

# Gary Mitchell's Previous Life.

Page last updated 13<sup>th</sup> July 2024

This page is a summary of Gary's creative career *before* becoming a novelist in 1996. *N.B. some items in select bibliographies are - pending ongoing consultation with former collaborators - currently commercially unavailable.*

See '*Shop*' for items from this era that have thus far been re-released.

The small print.

The following concorded, unpublished and lavishly illustrated complete biobibliographies cover the 'Previous Life.

*'Drunk Rock'* (1958-1983 from a Drunkards perspective), *'Drunk Rock II'* 1984-1988 from a Drunkards perspective, plus addenda to the earlier volume), *'Drunk Rock III - The Final Solution'* 1989-1990 from a Drunkards perspective, plus addenda to earlier volumes *and* a posthumous Drunkards section covering 1991-1993).

By 1990 Gary was the only former Drunkard still formally active, so *'Sein Kampf'* covers his career 1991-1995 and the Drunkards 'estate' from 1994-1995 - our Gazza being designated 'keeper of the flame'. *'Sein Kampf II'* covers Gary's career / the Drunkards 'estate' 1996-2000. Both volumes contain addenda for earlier periods too.

This website *is* the biobibliography for 2001 plus, so there is a slight overlap. Ok? Good, glad that's clear...

---

## EARLY LIFE

*DATES: 1958-1976*



*STORY:* Gary was born in North London on 31/12/1958. Moving first to Cookham in Berkshire, then to Henley-In-Arden, Warwickshire, he lived the 'Swinging Sixties' by quickly developing the love of

history, 'adventure gaming', football, rock and roll and sci-fi that was to later characterise his work. Inspired by The Beatles' example the mould was set.

In 1970, starting at Henley-In-Arden High School and - encouraged by his teachers and further inspired by Monty Python - Gary discovered a previously hidden talent for acting and writing humour, a gift unfocused until age 17 when he became 'base player' in The Drunkards'...

And **THIS** is where the adventure really begins...

---

## THE DRUNKARDS

**PERSONNEL:** (LEFT TO RIGHT) Andy Bachelor, Graham King, Gary Mitchell, Harry Holland.

**DATES:** 1976-1980, 1985-1989ish

**STORY:** Four Warwickshire sixth-formers with time to kill and a social life to build formed this legendary comedy group in 1976. Based around their ensemble performance and recording of (mainly) Mitchell's 'angry young man' sketches, insightful proficiency was quickly established.



From 1978 and under Holland's laconic guidance, dispersed as they were around the UK in higher education and employment, they graduated to more scholarly recording-free work from *Autobiography* onwards. The epic *Somewhere In Britain* gained a priceless foothold in BBC Radio comedy that was criminally unexploited by a group heading for minor acrimony by 1980.



The Drunkards re-convened as a sideline in 1985 - even recording again in '87 - only to call it a day when safely domesticated.

At times the combination of Mitchell's composition, Holland's range of character voices and King's charisma could be awesome, whilst less appreciated is Bachelor's thought-provoking poetry.

**KEY WORKS:**

**TEXTS:** *Autobiography* (1978), *Somewhere In Britain* (1979), *After The War is Over* (1980), 'Pub Crawl VI - Excalibur - The Last Voyage' (1988)

**RECORDINGS:** *Recorded Highlights* (1978), *Beyond a Joke* (1987), *Live And Posthumous* (1993)

**SHOWS:** *Live Piss-Up In Stratford* (1977)

**BROADCASTS:** *Week Ending* (BBC, 1980)

**Coda:** Graham (ironically) used to run a pub back in Warwickshire, specialising in fine ales and live music. Andy has trained for ordination by the Church of England and Harry is... well, possibly the nicest bloke in the universe. See *'The Drunkards'* page for the 'saloon's' current activity (it's unofficially a 'saloon' because it's not really big enough to be an 'estate' - boom, boom!)

---

## THE SO-CALLED PROGRAMME

**PERSONNEL:** Mat Coward, Gary Mitchell.

**DATES:** 1980-1981



**STORY:** A brief but crucial learning curve. Mat and Gary met at library school and began writing for BBC Radio. Mat went onto achieve great things for that august institution, Gary to self-driven anarchy...



**KEY WORKS:**

**TEXTS:** *The So-Called Second Attempt To Crack The Commercial Coconut* (1980), *The Long Overdue* (1980), *It Ain't Half The Oval Office Mum!* (1981)

**BROADCASTS:** *The Jason Explanation* (BBC, 1981)

Mat is now a much more famous writer than Gary and his website is <http://www.matcoward.com>. His very funny book about writing '*Success... And How To Avoid It*' (TTA Press, 2004), contains anecdotes on the duo's time together, and is worth buying for anyone interested in the writing disease.

---

## THE BIT IN THE MIDDLE



**STORY:** Between 1981 to 1985 Gary was involved in many loose collaborations, with both fellow ex- Drunkards and like-minded individuals. This period also marked the start of his romance with Julia Smith (they married in 1986), and his loose partnership with Louis Victor. It's a long yarn but Louis and Gary's *The Royals* - the story of an exiled East European Royal Family living in North London suburbia - came within an ace of being piloted as a BBC Radio sit-com.

**KEY WORKS:**

**TEXTS:** *ARNOS GROVE Live At The Stratford Odeon* (1981) MITCHELL & VICTOR *Funny Game Politics* (1982), *The Royals* (1985 & 1987)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Extracting The Urine* (1983)

**RECORDINGS:** *THE INCURABLE ROMANTICS* (Line-up Mitchell, Smith, Piers Woolston) *20,000 Words Before Midnight* (1983)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Librarians In Space* (1982), *Warlords Of Stoke Newington* (1983)

---

## RADIO BOSCOMBE

**MAIN PERSONNEL:** Nick Caulkin, Linda Everett, Anne Lydon, Morgan McGinnis, Gary Mitchell, Jonathan Russell, Julia Smith.

**DATES:** 1985-1989, 1993-1996, inactive 1996-2007



**STORY:** Moving to Bournemouth Mitchell and Smith set about forming a new group. The first settled line-up was Everett, Mitchell, Smith and Michael Stead. Right from the start it was apparent Radio Boscombe was going to be different as it harnessed (along with comedy) Smith and Everett's considerable musical talents.

After Mike left in 1986 the group continued as a trio (EVERETT CENTRE) before

bringing Nick Caulkin on-board in 1988, a development that also saw their progression to multi-track recording. When Nick left in early '89 the group made the excellent all-songs parody album *The Last Hurrah*, then disbanded. The trio recommenced in 1993 and continued to record until Linda left in 1995; replaced by American Morgan McGinnis. Later that year Julia left to pursue motherhood and Gary recruited award-winning poetess and compere Anne Lydon, whom he had worked with in 'Mickey Taping' (see below). Jester and stand-up veteran Jonathan Russell was quickly added and the quartet (CLOCKWISE, RUSSELL, LYDON, MITCHELL, MCGINNIS) cut the (relatively) huge selling *Do Not Adjust Your Brain* and appeared on BBC Radio. Solo careers now took precedence, Radio Boscombe going inactive.



### KEY WORKS:

**RECORDINGS:** *Four People And a Bucket Of Water* (1986), *Who's That Fish* (1988), *Postman Pat Always Rings Twice* (1988), *The Last Hurrah* (1989), *Recycling* (1993), *Bat Out Of Hull/Bat Out Of Hull Too* (1994), *Invasion Of The Geography Teachers From Mars* (1995), *Do Not Adjust Your Brain* (1996), (STILL AVAILABLE AS A SPECIAL EDITION - see 'Shop'), *Boscombe At The Beeb* (1997).

**BROADCASTS:** *The David White Show* (BBC, 1996)

---

## MICKEY TAPING



**MAIN PERSONNEL:** Anne Lydon, Gary Mitchell, Nick R. Thomas.

**DATES:** 1992-1994

**STORY:** Meeting through an ad in the local paper BBC Radio regular Nick and poetess Anne teamed up with Gary to instant but unsustainable success with topical review tape and backlog of unreleased recordings.

**KEY WORKS:**

**RECORDINGS:** 1992 - *How Was It For You?* (1992)

Gary and Anne were later in a line-up of 'Radio Boscombe' (see above). Nick is sadly no longer with us.

---

## OTHER PROJECTS

### GARY SOLO

**TEXTS:** *The Day Of The Trifles* (1981), *All My Own Work* (1981),

**PUBLICATIONS:** *The Comedy Magazine* (1980's)



**PERFORMANCES:** Stand-up in London, Ringwood and Tunbridge Wells 1997-1999, videoed as *Gary Mitchell - Stand-Up Routine No. 1A* (1997)

**OTHER COLLABORATIONS**

**TEXTS:**

**MITCHELL, CAULKIN & SEWARD** *Crossroads - The Next Generation* (1992),

**RECORDINGS:**

**MITCHELL & CAULKIN** *What We Did On Our Holidays* (1987)

**MITCHELL & SMITH** *Back From The USSR* (1992)

---