



## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### Never loved Elvis

Is it really 25 years since Elvis Presley died in one of Graceland's toilets? Is it really only a week since the last sighting of Elvis stacking shelves in Safeways? Do I really care? No, Elvis meant nothing to me.

I guess it's mostly a generation thing. Elvis mattered for about four years from his first recording for Sam Phillips' Sun Records in Memphis in 1954 to the time he joined the army in March 1958. That was the time Elvis was the King of Rock'n'Roll, when this poor white boy from Tupelo who wanted to be a truck driver changed music. That was the time when he was mad, bad and far too dangerous to show below the waist on national television. That was the time that Elvis mattered. The rest was cabaret.

The army gave him the chance to make bad films, not that any of his films were that good, but at least Jailhouse Rock had a great soundtrack. After leaving the army in March 1960 he did a few gigs, appeared on Frank Sinatra's TV show and then quit gigging for crap movies a year later. Who needs Blue Hawaii or Fun in Acapulco? They might have kept the fans happy, but the rest of us had The Beatles and The Stones, so what did we care?

Elvis finally put his black leather back on and did a TV special in December 1968 before embarking on the downward spiral that was the Las Vegas years. The money was good, the sequins were sparkly but the music was irrelevant. In the end he was fat, bloated, pointless and addicted to a mixture of uppers, downers and fried peanut butter and banana sandwiches. That he should die on the toilet at 42 seemed just about right to me. After all, by the time he died in August 1977 we had the Clash, the Sex Pistols and so much more. Times had changed, Elvis became the All-American Vegas experience - safe, sanitised and designed for tourists. I never loved Elvis, I just like some of the early records, but then I wasn't 16 in 1956 and by the time I started buying records Elvis was just history to me.

## Coming Shortly - The Binnie Barnes Story

This month we publish the trailer -

### The One Who Got Away

by Stephen Woolley

From Prospect Place to Hollywood - a local girl made it. She was Binnie Barnes.

Sophisticated and beautiful, the actress who started in two-reel comedy films left East Finchley in 1934, never to return. Her name remains magic with her generation, yet it is remembered with the erroneous phrase - "the casting couch". A twinge of jealousy I must assume, stemming from the environment of her time, the era of low wages, high unemployment, few motor cars and one week's holiday each year for the working.

Binnie Barnes was the working girl who got away, and went to their dream world - Hollywood. Escaping from reality meant standing in the bitter cold, then walking on fitted carpet, finally to look up at the silver screen. Perhaps there was a brief resentment towards Binnie Barnes, the girl from around Market Place, whose mother once worked in the laundry in The Walks.

Could the paradox of feeling for Binnie Barnes happen today? I doubt it. With our fast

cars, holidays abroad, divorce and plastic surgery, people have Hollywood without going there.

Now the curtain has gone down on the film star from East Finchley - whose marriage lasted 52 years.

Binnie can still be seen on the small screen today. We will bring you her full story next month.

## Poetry in Motion

Daphne Chamberlain introduces Felicia Conner  
Felicia Conner grew up in Ireland, in West Cork, but admits to a strong French connection. She has visited France regularly since the 1970s, working there for some time as an English teaching assistant. Since leaving Ireland in 1980 she has also taught Natural Science in North Africa. Inspiration for her writing comes from her experiences and the places she has visited.

Felicia began writing in her teens - mostly poetry, though she does dabble in short stories. A great novel-reader, she has attempted to produce the occasional one herself, but has never got past chapter six! Favourite poets include Shelley and Sylvia Plath.

### Sharing skills

A self-described jack-of-all-trades, she now works with a small consultancy firm integrating train travel and cycling, and travels around Finchley on a bike built for her by a friend.

Felicia moved to East Finchley four years ago. Until recently only her family and friends shared her poetry, but a friend living in France advised her to "hone her skills" with other writers. It was this that encouraged her to join the East Finchley Writers Group when she read about it in *THE ARCHER*. Joining the group, she says, has helped build her confidence and enabled her to share her work with a wider audience.

See What's On for details of the East Finchley Writers Group.

## Thoughts Of What Was

By Felicia Conner

I want you to know,  
That sometimes I think  
of you,  
When the plain cement  
platform  
Of a station is in view,  
A line of cereal wagons,  
Parked forgotten on a siding.

I think of you, and trains,  
And thousands of miles  
Travelled in the night,  
With carriages full of  
soldiers.

I think of you, and bread  
Gone stale by the morning,  
The hardness of its crust,  
The sweet jam,  
The bowl of coffee  
I could wash my face in.

I think of you,  
And the smell of Gitanes,  
The sound of Citroens and  
mopeds,  
Wrought iron balconies,  
Geraniums,  
Are all that remain.

And sometimes, I dream  
of you,  
And that is infinitely worse,  
For in those dreams,  
I go backwards and relive  
What we never had.

I am mourning you  
in my dreams.



Felicia Conner photo by Daniel Ferri

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