

# **ELECTRIC RENTBOOK**

**Kirsty MacColl Homage  
Issue 4 - August 2000**



**FREE - FOURTH ISSUE**



**W**ell, here we are again, issue four of Electric Rentbook. The year just seems to be flying by and haven't we had one heck of a gorgeous summer? I've been lazying around in my garden, Pimm's in one hand and ice cream in the other. Those of you outside the UK will not, at this point, realise that I'm being sarcastic!

In this issue you are onto a winner, we've got another competition with not one but two chances to be the owner of a promo copy of *England 2 Columbia 0* - a single which will now not be commercially released - and its signed by Kirsty as well! So, good luck to those of you who enter and even if you don't win you can console yourself with the freebie within the pages of this issue. Everybody gets an **"I love Kirsty MacColl"** window sticker with this issue. Stick it in a prominent position - where the sun does shine!

Hope that you enjoy the current issue and see you back here again within the next six weeks, enjoy the rest of the summer, apart from our friends in the southern hemisphere who will be enjoying the rest of the winter!

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING THEN...

## **Kirsty MacColl - Sunday Times travel correspondent...**

**T**he Sunday Times newspaper carried a feature on Kirsty's holiday memories in their travel section on Sunday 11th June.

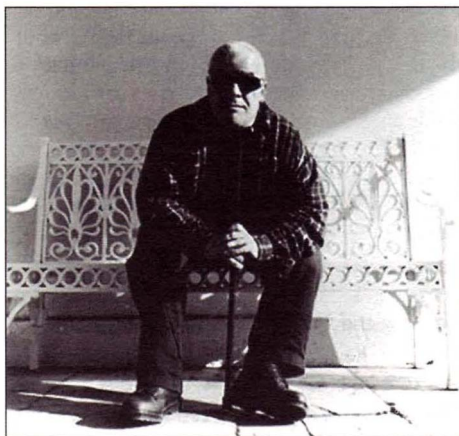
She recalled the first holiday she could remember, going to Poland at the tender age of four. Staying on a farm with her mother and brother, she gave her mother cause to worry on the visit; suffering an asthma attack and cutting her head open while they were there.

Most of Kirsty's childhood holidays were spent at the British seaside in those traditional hotels where you sleep between nylon sheets and breakfast is served between 7 and 7.30am. She remembered going on a day trip to France with her school and becoming very excited because their coach followed a gold Rolls Royce all the way to the ferry. Recognising the guy from the luxury car on the deck of the ferry Kirsty and her school chums approached the gentleman and enquired as to how he had such a fabulous vehicle. He told them his name was Jimmy Webb and he was an American songwriter (he had written huge hits including *By The Time I Get To Phoenix*). When Kirsty told him that her father was a songwriter too and he'd written *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*, he looked at her as if to say, "You sad child, what a terrible lie."

Kirsty's other holiday memories included; being drunk in charge of a bicycle in Formentera, visiting Cuba for the first time in 1992, travelling around Brazil, spending some time in Seville last summer and staying at One Devonshire Gardens in Glasgow - a favourite hotel where she says she always feels completely pampered. *"Although it's really plush, the staff are young*

*and don't judge you just because you're not dressed head to foot in designer gear."*

## **The Ian Dury Tribute Concert**



**K**irsty was one of the guest performers at the Ian Dury Tribute Concert, held on Friday 16th June at Brixton Academy. Backed by the Blockheads, she performed *Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick* - Ian Dury and the Blockheads classic number one single from 1979.

Other guest performers included Wilko Johnson, Wreckless Eric, Tom Robinson, Glen Matlock, Kathy Burke and Robbie Williams.

I saw a review of this concert in *Melody Maker* and, true to form, they failed completely to mention Kirsty's appearance and being the mainstream music magazine that they are, they thought it more important to suck-up to fat boy Williams. *Mojo* magazine gave the concert a more comprehensive review and mentioned Kirsty doing a rather 'shaky' version of the song. I presume this to mean a rather nervous rendition and not anything to do with it sounding rather like Shaking Stevens - which of course, it didn't!



## **Kirsty MacColl - appearing on a television screen near you...**

**D**igital television music channel VH-1 were at the Fleadh festival and although they didn't show the event live, they showed selected highlights the following weekend on the 'Something For The Weekend' show.

Julia Carling and Gideon Coe interviewed Kirsty and this was shown on the weekend of 16th/17th June. Further extended highlights of the festival were shown on July 8th and this included three songs from Kirsty's set - *In These Shoes?*, *England 2 Columbia 0* and *Free World*. The two hour programme also included performances and interviews with Prefab Sprout, The Undertones and The Corrs.

Kirsty also appeared, briefly, on BBC Choice programme 'Hotlinks' on July 12th. Also filmed at the Fleadh, she was asked what essential item was required to survive the festivals. See replied that it was "toilet paper"

The piece was a light-hearted look at surviving the festival season, Suzanne Vega and The Undertones were also asked for their festival survival tips. It was nice to see Kirsty featured, but to be honest the whole feature was too short and had you have blinked you'd have missed Kirsty's appearance.

## **Online interview...**

**T**hose of you who have access to the internet might like to key in <http://www.neilchase.com/realaudio/kirsty.ram> where you can listen to an interview Kirsty gave to Neil Chase in Hong Kong. A first class 25 minute interview which is definitely worth a listen.

## **Festival appearance...**

**K**irsty and her band will be playing the *Lokerse Feesten* at Lokeren, Belgium, on Sunday 6th August. Lokeren is situated inbetween Ghent and Antwerp. The festival runs for 10 days (4th - 13th August) and other bands appearing include Aswad, Marc Almond, Bob Geldof and Zap Mama.

Kirsty shall be on stage at 10.00pm, just before a Dutch band called The Nits perform at midnight.

## **It's good to talk . . .**

**W**asn't it Bob Hoskins who used to say those words to a duck and a pig in the old British Telecom adverts?

Anyways, Kirsty MacColl fans can have a good old natter via e-mail by signing up to Ross McMichael's discussion group.

To become part of the group visit <http://www.onelist.com/group/kirstymaccoll> and sign up. There is no subscription fee and once part of the group you can leave messages and exchange chat with fellow Kirsty fanatics.

Along with Alan Officer's *Freeworld* website (featured in issue three of *Electric Rentbook*), its a good source of finding out the latest Kirsty news and other fans views.

At the time of writing Ross' list had 58 members, many from the United States, so its a good source to have a discussion and many of the members are willing to tape other members rarer Kirsty releases such as the *Desperate Character* album.

It's well worth joining up and once you start leaving and reading messages the long summer evenings just fly by!

## **Ask Kirsty MacColl the questions you've always wanted to ask her.**

I shall be interviewing Kirsty again for issue 6 of *Electric Rentbook* and I want you, *the Electric Tenants*, to send me your questions for me to put to Kirsty.

Send your questions to the usual address or e-mail me your question.

Include your name and address and your question, and Kirsty's answer will appear in the issue after next. *Proposals of marriage will not be accepted! (or perhaps they will - who knows?)*

# GIG REVIEW

## FLEADH FESTIVAL - 10/6/2000

***I am indebted to Electric Tenant Ross McMichael of Slough for the following review of Kirsty's appearance at the Fleadh Festival***

**F**resh from her recent UK tour, Kirsty played the London Fleadh at Finsbury Park, North London on Saturday 10th June. She came onto the main stage at about 17:15 and played for a whole hour.

The sun was beaming down the whole afternoon and I really can't describe how fitting it was to have Kirsty performing in this huge park in the middle of London on a beautiful summers day.

She started her set with *Us Amazonians* followed by *Nao Esperando* and *Here Comes That Man Again*. We were also treated to *In These Shoes?*, *England 2 Columbia 0* and *Treachery* from Tropical Brainstorm and oldies *Freeworld*, *A New England*, *My Affair*, *Days* with a rousing *Chipshop* for the finale.

Kirsty didn't do much talking but she did remind us about the Greenpeace campaign going on in the park to stop dumping rubbish in the Irish Sea. *In These Shoes?* was introduced as "a song about dodgy footwear!" For *England 2 Columbia 0* we learnt that the song was "written during the last World Cup and has nothing to do with football, some of you may be relieved to hear." It still received a cheer though. Hopefully V2 will eventually release this as a single (**apparently not, but you can win a signed promo copy in this issue - Ed.**) as the crowd really seemed to enjoy it.

I reckon the record stores will be shifting a few more copies of Tropical Brainstorm on the back of this performance. She really won the crowd over with the new stuff, everyone was ready for a dance in the sunshine! I've no idea how many people were there - at least 10,000 I would've thought - not bad promotion is it?

I also saw Billy Bragg who headlined the small stage at the end of the night.

Not really a fan of his but I was pleasantly surprised with his performance. I hoped Kirsty might have made an improptu

appearance but it wasn't to be. Heard *A New England* for the second time that day! Billy announced it, rather territorily, as "my song!"

Prefab Sprout were very good, though Paddy McAloon needs to lose the facial hair. Suzanne Vega was very dull, really could've done with a band behind her. The songs just didn't hold up on acoustic guitar.

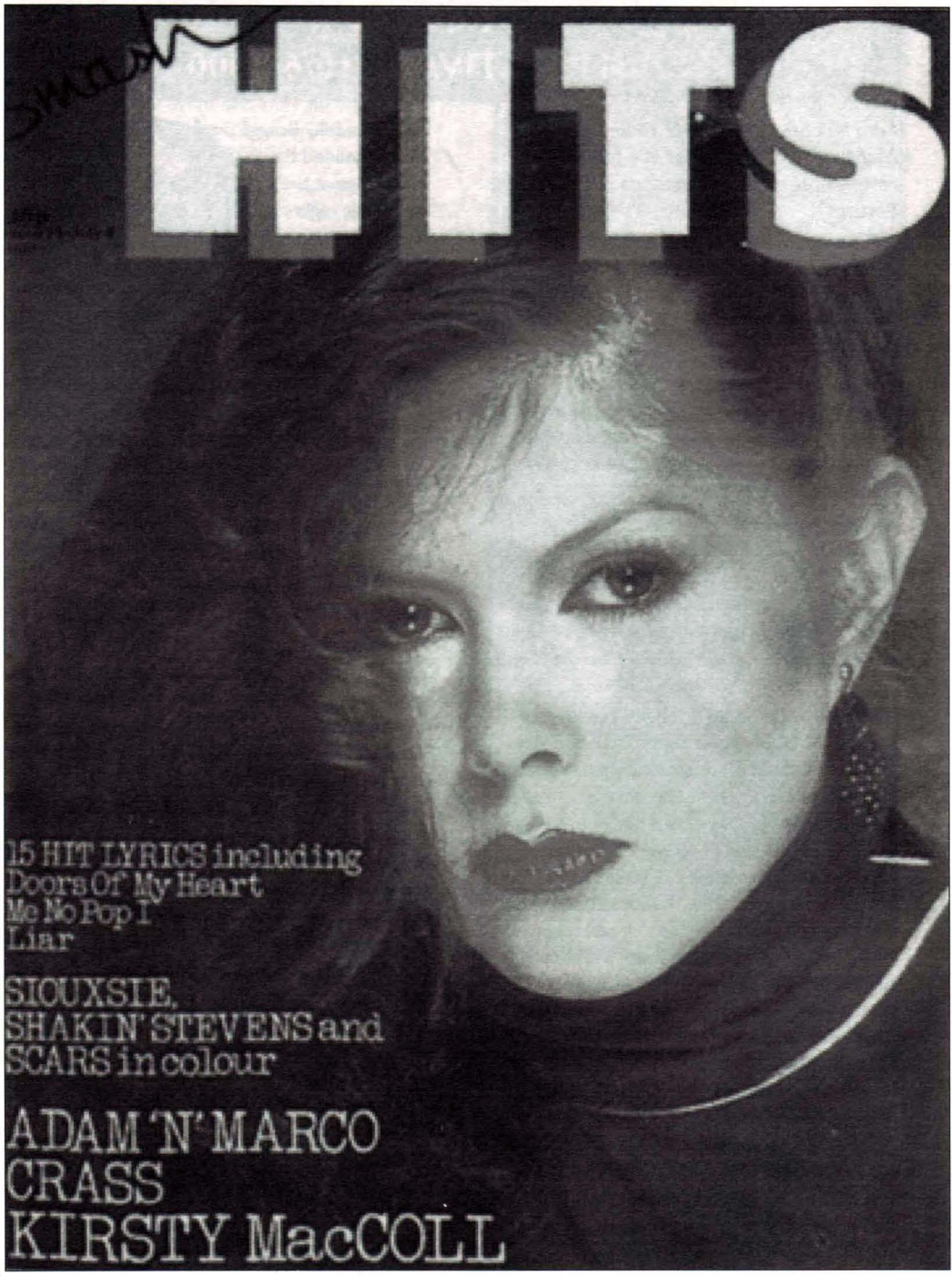
The Undertones were okay, seemed a bit karaokeish without Feargal Sharkey though. The Corrs . . . well . . . opted for Mr Bragg instead!

Before Kirsty came on stage, three of her songs were played over the PA; a dance mix of *Shoes*, a new dance re-mix of *Us Amazonians* and a completely new song, well, certainly new to me. If anyone else was there I would love to know if you recognised this song. It didn't sound like a Tropical Brainstorm out take or a b-side. (**It was a song called Xodo, a cover of a brazilian tune, which is currently unavailable but may turn up as a b-side in future - Ed.**).

All-in-all, it was a wonderful day. When I first heard Tropical Brainstorm, I thought these songs would sound great on a hot summer day. Well, today that thought materialised. Let's hope the current album makes a welcome return to the album charts.



# HITS



15 HIT LYRICS including  
Doors Of My Heart  
Me No Pop I  
Liar

SHOXSIE,  
SHAKIN' STEVENS and  
SCARS in colour

ADAM 'N' MARCO  
CRASS  
KIRSTY MacCOLL



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

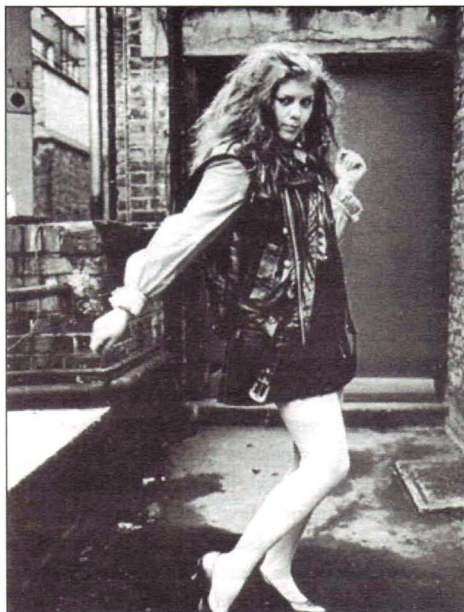
Introducing the first in an occasional series, where we delve into the archives and reproduce old features and interviews with Kirsty taken from the British music press. In this issue we go back to the 25th of June 1981 and find Kirsty featured on the cover of pop magazine **Smash Hits** and within its pages are the following feature, written by **Stuart Franklin**, and some pictures of a young Kirsty.

**"D**on't ask a lot of questions about me Dad!" pleads Kirsty MacColl, flicking back the glorious swathe of hair dotted with tell-tale Red Indian braids.

Only minutes previously she had blown a kiss in the direction of an Adam Ant poster. Imitation is still the sincerest form of flattery. Her family wanted her to go to university to study science but she wasn't too enthusiastic. By way of a compromise she went to art school. That didn't work out too well either.

*"Most other people at college were only there because their parents expected them to do something and art college is an easy way out - easier than finding a job or really applying yourself to a project. When I realised I was there for the same reason, it seemed dishonest and I left after 6 months."*

So what did she do then? *"I learnt snooker. They don't like girls going into the clubs much. Pool halls are like the unemployed equivalent of a men's club."* While not potting a black (or cleaning flats or working in the mail order department of Bonaparte Records) she played with a combo called the **Drug Addix** who later shortened their name to the **Addix**. Why that awful name? *"We were called that for a laugh. It was the time of punk and everyone expected an outrageous, Sex Pistols type of band but we weren't. We were all slide guitar and R&B. I was just the token boiler on backup vocals... Of course that annoyed me but you've got to start somewhere. If you can't really sing and you can't play anything, you can't argue about it."* The band recorded a four track demo which Chiswick promptly released as a single. It whipped up a mini controversy because, in Kirsty's words, it was *"quite rude"*.



One song, *"Gay boys in bondage"*, became a talking point for obvious reasons. Written by Rick (Rick Smith - *Drug Addix* singer), it was meant to be a parody of the Lou Reed School of Seediness, a piece of camp corn that lent itself to stage dramatics.

Enter the Stiff label. They paid for the Addix to make some more demos but nothing came of the venture. The band fell apart. Kirsty stayed with Stiff who in June '79 released her first solo single, *"They don't know"*. Produced by Liam Sternberg, it was a rousing beat ballad. The radio played it endlessly but a strike in Stiff's distribution department threw a spanner in her works. You could hear the song but it wasn't easy to buy it. *"It wasn't down to Stiff"* explains Kirsty *"it was down to industrial action. Isn't everything?"*



Matters became more complicated. She recorded a follow-up called "You caught me out" which was co-written with Pete Briquette and Simon Crowe of the **Boomtown Rats**. Not only was the release date delayed as many times as a British Rail train but also no-one could agree on a final mix for the song. "There were so many people mixing it that in the end it became a joke. People literally used to come up to me in pubs and say 'You don't know me but I mixed your single.'" The single never saw the light of day.

Her relationship with Stiff became tricky. "We didn't come to blows at all. Most of my best friends work at Stiff but I wanted too much control really... or more control than I was getting. There were any number of little things but I think it was really because they didn't have my publishing." In February last year (1980) they parted company.

Enter Polydor. Her hard-bitten business sense meant that everyone knew where they stood from the start. Still, there was the occasional shady spot. Bazza, engineer to such stars as Rockpile and Elvis Costello, asked her to add a vocal to a backing track of the '60s anthem "Keep your hands off my baby". "It would have been an 'illegal' single but I thought 'So what?'

because no-one will ever hear it. When we did it, I thought it's so much better than the stuff I'd done for Polydor that I ought to tell them. So I did and we put it out because it was ready to go."

The only problem was that it went nowhere, sinking faster than a concrete overcoat. But it paved the way for the latest toe-tapper and potential chart-topper "Chip Shop". Interestingly she wrote the song with Phil Rambow, a man who has been tipped for success more times during the '70s than he'd probably care to remember. Armed with some miniatures of tequila that Stiff were using to promote Joe King Carrasco, the duo developed the title that Kirsty already had. "After the first couple of bottles" she smirked "it was easy".

This time round it looks as if the daughter of Ewan MacColl is going to have a spell on Top of the Pops. She knows what she wants and how she can get it. "Rock 'n' Roll is about having a good time and just because the people who play it don't wear curtains round their heads, that doesn't mean it's not modern. That reminds me," she laughed. "I must get a blanket to put over my head. It's like being a budgie."



# Win a copy of the single that isn't a single!

**E**lectric Rentbook brings you another great exclusive competition to get your hands on some rare Kirsty MacColl items.

Following the response to the competition, which appeared in issue two, to win a signed copy of *Tropical Brainstorm* - won by Lee Johnson of Knottingley near Wakefield.

**Congratulations Lee!** We bring you another great prize, something that promises to be a real Kirsty collectors item.

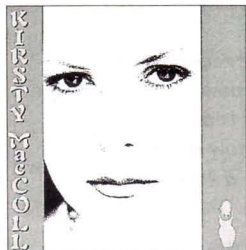
With *In These Shoes?* getting a re-release, V2 have scrapped plans to release *England 2 Columbia 0* as a single. But you can be one of only a very few number of people to own *England 2 Columbia 0* as a single.

The prize up for grabs in this issue is a promo CD single of *England 2 Columbia 0*, not only is this a single that will not be commercially available but it is a different version of the song that appears on the album - with the 'bastard' lyric changed to 'scumbag' AND, as if that wasn't tempting enough, it's autographed by a certain Miss Kirsty MacColl.

We have two copies of this fabulous prize to be awarded to the two people who answer most of our singles related Kirsty questions correctly (if you can't answer all the questions still give it a try - you might be lucky) and are drawn out from the winning entries on the closing date of **Saturday 2nd September 2000.**

So, what are you waiting for? Send your answers on a postcard to *Electric Rentbook, 8 Ashville Terrace, Cross Hills, Keighley, BD20 7LQ.* Alternatively you can email your answers to us at [electric.rentbook@talk21.com](mailto:electric.rentbook@talk21.com)

1. What was the title of Kirsty's first single which failed to chart but later provided Tracey Ullman with a No.2 hit single?
2. A New England was a hit cover version of whose song?
3. How many of Kirsty's singles have had a picture disc version released?
4. Kirsty guested with a band on their 1987 christmas single. Name the song and the band.
5. Finally, can you identify these three singles from their covers which have their titles cunningly removed?



# Electric Tenants have their say...

## WANTED

**Jonathan Oakley of St. Neots in Cambridgeshire** is searching for the following Kirsty records:

**Kirsty MacColl album (SPELP95)  
You Caught Me Out (BUY57)  
Berlin (NOW100)**

If anybody could supply Jonathan with any of these, he's prepared to swap in part exchange the *Desperate Character* album and the singles *You Still Believe In Me* and *Keep Your Hands Off My Baby*.

Contact us at Electric Rentbook and we'll forward your reply to Jonathan

## Steve Foster of Rushden wrote:

Dear Graham,

Thank you for issues two and three of Electric Rentbook, I was disappointed to miss getting issue one as I'm quite impressed with it: well laid out, some nice pix and hardly any typos which is more than can be said for some "professional" mags.

A few quibbles - in the gig review, in issue three, I would have liked to have known who the musicians were, did she play anything or just sing, what did she wear and what was her performance like? It all helps to give a picture to us unfortunates who were not there. (You did say it was "a brilliant set" but then I expect it would be "brilliant" just to see *Her Landladyship* in the flesh!)

Ok, just one quibble - I lied about there being a few.

**Ed - Your comments about the Manchester gig review have been noted and in future I'll try and paint a clearer picture for people who weren't actually at the gig.**

## Andrew Scurrah of Sheffield wrote:

Hello!

Thanks ever so much for sending me the new third issue of *Electric Rentbook*. I hadn't realised how soon issue 3 was ready so was really chuffed when you sent it through.

Although I was at the Leadmill show (marvellous) in May, I'm afraid I didn't see you handing out the fanzine although right at the end I caught a few glimpses of folk clutching their copies.

Hopefully the mooted tour will commence in the Autumn so I might be able to say hello in person.

Keep up the great work with the mag and really thanks again.

**Ed - No word yet as to whether Kirsty and the band will definitely be touring or not in the Autumn but if it does go ahead and you see me handing out the fanzine come over and make yourself known - that goes for everybody!**

## Steven Jones of Camborne wrote:

Dear Graham,

As a member of the Kirsty MacColl e-mail list I have heard a lot about your highly praised "Electric Rentbook". I understand that you have produced 3 issues so far, and that number 4 is due soon.

If all 4 are still available I would be very grateful if you could send me the complete set.

**Ed - Steven will have received issue 3 and this issue and is now on the mailing list. A note for other readers is that issues 1 and 2 have now all gone. There are, at the moment, a very limited supply of issue 3 left.**

## Acknowledgements

*I'd like to extend a great big thank you to the following good people:*

**Kirsty MacColl** without whom this fanzine would most definitely not be possible. **Lisa-Jane Musselbrook** at Major Minor Management, for her continued support and help beyond the call of duty. **Alan Officer** at the Freeworld Website for continued support and the free advertising. **David Hyde** for the loan of his Apple Mac while mine was (still) on the blink. **Dixon Target** for the printing and collating. **Paul Crossley** for donating that most precious of commodities, his time, to print the window stickers. **Angela Greene** for saying such nice things about Electric Rentbook to just about anybody who'd listen. **Jeremy Neal** for the Glastonbury recording. The three most important people in my life; **Catherine Allton** **Brandon Scaife** and **Sofi-Maria Scaife** for continuing to put up with my Kirsty MacColl and Stranglers obsessions. And finally **You** for your impeccable musical taste.

## Fancy Contributing?

**H**ow would you like to have your review printed in the pages of Electric Rentbook and read by fellow Kirsty fans? Not only in the UK - our mailing list includes fans in the US, Germany and New Zealand.

Please send me your contributions, not just live and record reviews but your poems, drawings, stories about what being a Kirsty fan means to you. Anything Kirsty related really.

We are now on issue four of the fanzine and, apart from the Fleadh review and your letters, everything that as appeared within its pages as been written by one person.

Electric Rentbook is the fans' (that's you) homage to Kirsty MacColl and I'd like to included as many of you as possible in these pages - so how about it?

Please send all correspondence to:

*Electric Rentbook, 8 Ashville Terrace, Cross Hills, Keighley, BD20 7LQ.*

*or now you can email me at [electric.rentbook@talk21.com](mailto:electric.rentbook@talk21.com)*



# The best albums in the world . . . . ever!

