

## Notes for Podcast 6

'Legend of the Kingfisher' by Gygafo recorded 1972, and 'Ode' by Blue Epitaph 1973

### 'Legend of the Kingfisher' by Gygafo 1972

Gygafo were a well-known band in the Leeds area, and were looking for a contract with a record company. They worked together well as a band, with great musicianship, and the songs were dynamic and carefully thought out. Pete Taylor describes Charlie Speed and Eddie Stringer as having 'legendary status.' Eddie wrote many of the songs and played keyboards. Charlie played lead guitar and later had his own band and continued to play in the area for many years. Mike worked with them to produce tracks that had that Holyground 'touch'. It was not released as a vinyl album until 1990 and as a CD until 1992.

Having contacted Eddie in 2023, it was good to hear that he had good memories of recording at Cass Yard

Eddie's memory of writing 'Waiting for the Rain':

*It was my music and lyrics and vocal..written on your kitchen table and I have found the original lyric written on Holyground paper which I attach. There is a line where I was trying to be clever where I sang.."I feel depression..Low" and it was supposed to be an analogy between emotion and weather but my meteorological knowledge was so poor I didn't know if the Rain came with High or Low atmospheric pressure and nobody else around was any wiser..I took a punt on Low because it sat better with the music. Luckily it was right.*

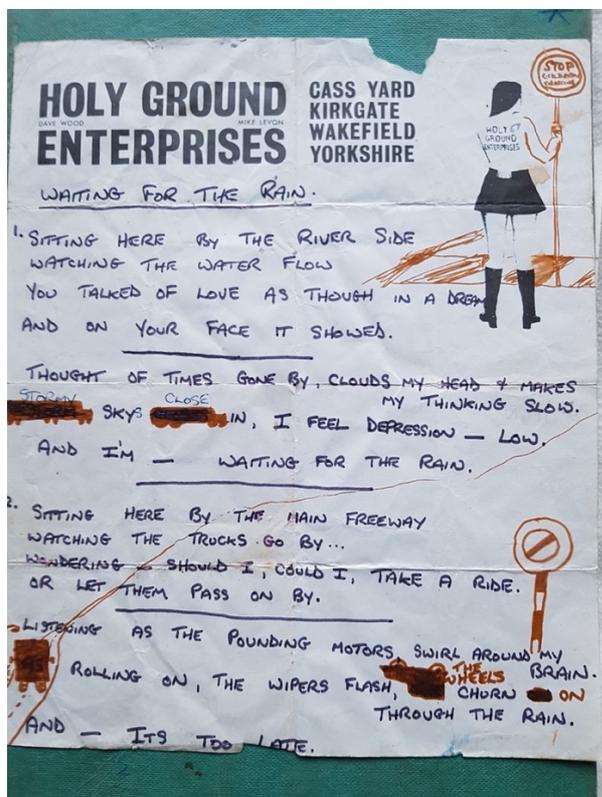


Image courtesy of Eddie Stringer

**More information:** [Legend of the Kingfisher](#)

### **'Ode' by Blue Epitaph 1973**

Pete Howells and Jim Gordon who were 'Blue Epitaph' were also generous with their memories of recording at Holyground when we contacted them. Pete Howells wrote all the songs on the album, and Mike worked with them to produce an interesting and unique album. Although they paid to record, it was never the commercial aspect that was important to Mike - as Pete and Jim say, it was for the love of the music. Mike always worked to produce the best sound possible, in this case replacing the drums with what he regarded as a better set.

**More information:** [Ode](#)

**Our thanks go to Pete Howells and Jim Gordon for these memories:**

*I'm fairly certain we recorded this album over a couple of weekends in November 1973, though it could've been 72. The memory dims. Cass Yard was thick with ice on the first Saturday of our recording and our bass player skidded into the yard in his Bubble car; his bass and huge speaker probably doubling the weight. We helped Paul Todd, the drummer, with his kit and carried it up the narrow stairs to the little studio with its upright piano and the wall covered with egg-boxes and mattresses. All studios were like that then. Mike got a different kit in after complaining that Paul's sounded like wet cardboard boxes.*

*It was a huge learning curve for us (Jim Gordon and Pete Howells). We were young and full of enthusiasm and felt fully confident in Mike's ability to get the best from us.*

*Here's our memories of one particular track. **'I never met you'** - The song was based on a pretty, ragtime kind of tune - fashionable at the time. We wanted to give it a musical-hall feel, the sort of thing that Flanders and Swan might've done to contrast with an underlying darkness in the lyrics. There is a call and response between the two protagonist that are being portrayed - the two ex-lovers. It's about the harsh reality at the end of a relationship. One wants to deny that it ever happened. The other follows suit. In that respect they remain entwined. This might sound highfalutin but it's really just a fun take on a sad and familiar story. It was meant to suggest a light-hearted reflection on the split up but underneath it there is a sense of deep regret at the inevitability of the breakup, summed up in the last two lines*

*"You said you loved me and I said I loved you,  
but now you're without me and I'm without you."*

*There are only the two guitars and a metronome on this track until the very end where we go a little more surreal. Mike suggested including a recording he had made earlier of Howard Haswell-Bailey's Welsh chickens. (I hope I've got the name right. I'm sure you will know Shirley.) We loved that suggestion.*

*Mike's favourite lines of the song were,  
"Sometimes I just look through,  
the glass I had painted blue,"*

*It made him laugh every time, and it does me now, because he heard it as, 'Sometimes I just look through the glass-eye...' it works either way I suppose.*

*We laid the guitar tracks down to the metronome click, which we later faded in and out, and then did the vocals, warts and all, in one take. The album was later categorised as psychedelic folk music and this of course was recorded at the first independent record company in the UK. We were retrospective pioneers in the land of make-believe. It was fun and it was hard work. The recording of the whole album took about three and a half days. The mixing, the sound effects the later additions and tinkering about were mainly done by Mike. We were doing this sort of stuff simply because we could, because we believed in it and we thought we were pushing boundaries and maybe we were, just a little.*

*The whole project cost about £100 which is laughable retrospectively. We were all doing it for the love of the thing really, all of us including the inimitable Mike Levon. One of those discs, in good condition is worth six times that now! We've got three between us and that's partly why we are both so incredibly rich today.*

*We certainly learned a lot and the experience definitely gave us confidence with subsequent recordings. We've worked in much more sophisticated studios since but there has never been that same magic, that rawness, or the naivety and honesty that was part of the fabric of the Cass Yard studio. You can't manufacture that. We both owe a whole lot to Mike for his patience and belief in doing something different and his smiley encouragement throughout.*