to that, that Smiths gig, how do you remember the night itself going? Did, did, did, did they, did they stun the crowd or they, were they, were they good? Do you remember?

[00:22:51] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, no. They, they were fantastic.

[00:22:52] **Julian Hickman:** I think we, you know, we had to go out and get the, uh, gladioli for Morrissey. 'cause at that time he was, came on stage with, um, uh, [00:23:00] gladioli sticking out of his back pocket. So, and those were thrown into the crowd? It was, it was a thing. He did that for a number of years, actually in the early days.

[00:23:08] **Jarek:** Remind me what gladiola is.

[00:23:10] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, a long, tall

[00:23:11] **Jarek:** flower. Yes, okay, yes. Okay, so you had to go and get that for, for him?

[00:23:17] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:23:18] **Jarek:** Okay. Um, uh, yeah, and tell me about some of the other, uh, individual gigs that, that you maybe remember particularly well.

[00:23:30] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, uh, the Pogues, I mean, I think Rachel has probably got better memories on that, but I think we were very lucky in the early days of the Pogues because we, uh, managed to book them on Thursday for a Knights Park show and it was March the 17th, St. Patrick's Day, which is, you know, years later, you know, there were four or five thousand people would be going out to watch the Pogues, but we just had 200 people in the, uh, Knights

Park bar and the barman, who was there for many years, a [00:24:00] lovely guy called Paddy, obviously being Irish, he got a special Guinness promotion on, and I don't think he's ever, he's never bettered his Guinness sales for on that night, so.

[00:24:12] **Jarek:** Is that Paddy Sweeney?

[00:24:14] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah,

[00:24:14] **Jarek:** yeah, I've got, I've got him on my list to speak to. We've, we've never, um, we've not been able to sort it yet. But yeah, I'm hoping to speak to him. But that's incredible. The Pogues on Christmas Day. I'm sorry, not Christmas Day. St. Patrick's Day. Yeah, yeah, that sort of gig would have, yeah, as you say, a couple of years later would have been like

[00:24:30] **Julian Hickman:** They were go do on to Brixton and yeah, places like that, so that was good.

[00:24:34] **Julian Hickman:** And we had a band called the Southern Death Cult, who, um, uh, eventually became The Cult. Uh, so, and they played in Knights Park, um, uh the Prefab Sprout, I think they were a great, great band at the time. They were one, I think they did Cam, uh, Cambridge Park, uh, that one, that, uh, they were good, and, um.

[00:24:56] **Julian Hickman:** What's it? Lloyd Cole and the Communications, they played Penrhyn Road, [00:25:00] um, that was a great show, they were, just at the time, had their first, they'd become a real big deal and I think because I put the price under a pound for that, so a lot of people could get in for free to watch that one.

[00:25:14] **Jarek:** Right, yeah, I mean, how did pricing work?

[00:25:16] **Jarek:** What would a gig typically?

[00:25:17] **Julian Hickman:** £1.50, £2, something like that, yeah. And I was paying typically 200, 300 for these bands. So, you know, we, you needed a couple of hundred people in generally.

[00:25:29] **Jarek:** Was that like a standard fee that you, that you had for artists?

[00:25:32] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, it's because you have to work out what your capacity is and how many people you can get in.

[00:25:37] **Julian Hickman:** And it's a pretty straightforward economics of, you know, trying to get it to break even. But because we had a lot of the money in already from the subscriptions, from the ENTS cards that we sold, you know, we could have a, we couldn't worry too much. Uh, if we were lost on some gigs and made money on the other ones, so yeah.

[00:25:56] **Jarek:** And were you, uh, were you involved in sort of liaising with the artists directly [00:26:00] yourself? Or were you, so, so, so, I mean, do you, do you have many recollections of what Morrissey was like? Or, um, yeah, what, what, what Shane McGowan was like?

[00:26:09] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, yeah, Shane, Shane obviously was a big drinker. And, uh, he, yeah, he, he, he, I think he was definitely, had too many to go on stage, but that's the way, that's the way he worked.

[00:26:21] **Julian Hickman:** Um, Morrissey, uh, he was, uh, just a bit aloof. Um, the, the rest of the band were, uh, were very friendly and great, but just Morrissey just a little, little bit aloof.

[00:26:37] **Jarek:** Was New Order in your time as well?

[00:26:38] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, I, I put the New Order show on at, uh, Tolworth. Um,

[00:26:43] **Jarek:** That was Tolworth Rec was it? Ah, I see. So I've heard about New Order playing Tolworth Rec, what I didn't realise was that was a Polytechnic

[00:26:49] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah.

[00:26:50] **Jarek:** organised gig.

[00:26:51] **Julian Hickman:** It was.

[00:26:51] **Jarek:** Right. Okay, I spoke to someone who was at that gig and remembers being at that gig, but yeah. Okay, so, um right, so Tolworth Rec was like an, uh, a sort of [00:27:00] external venue that you could use?

[00:27:01] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, we could, we could hire because if, if I couldn't get Penrhyn Road or we thought we were going to do more tickets than Penrhyn Road could hold, which I think 1100, I think it was the c- or 1200, Tolworth Rec could, uh, uh, hold, whereas the Polytechnic main hall was 500.

[00:27:19] **Julian Hickman:** So it was, uh, yeah, I think it was a, it was a Rag ball as well. The New Order. It was Rag Week and it was the end of Rag Week.

[00:27:27] **Jarek:** Ah, okay.

[00:27:28] **Julian Hickman:** And I had a choice between booking New Order or the Eurythmics. I could have booked the Eurythmics and they'd have been number one if I'd booked them. But we had New Order instead.

[00:27:38] **Jarek:** Right. As in they would have been number one in the charts? Oh, I see. They were number one at the time. Oh, Sweet Dreams came out around then? Yeah.

[00:27:46] **Julian Hickman:** Before, when I booked them, it hadn't come out yet. I knew the tourists and I knew Annie Lennox and I was like, oh yeah, okay. But, uh, I went for New Order instead.

[00:27:56] **Julian Hickman:** I couldn't, we weren't really up to running two shows on the same night. [00:28:00] So I had to turn the Eurythmics down.

[00:28:03] **Jarek:** Wow, yeah. I mean, at least New Order were a decent enough alternative. It's not like you plumped for some people who became nobodies. You still had a very good band in New Order though, right?

[00:28:15] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, and to get New Order you had to ring up Rob Gretton, the manager. They didn't have an agent, they did it all themselves. So I was good friends with, at the time in Brixton, the Ace Theatre, which is still there, the promoter of that. We got together so we could offer them a show in Kingston and then one in Brixton over the weekend so New Order came down with their PA and everything and, uh, yeah.

[00:28:43] **Jarek:** And again, do you remember much about the show itself with New Order?

[00:28:46] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, it was, uh, yeah, it was quite- because that was the biggest show that I'd ever run at the time, with 1200 people in there. Uh, and, uh, yeah, the band were great fun, although at the time they [00:29:00] were very they were seen as, uh, they didn't talk much to the press and they had a very cool sort of, um, um, image that, uh, sort of, you know, you couldn't speak to them or anything.

[00:29:12] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, but, um, there were, uh, they played a, a prank that night on a journalist. They had a journalist that was following them, making, uh, a book, a guy called Mark Johnson, American. He was doing a book about, uh, Joy Division and New Order and he was at the show. Uh, and I think they were getting a bit sick of him 'cause he, he kept pestering them.

[00:29:32] **Julian Hickman:** He was always there asking them, you know, asking him, what track did you pay in 1979 at, uh, uh. some Stourbridge working men's club. So he'd come and he'd just been given an advance for the book that he wrote about them and with the advance he'd bought a scooter and he came to the show on the scooter and parked it outside near the trucks and for that show we had a forklift truck.[00:30:00]

[00:30:00] **Julian Hickman:** And so we got the scooter, we lifted it off the floor and put his scooter on the forklift truck, raised it, this was out in the car park near the trucks, and raised it to its maximum high. Then in the middle of the concert, the band wanted us to stop the show and make an announcement from stage that the owner of Scooter registration, da da da da.

[00:30:26] **Julian Hickman:** Can they please go outside? 'cause he's blocking the access to our trucks . And so this, uh, journalist went out, went to the, uh, back of it, and then saw his, uh, scooter that'd been hoarded, hauled, hauled into the middle of the, uh, the air. So, yeah.

[00:30:41] **Jarek:** Wow. Good, good prank. So they did actually stop the show to make that announcement.

[00:30:46] **Julian Hickman:** Oh yeah. There's a, there's a, there's a, it's on, in this quite famous bootleg of the concert. It was a, a tape recording from the desk and you can hear it. It's in the middle. It stops. And, uh, yeah, cause New Order, they were infamous for [00:31:00] not really speaking at their concerts or anything, they just played, played the show, there was no- and, uh, yeah, they were very chatty at this one, there was quite a few little bits and pieces.

[00:31:08] **Jarek:** That's funny. That's funny. Um Did you say it was recorded from the desk? Does that recording still exist?

[00:31:15] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, yeah, I've got a copy of it still.

[00:31:18] **Jarek:** I'll speak to you about that after the interview.

[00:31:20] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, it's, uh when I got to Kingston, there was quite a tradition of, uh, well, there were bootlegs at the time. I mean, you know, you weren't meant to do them, but we'd, uh, for the New Order one, we connected up the, the Polytechnic, uh, DJ decks to the PA system.

[00:31:37] **Julian Hickman:** And then underneath the DJ, uh, the DJ decks, we had an input. So we've got a left and right channel directly from the PA. Um, which, I mean, there's a famous. David Bowie one from Penrhyn Road with, um.

[00:31:50] **Jarek:** There was indeed. We, um, we had it displayed in our exhibition. Um, so we, yeah, we got a copy which bizarrely was German produced.

[00:31:59] **Jarek:** Um, but it was [00:32:00] David Bowie at Kingston Polytechnic. Um, so, yeah. Yeah, the world of bootlegging is fascinating in its own way.

[00:32:07] **Julian Hickman:** New Order turned that around and Factory released it on a retrospect of the live, when they did a live album, it's like a full CD set. So, uh, most of the tracks are on that. So, yeah, I don't feel too bad about it.

[00:32:22] **Jarek:** Um I'm interested in sort of the status of the, I mean these bands are sort of now kind of elite, elite level bands. I'm interested in the status of them when they were playing the Poly. I mean the Smiths we've talked about this, the Smiths we've talked about as being right at the cusp of their, of their fame.

[00:32:39] **Jarek:** How about New Order, where were they at in their careers at this point?

[00:32:42] **Julian Hickman:** I was really lucky with New Order. They just, when I booked the show, they said, Oh, we've got a new single, uh, coming out soon and, uh, uh, we'll send you, send you a copy. So they sent me a copy and it's a white label, white label, New Order on it, just there-

[00:32:57] **Julian Hickman:** and it was Blue Monday. [00:33:00] So that was just released just, uh, around the time of, uh, the show. So, you know, it's just, and really, it, it really exploded for New Order after that. And as they, I went to see them the following day when they, when my friend up at the Ace, he put them on at the Ace, which is their main London gig, and that was amazing.

[00:33:21] **Julian Hickman:** And they were a real cult band and attracted, uh, you know, their shows sold out straight away. And, yeah, and they were doing something different as well, you know, mixing elect- first, one of the first bands to use, uh, computers, um, and track, and as you see, you know, Blue Monday, it's a Great seminal track, yeah.

[00:33:43] **Jarek:** Um, so we're interested in, I think, well, I'm certainly interested from a, from a research point of view of this, of this idea of the student circuit. Um, I mean, it seems like it starts to become a big thing around the sixties and continues all the way through to the late eighties, [00:34:00] maybe early nineties. So in terms of Kingston, we've got this sort of list of. high profile acts that played at the Polytechnic and you know we have Yes and Queen and Elton John and David Bowie, um, and then during your time there's the Smiths and there's New Order, um, and it goes runs up all the way to early 90s that we have Radiohead, which I think Rachel helped to help to organise.

[00:34:22] **Jarek:** Um, my question throughout this has been sort of, why was this a thing? Why was the student circuit a thing and why isn't it a thing now?

[00:34:32] **Julian Hickman:** Um, okay, so it was a thing as I said that that was our own own, our own, only real form of entertainment that you had as students. Uh, I say there was nothing in, in the town of, uh, of Kingston.

[00:34:49] **Julian Hickman:** It was quite quiet. If you wanted to do anything in Kingston, you went up into, it went up into London. Um, so, yeah, so that's, and then. It was quite a [00:35:00] community based thing with the students. You didn't have as many students then as you do now. Um, you know, it's grown exponentially, hasn't it? The amount of students that are going to it.

[00:35:10] **Julian Hickman:** Um, and also there's a lot more sources of entertainment now. At the end of the 90s, you had the rave scene came out, um, and then a lot of people started going to raves, huge raves, and then you have the super clubs and the mega clubs, and that was your audience, and your audience moved away really from, uh, going out in the Students Union, which was probably seen as a bit naff, uh, the Students Union Disco, uh, and when you can go to Cream, Ministry of Sound, or a rave, you know, Sunrise, one of the big raves out there.

[00:35:45] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:35:45] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, and, uh, yeah, times changed, that's all. So,

[00:35:49] **Jarek:** yeah, I mean, um, I spoke to, I can't remember, it might have been Rachel. Um, and she sort of cited that there were just a lack of, there was also just not as many music [00:36:00] venues

[00:36:00] **Julian Hickman:** No.

[00:36:00] **Jarek:** Around, so SU gigs were actually opportunity to see bands where, whereas now there's, you know, hundreds of venues in central London that will put on the same bands.

[00:36:08] **Jarek:** Is that another factor you think within

[00:36:10] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. Yeah. Very. Yeah, very much so. But I think the amount of venues down has gone down because of losing the student circuit. As I say, you know, I was looking after four in Kingston alone, and programming them quite regularly. That's quite, you know, that's quite a bit, and to, to lose that, okay, you've got PRYZYM here, haven't you?

[00:36:29] **Julian Hickman:** And, uh, uh, where's, where's the other closest venues that nowadays...

[00:36:34] **Jarek:** Uh, well it's, I mean PRYZYM is the last sort of big one that we've got left. Um, so we had the Hippodrome, um, but that shut down a couple of years ago. Um, being turned into flats. Yeah, yeah, so we've lost the Hippodrome. Uh, we've actually lost- what's interesting is you mentioned the clubs there, and when I, when me and Thom were at uni, we were 2006 to 2009, there were like [00:37:00] 8 or 9 nightclubs in Kingston, you know, um, and now they've all gone except two.

[00:37:04] **Jarek:** You've got PRYZYM the really big one, and you've got Bacchus the really small one. Um, did you, did you go out in, in Kingston much, uh, outside of the SU? Were there places to go?

[00:37:14] **Julian Hickman:** Pubs. Which closed at 11.

[00:37:16] **Jarek:** Right.

[00:37:17] **Julian Hickman:** So, you know, if we went out, we went into, um, into town, or if somebody had a party.

[00:37:23] **Jarek:** What pubs do you remember?

[00:37:24] **Jarek:** Do you, do, do, do, are there any that spring to mind?

[00:37:27] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, if, if, if you, uh, if you grant had just come in, you had a bit of money, you had The Mitre. Uh.

[00:37:33] **Jarek:** Where was that?

[00:37:34] **Julian Hickman:** It's just, is that the, is that The Mitre? Was that The Gazebo I think it used to be, and the, is it the one next to it as well, The Bishop?

[00:37:42] **Jarek:** The Bishop, yeah, The Bishop in Residence, yeah, yeah.

[00:37:45] **Julian Hickman:** I think The Gazebo was called The Mitre or something when it came. But yeah.

[00:37:49] **Jarek:** Yeah, that might well be true.

[00:37:50] **Julian Hickman:** But there's, there's those, um, then there were one between, there's a, there's a pub, a Young's pub between, uh, Kings, uh, between [00:38:00] Knights Park and Penrhyn Road around the back, used to go in. But generally, um, you know, you had to pay a lot more, uh, for your beer if you went out and you're, you tended to drink in the Students Union bars.

[00:38:10] **Jarek:** Yeah. So. Um, and just going back to that question we were saying about the student circuit, I mean, another way in which things may have changed, and I'd be interested to get your professional perspective on this, but, um, is live gigging now less important to upcoming artists? Is it more about getting yourself on streaming platforms and that sort of thing?

[00:38:28] **Jarek:** Or do you, or is it still very much an important component?

[00:38:30] **Julian Hickman:** Um, I think it's a really important component for bands because that's where they make most of their money on nowadays. And also another factor in the Students Union lack of venues is nowadays it's festivals. It's, the festival season is huge. Uh, they pay good money for the bands generally and the bands can- so it's sort of concentrated now.

[00:38:52] **Julian Hickman:** Um, in the summer, you know, from May through to September, uh, you know, the majority of work is at [00:39:00] festivals, so yeah.

[00:39:03] **Jarek:** And yeah, just in terms of your own, your own story, um, post graduation. Did you stick around in Kingston or did you disappear soon afterwards?

[00:39:10] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, I had a couple of interviews with record labels, um, because I started getting offered jobs when I graduated and coming to the end of my, uh, term there.

[00:39:22] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, I did a lot with Cherry Red Records, uh, we did like a, a showcase, uh, and we had, um, the Marine Girls and Ben Watt who, you know, they, they eventually became Everything but the Girl which I think played the, at Kingston Poly the year just after I'd left. Um, so I had an interview with them and then another guy, a friend of mine, John Hollingsworth, that - who was a graduate at Kingston.

[00:39:50] **Julian Hickman:** He went on to work for WEA and he was the A&R man for, uh, the Associates, Billy McKenzie, which was, uh, uh, amongst other things. Um, [00:40:00] and, uh, he recommended me and I did a couple of interviews, record labels, but then I got a job as an Entertainments Manager at Liverpool University, working for the Guild up there.

[00:40:09] **Jarek:** Ah, okay. So essentially the, uh, yes, the, the job that your boss was doing when you, when you first started as Social Secretary. What was your course again? Remind me?

[00:40:19] **Julian Hickman:** Social Science.

[00:40:20] **Jarek:** Social Science. So, um, Was there a point where, during studies, where you went, Oh, actually music is what I want to do, or did you already know that?

[00:40:30] **Jarek:** Because it seems that you'd, by the time you'd graduated, you'd decided music was where you wanted to go, is that right?

[00:40:35] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, yeah, it's pretty much, I sort of fell into it, because, uh, as I say, people started offering me jobs and saying, going for interviews and things, which I, which I did, so, okay, I can make a career out of this.

[00:40:45] **Julian Hickman:** I mean, I enjoy it. I might as well. And essentially I went to Liverpool doing exactly the same job as I was at Kingston, but I was, um, paid for it and I was on the salary and employee.

[00:40:56] **Jarek:** But presumably you were being offered those jobs because people knew about what you were doing at the, at the [00:41:00] Poly and

[00:41:00] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:41:01] **Julian Hickman:** I had the CV and all the bands that I put on and we had, there's a number of students organisations like through the NUS and through London colleges that you are talking to other social secs and you're always quite close on, um, you know, who you're going to book and who you're looking for. So there's quite a network of, uh, of social secretaries and a lot of us went into that, uh, from my sort of area, uh, era into, you know, entertainment managers.

[00:41:29] **Jarek:** So, um, yeah, and then tell me how your sort of career has evolved since then. You're, you're, you're a tour manager these days. Um, I mean, what, what, what, what was your sort of journey and, and what sort of things do you do now?

[00:41:39] **Julian Hickman:** Um, yeah, after, uh, working in the colleges for most of the, uh, eighties, after Liverpool, I went to Leicester Polytechnic and had a venue there as, again, as an entertainment manager.

[00:41:50] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, but then as you were saying the, the student circuit used to die away, sorry, started to die away and it became much more [00:42:00] difficult to get people in and I ended up Uh, being made redundant at Leicester as a, uh, as a student employee. I think they, they made about half the Students Union were made, um, unemployed and redundant at a stroke.

[00:42:15] **Julian Hickman:** I think it was for the, uh, bizarrely, the Chancellor, at uh, Kingston had moved to Leicester and was given that and the, um, the De Montford University, which it became, took control of the students' union 'cause they thought it was losing too much money on, uh, or having too much power. And then they, uh, pretty much closed most of it down.

[00:42:40] **Julian Hickman:** So after that I was stuck for, uh, a while, but ended up in London and started working for a promoter. Um. Who specialised in, uh, reggae, R& B, hip hop, early hip, early hip hop. Um, so I went on tour with Public Enemy through, through him. [00:43:00] Again, the, the contacts that I'd had at, uh, Kingston. Um, uh, the agents and people that I'd dealt with there, that I was booking, they, they said, Oh, okay, you're, um, if you're at loose end, come and work for us.

[00:43:12] **Julian Hickman:** Then I started, I was stage manager for a while at, um, Brixton, the Academy, which was great in the 80s. That was a real great place to work at. Uh, a lot of fun. Um, and then most of the acts that I was working with, um, at around that time was signed to Island, Island Records, uh, Chris Blackwell. And so Chris Blackwell's office, I was working quite closely with.

[00:43:39] **Julian Hickman:** They said, oh, when you're not on the road, come and work. Uh, for us in the office. So I ended up looking after their touring and their artists for, um, the Chris Blackwell side of Island Records, which was all the African, Jamaican, uh, sorry, Jamaican reggae, um, and, uh, world, you know, at the [00:44:00] time it was called world music, still is, isn't it, really?

[00:44:02] **Julian Hickman:** So I started doing a lot of work with those artists, yeah.

[00:44:06] **Jarek:** Uh, am I right in saying do you, do you work with Steven and the Damon Albarn...

[00:44:10] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:44:10] **Jarek:** That side of things. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about, about that project.

[00:44:13] **Julian Hickman:** Um, so that led on from, from the Isla- I was working with an artist, still working with an artist these days called Baaba Maal, who's a Senegalese uh, singer.

[00:44:21] **Julian Hickman:** Been around for many years. He was the voice of Wakanda on Black Panther. He's been, been on that. So that's where people know him from. Um. So the early days of Africa Express with, uh, the industry all got together and decided we need, we need to sort of promote African music and the African culture, almost as a reaction to, um, Bob Geldof's Live Aid, because he went in the early 2000s, um, and did another version of Live Aid, but didn't invite any African acts to it.

[00:44:54] **Julian Hickman:** So there was uproar, um, and Damon particularly was very vocal in [00:45:00] trying to change that. And, um, yeah, and out of that, uh, grew an organisation called Africa Express. And there I've been responsible for almost all their live shows and events that they do on that, which is, again, great fun.

[00:45:14] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, I can imagine.

[00:45:17] **Jarek:** What years were you on tour with Public Enemy out of interest?

[00:45:20] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, Public Enemy, we did Public Enemy, I think it was about 87, 80, 88.?

[00:45:26] **Jarek:** Oh wow, that's like almost their heyday.

[00:45:28] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, 88, no maybe 89, yeah.

[00:45:31] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:45:32] **Julian Hickman:** Oh yeah.

[00:45:32] **Jarek:** That must have been interesting.

[00:45:33] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah, that was a great tour to be on, yeah.

[00:45:37] **Jarek:** Was that a UK tour or global or?

[00:45:39] **Julian Hickman:** Just UK I did, I looked after them in the UK. I did quite a few early hip hoppers like LL Cool J, Big Daddy Kane and, uh, and stuff.

[00:45:49] **Jarek:** I mean, that must have been really interesting. I mean, did you, um, did you get a sense of that hip hop was going to become as huge as it became?

[00:45:59] **Julian Hickman:** One of [00:46:00] my first shows at Penrhyn Road that I promoted Uh, at the Main Hall was Curtis Blow.

[00:46:06] **Jarek:** Yes.

[00:46:07] **Julian Hickman:** So, Curtis

[00:46:08] **Jarek:** Christmas Rappin'.

[00:46:08] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. So, Curtis was like 82. So, he was one of the first, uh, uh, American hip hop artists to visit the UK.

[00:46:16] **Jarek:** I think he had raps first number one with Christmas Rappin'.

[00:46:19] **Julian Hickman:** He did. He did. So, I'll I'll I'll And that was fantastic. It was, um, Knights Park, um, the students, they didn't tend to come over Penrhyn Road, it wasn't cool enough really for them, they were all over there. But, uh, for Curtis Blow, they filled out the whole of Penrhyn Road of, uh, of the main hall. And I'd say that was one, one of the very first artists, uh, hip hop artists to visit the UK. So really early days, yeah.

[00:46:45] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah, um, yeah, what a fascinating, fascinating time.

[00:46:50] **Jarek:** Tell me a little bit about, um, Cherry Red Records as well, because I've come across this name, but I don't know a great deal about them. And I think they do have some sort of local link, and I know they, they sponsored the, um, [00:47:00] AFC Wimbledon when they played in Kingstonian's ground. Um, what's that, what, what, what, what are Cherry Red Records, uh?

[00:47:06] **Julian Hickman:** Cherry Red Records, were a Uh, big independent, uh, label at the time. Uh, I think there was a, a, a, a Kingston band, Monochrome Set.

[00:47:17] **Jarek:** Yes, I've come across that name, yeah.

[00:47:20] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, I think the lead singer had a, uh, a houseboat moored and lived on it when I was here over the other side of the bridge. Uh, I can't remember his name, but I mean, you can Google it.

[00:47:32] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. I think they were signed to Cherry Red. Um, and as the, the guy I mentioned before, John Hollingsworth, who was a student here, he, uh, worked a bit with Cherry Red as well, and there's a guy, Mike Allway, I think he's still there at Cherry Red, uh, very good A&R guy, um, and they'd signed, uh, uh, Ben Watt, the Marine Girls, they said they had Monochrome Set, things like that, so old, old [00:48:00] 60s acts called like, you know, Kevin Hewick, uh, Hewitt, I think it was.

[00:48:04] **Julian Hickman:** And they came to me and said, Oh, can you put on an extravaganza? So one year we did, um, like three or four, just a night for Cherry Red Records. And as I say, I think that was the night that Ben Watt and Tracey Thorn got together. So that became Everything But The Girl.

[00:48:23] **Jarek:** Yeah, amazing. And when you look back, um, at your time at the Poly and your time as the Social Secretary, um, to what extent do you think that experience framed your, your, your career today?

[00:48:41] **Julian Hickman:** Oh, I mean, it's instrumental, you know, it's, uh, uh, so many, uh, of my compatriots, uh, social secretaries, uh, throughout that time are still in the music industry at the moment. Um, you know, friends of mine and you, uh, uh, running like, uh, and that's Social Sec [00:49:00] from, uh, where was, Jeff, Jeff Ellis, I think he was at Middlesex.

[00:49:04] **Julian Hickman:** He went on to, um, run Dance Factory, so he ran T in the Park, he was responsible for that. He also worked at the Marquee and booked the Marquee for many years, uh, and he was, you know, the same age as mine then. Uh, the guy who was at Liverpool before me and at Leicester Poly, uh, Neil. He's gone on, he now works for Liam Gallagher.

[00:49:27] **Julian Hickman:** He looks after Liam and Noel. Um, then a guy in Manchester, Rob, he now works with Simon Moran at SGM. And Simon Moran was SGM Concerts, who were one of the biggest concert promoters here. He's, uh, he was Sheffield's social secretary. Harvey Goldsmith, he was a social secretary in Harvey Goldsmith.

[00:49:51] **Jarek:** So it seems like You know, this is something that I maybe didn't realise but it seems like there's a, there's a direct connection between the music industry today and that student [00:50:00] circuit of, of, of, of that time.

[00:50:02] **Jarek:** Like the, the people who occupy this world were once of very much involved in this world.

[00:50:06] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. So, uh, another social secretary, David Le-Levy at, uh, my time that um, it's almost exactly the same time as, as, uh, as I was here. He's, uh, one of the world's, uh, leading agents for William Morris. And I work with him still to this day.

[00:50:26] **Julian Hickman:** And he represents a lot of the bands that I go out on tour with for William Morris Endeavour. Who are, um, yeah.

[00:50:32] **Jarek:** And in terms of social connections, are you still in touch with people from the, from the Poly day outside of your, your professional, professional life?

[00:50:39] **Julian Hickman:** Um, yeah. A couple, couple of, couple of the guys sort of via Facebook and things, you know, Facebook's helped a lot to reconnect.

[00:50:44] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah. You,

[00:50:46] **Jarek:** and do, do you make it back to Kingston at all or is this your first time back in a long time?

[00:50:50] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, I think this is my first time- oh, no. Uh, yeah, I've done a couple of, uh, things for Beggars, you know, at the, uh, uh, at the church. We've done a show at the church, and, uh, [00:51:00] yeah, a couple of things.

[00:51:00] **Jarek:** So what artist, what artist was that out of interest?

[00:51:02] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, that was, uh, Rick Astley.

[00:51:04] **Jarek:** Ah, right, okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So Banquet Records as it's, as it's known these days.

[00:51:08] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, yeah,

[00:51:08] **Jarek:** yeah, yeah. Um, oh, that's interesting. Yeah. Yeah, actually, I mean. I know you were talking about this off air with Thom, um, but it's interesting how Banquet, the student circuit no longer exists, but actually Banquet seemed capable of attracting these enormous acts like The Who and Stormzy.

[00:51:30] **Jarek:** Why is that? Why, well, you know, I'd love to get Jon to explain himself, but we struggle to get Jon in front of us. Why, um, yeah, what, what, from your knowledge as a tour manager, why, why are Banquet able to, to, to attract this high, you know, really high level of act?

[00:51:46] **Julian Hickman:** And I work quite closely with the record labels as well.

[00:51:49] **Julian Hickman:** And it's really, um, when you have a release and chart positions are important, uh, Banquet's, uh, physical, [00:52:00] um, sales still count for a lot in the charts. And, uh, if, if- Banquet almost guarantee uh, a certain amount of CDs that will sell if you come and do their, um, their concert. I, I think you, you, uh, get a CD or something when you get the ticket, exactly.

[00:52:17] **Julian Hickman:** And so, yeah, and it's, you know, in that week and you're doing promo anyway. So the artist will typically, you know, do a Chris Evans on Virgin, they'll do Radio 2, Banquet it's very much part of the record labels seeing it as a part of the promotional circuit for um, uh, as part of a release, a new release.

[00:52:36] **Julian Hickman:** So it only generally happens for new releases, doesn't it? So, and that's when Jon has done very well at saying, uh, at providing that sort of in store experience to it. I think it's, it's a b- he does it at a better level than Rough Trade do it. Rough Trade East have got just basically a stage in your, in the shop where you go in and pile in.

[00:52:57] **Julian Hickman:** But, uh, uh, yeah, they obviously [00:53:00] Banquet don't have the space in the shop to do it. So they've taken it to another level.

[00:53:03] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah. No, it's phenomenal. I mean, the amount of times I go past the shop and there's a queue going round the corner because they've got someone. Ed Sheeran was here a couple of weeks ago, I think.

[00:53:12] **Jarek:** Um, so, yeah, yeah, no, it's, uh, it's really, yeah, it's phenomenal what he does. But, um, really interesting, your answer, because I hadn't connected it to chart positions and that sort of thing, so.

[00:53:22] **Julian Hickman:** Y'know, scratch the surf, that's what it's all about.

[00:53:25] **Jarek:** Yeah. Um, just before we wrap up, um, I just thought we'd Reflect a little bit about the more wider topic of, yeah, the wider topic of, uh, live music in, uh, in the UK, um, and the loss of, loss of venues, loss of live music venues.

[00:53:42] **Jarek:** Um, I mean, how do you reflect on, on that overall topic? Um, I mean, there's a lot of talk about we are losing live music venues, um. Do you recognise that in your work, and is it a problem for you? Do you think there are solutions, or do you think it's just, uh, just how [00:54:00] things are evolving?

[00:54:00] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, it's difficult, a bit difficult for, for me to, uh, to experience because I've, you know, those grassroots venues, they tend to do it without tour managers.

[00:54:10] **Julian Hickman:** So it's not some, not some places that I tend to, to go to. But I think, I believe a lot of the problems with grassroots venues is generally with neighbours and local residents, noise, uh, which has become a problem. Uh, I think, you know, people moving in and gentrification of areas that you're moving into.

[00:54:32] **Julian Hickman:** Uh, people with a bit more money, I think, and they buy somewhere near to a venue that tends to be in a, uh, a livelier part of town and they, they object to licenses and I think that has been a big impact on it. So unless you can fight against that and mitigate those circumstances on that grassroots and, and also the industry in my day, it was very much- not amateur uh, but a lot of [00:55:00] entrepreneurs, uh, and sole, you know, just small independent companies working like the record labels were, the promoters were, but nowadays it's gone very, very corporate. Um, so you've had American multinationals, Live Nation, uh, as I said, William Morris, uh, taking over, uh, and making that, you know, huge multi billion pound business, which it is with, um, you know, the stadium tours and, and things on that. So yeah, because whereas in my day when I was go- you know, for a summer, for a summer job at Kingston, when I didn't have any gigs, I, uh, promoted shows independently and I rented Surbiton Assembly Rooms and I used to put a few shows on there outside of the, uh, the college.

[00:55:47] **Julian Hickman:** So, uh, I think we had things like, uh, The Fall playing there, uh, birthday party. Uh, who's that, a band called the Enid, yeah.

[00:55:56] **Jarek:** I didn't realise you did stuff at the Assembly Rooms as well. I mean, just, just, just [00:56:00] quickly, I mean, what do you remember about that venue? Because we know that people have gone to lots of different gigs there and there were some interesting acts that have played there.

[00:56:06] **Jarek:** I mean, what do you, what do you remember about the Assembly Rooms?

[00:56:08] **Julian Hickman:** Um, yeah, it's, it's, it's just, uh, you know, it's, again, church hall, I quite liked it as a venue. It's, uh, good place to see bands, better than the Penrhyn Road main hall, uh, but I, you know, I couldn't use, I couldn't really use that in term time, but outside of that during the summer I could put a few, uh, a few gigs on and make a bit of money, or try to make a bit of money.

[00:56:30] **Julian Hickman:** I think I ended up losing money though on the, over the summer.

[00:56:34] **Jarek:** Yeah, and then, yeah, and I'll just pick it up on that, um, venue closure question. Um, do you think just generally for young upcoming artists. It's now a tougher landscape to sort of, uh, apply your trade and showcase your work.

[00:56:47] **Julian Hickman:** Um, I think, uh, I think it's easier with the internet because I mean, everything's just a click away.

[00:56:53] **Julian Hickman:** So if you can get traction and you get your marketing right, you can get, you can certainly get your music out. [00:57:00] To, um, uh, to everyone. But, you know, the, the rewards from that and streaming is so minuscule. That's why live is still very important for a lot of the artists. Cause, um, you know, that's their main bulk of income is coming from live shows.

[00:57:17] **Julian Hickman:** And, you know, people paying festivals or as a hard ticket. A hard ticket is where you're actually paying for that particular artist to go to a show.

[00:57:26] **Jarek:** Great, um, I think that covers most of what I had to ask. Do you have anything that you think is worth asking or anything come to mind? No particularly,

[00:57:34] **Mrudula:** but I found it really interesting about how you spoke about the Kingston School of Art bar.

[00:57:39] **Jarek:** The Knights Park bar.

[00:57:41] **Mrudula:** I graduated from KSA like last year, so it's just interesting to hear.

[00:57:46] **Jarek:** Can you imagine seeing huge bands on in that, uh, in that bar?

[00:57:50] **Julian Hickman:** No, no, they weren't in the bar, they were in the refectory

[00:57:52] **Jarek:** yes, right.

[00:57:53] **Mrudula:** Oh where was that?,

[00:57:54] **Julian Hickman:** the refectory is just outside the bar, so you come out the bar, turn right, then through the big double [00:58:00] doors, and then it's all one glass.

[00:58:02] **Julian Hickman:** And then overlooking the river, there's a few seats outside. And then at the other end of that little hall there, we put a temporary stage. We had the dressing rooms under the back room and just underneath the stairs on that side. I went up to the main hall and looked in the main hall.

[00:58:17] **Jarek:** Oh what, just now?

[00:58:18] **Julian Hickman:** Yeah, no, um, last time I was here.

[00:58:20] **Jarek:** Right, right, right, yeah.

[00:58:21] **Julian Hickman:** Ten years ago.

[00:58:22] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:58:22] **Julian Hickman:** I think there's, you can see bits and pieces on, on there like of, uh, way, but, you know, it's changed a lot. There's the stage is still there, but I think it's all covered up. And

[00:58:32] **Jarek:** I've, I have found it impossible to get any photos from this, from this time, like of any of the gigs at the Poly, whether it's Knights Park, whether it's, do you know who I can speak to?

[00:58:40] **Julian Hickman:** I've got, I've got three or four photographs of the Marine Girls. I found at home and I've downloaded them on my computer.