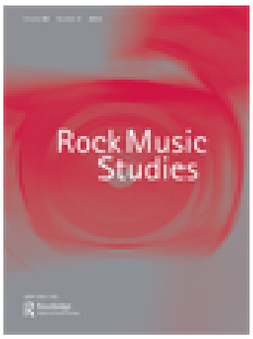

Rock Music Studies

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rrms20

The Deeply Vale Music Festival: The North West Free Music Festival, Its Demise, Its Influence, and Its Legacy

James Ingham

To cite this article: James Ingham (2023): The Deeply Vale Music Festival: The North West Free Music Festival, Its Demise, Its Influence, and Its Legacy, Rock Music Studies, DOI: 10.1080/19401159.2023.2195198

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/19401159.2023.2195198

Published online: 28 Mar 2023.

ROCK MUSIC STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/19401159.2023.2195198

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The Deeply Vale Music Festival: The North West Free Music Festival, Its Demise, Its Influence, and Its Legacy

James Ingham

School of Arts & Media, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK

ABSTRACT

Deeply Vale Festival, held near Rochdale, England from 1976 to 1979, started with an audience of 300 and grew to 20,000 attendees in 1979. It played a significant role in introducing punk music to the festival scene and was initially larger and better organized than the Glastonbury Festival. While Glastonbury became the largest greenfield festival in the world, Deeply Vale did not achieve the same financial success. However Deeply Vale's impact and legacy can be considered as significant as Glastonbury's. This article explores the factors that enabled Glastonbury's success and prevented Deeply Vale from achieving the same level of recognition.

KEYWORDS

Music festival; Counterculture; 1970s; Glastonbury; Manchester

Introduction

> It was far more organized than Glastonbury . . . .We could be sat here and be seeing U2, Paul McCartney – who is going to be playing Glastonbury or Rochdale next year. (journalist Luke Bainbridge in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*)

The Deeply Vale Festival and Glastonbury Festival have very different histories as to longevity and financial success. The Deeply Vale Festival, a well-attended and musically groundbreaking festival in the late 1970s, ceased to exist by 1980. Glastonbury, a much smaller festival at that time, went on to become the largest greenfield music and performing arts festival in the world, now attended by around 200,000 people. This article considers the factors that contributed to Glastonbury's success and what prevented the Deeply Vale Festival from being just as successful despite it being a better-organized and larger festival than Glastonbury. Despite its passing, the Deeply Vale Music Festival has left a legacy and impact that have gone on to influence today's music festivals, the creation of popular music, and arguably the geography of the region.

Certainly, it could be said that Deeply Vale's failure to make the most of its early success was a missed economic opportunity. Festivals have significant economic and social impact. The total direct and indirect spend generated by "music tourism" for festivals in the UK in 2014 was identified at more than £1.7 billion and as sustaining more than 13,500 full-time jobs (Webster and McKay). Glastonbury itself had 177,500 Festival

CONTACT James Ingham jingham@uclan.ac.uk School of Arts & Media, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK

visitors in 2007 with a total gross direct spend estimated at £73,286,500 and an estimated employment generation in South West region of 1,110 full time jobs (Webster and McKay). Tickets for Glastonbury now sell out within minutes. The festival is broadcast to more than forty countries around the globe, and more than three million people are registered to attend (Eavis and Eavis). The festival itself encompasses a gigantic city in the fields with a total population nearing a quarter of a million.

Economic models can be used to explain festival success and failure (Anderton, "Risky Business"). Several likely sources of festival failure include the weather, lack of corporate sponsorship, overreliance on one source of money, inadequate marketing or promotion, and lack of advance or strategic planning (Getz; Anderton, "Risky Business"). None of these sources of failure, though, are identified by Chris Hewitt (one of the Deeply Vale organizers), as the reason for the demise of Deeply Vale. When asked the reason, Hewitt's response was Rossendale Borough Council, who said we could not have the festival in the valley for health and safety reasons (*On the Wire* 2014 audio).

In this study I will try to demonstrate that this is indeed the case, although other factors were also at play. To analyze festival success the methodology used in this study compares and assesses Deeply Vale and Glastonbury. This methodology views the different festivals as cases of a larger concept of the festival, thereby enabling Deeply Vale and Glastonbury to be examined in a way that allows for comparison and assessment of festival success based on longevity. It should be noted that this approach differs from viewing each festival as a unique, historically situated event. The multifactorial approach allows for comparison and analysis across different festivals. Nevertheless, with such a focus this methodology may not capture the full uniqueness of each individual festival.

The account of Deeply Vale is based on several primary sources including interviews, photographs, recordings, and documentary film and video footage. A key source of information is interviews with Chris Hewitt. Another valuable source of information has been *The Archive: UK Rock Festivals 1960–90 & UK Free Festivals 1965–1990*. There is a great deal of detailed descriptive work presented, with much of the material appearing in academic literature for the first time. By providing this amount of descriptive detail key insights on the festival can be derived. To assist the reader with the location of the various locations discussed, a map (Figure 1) has been produced.

Analyzing Music Festivals

The analysis of the Deeply Vale music festival incorporates previous theories of the music festival. It includes an examination of festivals as sites for creative expression (McKay, *Pop Festival*); a consideration of pop festivals as important sites of political activism and cultural resistance in the UK during the 1970s (Clarke); the role of festivals in the negotiation of subcultural identities (Waksman); and a critique of modern music festivals as not inherently radical or countercultural, but rather an adaptation and response to historical, geographical, political, social, and economic circumstances (Anderton, *Music Festivals*).

Pop festivals reflect the broader cultural and political movements of their time (McKay, *Pop Festival*). For McKay, pop festivals since the 1960s have provided a space for experimentation and community-building. Deeply Vale provided the opportunity

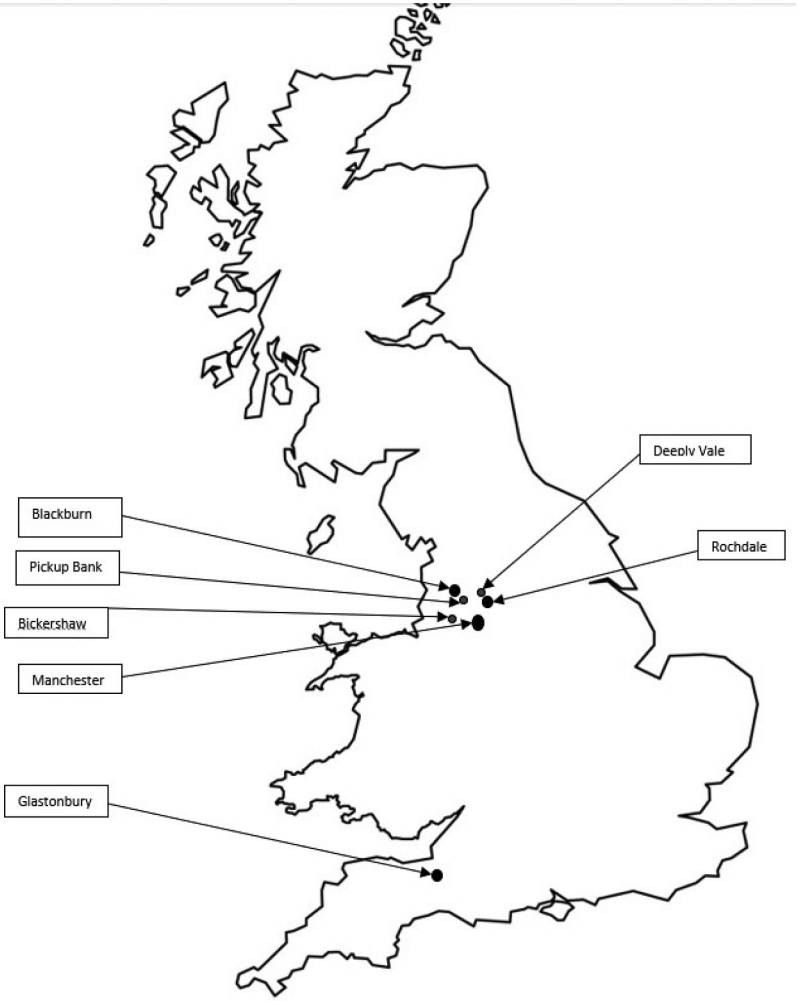

Figure 1. Map of Key Locations.

and space for creative expression, experimentation, social change, and community-building.

Festivals have become increasingly commodified and corporatized in recent years (McKay, *Pop Festival*). The explosion of UK music festivals since 2000 has led to the formation and evolution of the modern festival scene in its current form as a widespread and professionalized industry (Robinson). Festivals also provide links between various local and global cultures, communities, identities, and lifestyle narratives (Bennett, Taylor, and Woodward).

Festivals offer space for people to express themselves and challenge the dominant cultural norms, shaping youth culture and politics at the time (Clarke). For Clarke, the UK pop festivals of the 1970s were an important site of political activism and cultural resistance. As the decade ended, pop festivals were increasingly politicized and co-opted by various political groups and ideologies. Deeply Vale, for instance, staged a Rock Against Racism Day as part of its July 1978 festival (Hewitt, *Tales*).

Pop festivals can also play a crucial role in the development and negotiation of subcultural identities. The 1970s and 1980s Pop Festivals provided a space for heavy metal and punk subcultures to interact with each other (Waksman). Such interactions occurred at Deeply Vale where there was a negotiation of progressive rock, punk and reggae subcultural identities for the first time in a festival format (Hewitt, *Tales).*

Studies of music festivals have typically concentrated either on their carnivalesque heritage or on developing a managerial Events Management approach (Anderton, "Festivals;" Anderton, *Music Festivals*). For Anderton there is a need to move beyond such approaches to develop a wider cultural, social and geographic consideration of outdoor music festivals, where the modern music festivals are considered as not inherently radical or countercultural. Instead, for Anderton they are a cultural form that adapt and respond to different historical, geographical, political, social, and economic circumstances. Changes in music festivals since the mid-1990s, such as professionalization, corporatization, mediatization, regulatory control, and sponsorship/branding are not the process of transgressive alternative culture being co-opted by commercial concerns. They are simply a reconfiguration of the sector in line with changes in society, along with a broadening of the forms and meanings that may be associated with outdoor music *events*. This paper develops Anderton's thesis by demonstrating that music festivals do not just adapt and respond to society, but that *society adapts and responds* to music festivals.

Background to the Deeply Vale Festival

Woodstock (Bennett; Spitz) influenced the Deeply Vale festival, just like other 1970s free festivals. The Film *Woodstock* was a key factor here. The narratives and techniques in the film construct and reinforce a countercultural carnivalesque (Anderton, "From Woodstock to Glastonbury"). Anderton explains that this is a way of thinking about festival culture that is informed by a particular understanding of the youth counter-culture of the late 1960s. This narrative construction is present in two British music festival films, *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970* and *Glastonbury Fayre*.

The roots of Deeply Vale are also in the early 1970s British Free Festival movement. This movement was largely based in the South of England. Festivals included Windsor

and Stonehenge. Those festivals themselves, in turn, had their roots in the jazz festivals of the 1950s and 1960s. The British Free Festival Movement was at the epicenter of counter-culture Britain (Knee).

Hewitt cites the Bickershaw Festival of May 1972 as the key influence on the Deeply Vale festival ("2012 Bickershaw" video). In May 1972, thousands of festivalgoers descended upon Bickershaw, an old mining village near Wigan, Lancashire. The lineup was a mix of British and American acts including the Grateful Dead and Captain Beefheart ("Notable" audio). At the time, Hewitt was promoting music events at Rochdale College. Jeremy Beadle, organizer of the Bickershaw Festival, contacted Hewitt three weeks before the Bickershaw event asking him to help out (Wyatt, "Remembering"). Hewitt says the experiences helping Beadle at Bickershaw in the run-up to the festival and spending three days taking in all the bands in damp muddy conditions were a great grounding for putting Deeply Vale together (Wyatt, "Remembering"). Hewitt also says that the Deeply Vale organizers were inspired by a Rivington Pike (North Country Fair) Festival of August 1976 and, in particular, by the laid-back American West Coast atmosphere and feel (*On the Wire* 2014 audio).

It is also worth placing the Deeply Vale Festivals in the social and economic context of 1970s Britain. For Sandbrook, the late 1970s were an extraordinary period, a period of chaos and contradiction, which was a decisive point in recent history, when a profound argument about the future of the nation was played out. For many young people, the 1970s in Britain were bursting with cultural experimentation, sexual liberation, and industrial militancy. The 1970s saw the ruling elites of Britain challenged at every level (Medhurst).

The Deeply Vale Festival

The Deeply Vale Festival was held in 1976, 1977, 1978, and 1979 on land in the Cheesden Valley, to the northwest of Rochdale. For broadcaster Bob Harris, Deeply Vale (in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*) has a place in rock history as being the best-loved and silliest rock festivals of all time. The original catalyst for Deeply Vale Festival was David Smith. Smith lived in a commune that was in a former shop and three-story house on Oldham Road, Balderstone, Rochdale in 1976 (Hewitt, *Tales*). Smith believed that more free festivals should be brought to the North of England. He had been on the festival trail in 1975 and 1976 and had noticed that all the Free Festivals that had arisen (Windsor, Watchfield, Stonehenge, Seasalter) occurred in the south of England (Hewitt, *Deeply*). Whilst on a ride out on his motorbike, Smith spotted Deeply Vale and approached the farmer Frank Turner to see if he could use the land. Smith said it would be used by ten campers for a birthday party. Although he was misled about the number of people, Turner could not have been too troubled, as he went on to allow his land to be used again for festivals in the following years. Smith contacted Hewitt, who owned a hippie PA hire and music shop – Tractor Music (Wyatt, "Return"). Hewitt provided the equipment and used his contacts to help with the booking of bands.

There was the belief that making money should not be the primary concern of the festival. For Hewitt, the festival being in Rochdale was significant. Rochdale was a good place. Lots of poets and artists. The community spirit worked well. It also had a recording studio – Cargo – and a PA company (*On the Wire* 2014 audio). As Hewitt says, Deeply

Vale would have never worked without the community spirit that prevailed in the mid-1970s hippie and punk scene in the North West (*Tales*, 4).

There were two sources of funding for the Deeply Vale festival. According to Jim Milne, lead guitarist of the band Tractor, the first source was royalty money from Tractor, which was given to them from John Peel's Dandelion label to buy a PA system and recording equipment (*Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film). Hewitt explains that the second source of funding was a fifty-pence surcharge on every cannabis sale by the Balderstone commune. That hippie commune, in the Balderstone district of Rochdale, was a communal house where everything was shared. Purchasers were told that the money would go toward the Free Festival at Deeply Vale. The fact that bands were willing to play for free meant that additional costs were significantly reduced. According to Steve Clayton, drummer of Tractor, speaking in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*, bands were happy to be paid through the experience of just being there: "We all thought it was silly, but let's do it anyway. People just wanted to be involved. It became the place to be at and have fun. That is what people got the satisfaction from, at least to begin with. It changed a little as years went on."

It is useful to define what "free" meant in relation to the Deeply Vale Free Festival. According to Hewitt (in *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*), it meant that there were no admission charges and the festival was free to enter. However, there was also free food. People would also offer participants free accommodation. The accommodation would be spare tents. For Hewitt, this meant you could turn up without any money, be fed, and still have a good time. The festival was also free in the sense that people were free to contribute. Everyone could bring something to Deeply Vale and contribute. If you had an idea, you could bring that along and put it into practice. This again exemplifies that the free festivals were sites of community-building and creative expression (McKay, *Pop Festival*).

The first Deeply Vale Music Festival, in 1976, had an audience of 300 people camping for two days and watching space rockers Body and Tractor. The festival grew to 3,000 in 1977, with bands including Andy McCluskey's Pegasus, a forerunner of OMD. By 1978 and 1979, there were 20,000 people (Figure 2) watching bands and camping for six days. In 1979, Deeply Vale had become the largest free festival in England. In comparison, after the initial Glastonbury Free Festival in 1971, there were no further Glastonbury festivals until 1979.

Despite it being a Free Festival, the Deeply Vale Festival was considered a well-organized event. The Home Office-sponsored body that reported on many pop festivals from the mid 1970s, Festival Welfare Services, said in a report on the 1978 festival that the event, attended by 20,000 people, was actually better-organized than the large Bob Dylan concert at Blackbushe the same summer. Festival Welfare Services went on to say that the 1978 Deeply Vale Music Festival was a model for how festivals should be run (Hewitt, *Tales*). Luke Bainbridge says "it was far more organized than Glastonbury . . . .[Deeply Vale] had running times and stuck to stage times far before Glastonbury did" (*Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film).

Deeply Vale can also be contrasted to other free festivals at the time. This is because Deeply Vale had permission to be on the land from the landowner. The organizers had hired the land. In this way it was more like Glastonbury than other Free Festivals such as Stonehenge. Deeply Vale Festival did not involve trespassing on the land. The festival was

Figure 2. Deeply Valley 1978 (copyright Chris Hewitt).

operating within the law, with the festival attenders having permission to be on the land. In this respect, Deeply Vale had significant potential to be viable in the long term.

Compared to music festivals today, though, Deeply Vale would be considered very disorganized. Musician Vini Reilly of Durutti Column says the festival was incredibly eccentric, completely out of order, and completely disorganized. However, at the same time it was completely benign and had a "lovely atmosphere" (*Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film). The Reverend Mike Huck, of Wigwam Acoustics and the Movement Banned, said that the festival had a special atmosphere: "There was a warmth and togetherness – that was good. There was a warmth about the people there" (*Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film).

One of the important aspects of the Deeply Vale festival was that it brought punk music into the festival scene. It enabled subcultures to interact and negotiate with each other (Waksman). Towards the end of the 1970s, the typical festival bands were tending to go into a decline. Many had split up or mutated into other styles. There simply were not enough festival bands to keep a free festival supplied with music for a week. Along with this, people's taste in music had changed. Many free festival devotees were now prepared to listen to new forms of music such as reggae and punk. The Deeply Vale Festivals were the first of the hippie music festivals to accommodate this.

In this respect Deeply Vale was slightly ahead of the Southern festivals in that it introduced the fusion between the classic psychedelic festival movement and punk and New Wave music (Steve Hillage [Figure 3] in (Hewitt, *Deeply Vale Festival*).

But it was not just punk and New Wave. There was reggae as well. All the hippies and all the punks liked Bob Marley, and they liked Misty in Roots, (Hewitt, *Tales*, 42.) This mixing of musical genres became a model that many other festivals would go on to emulate. It was also a factor that give Deeply Vale a greater longevity and popularity than it might otherwise have had.

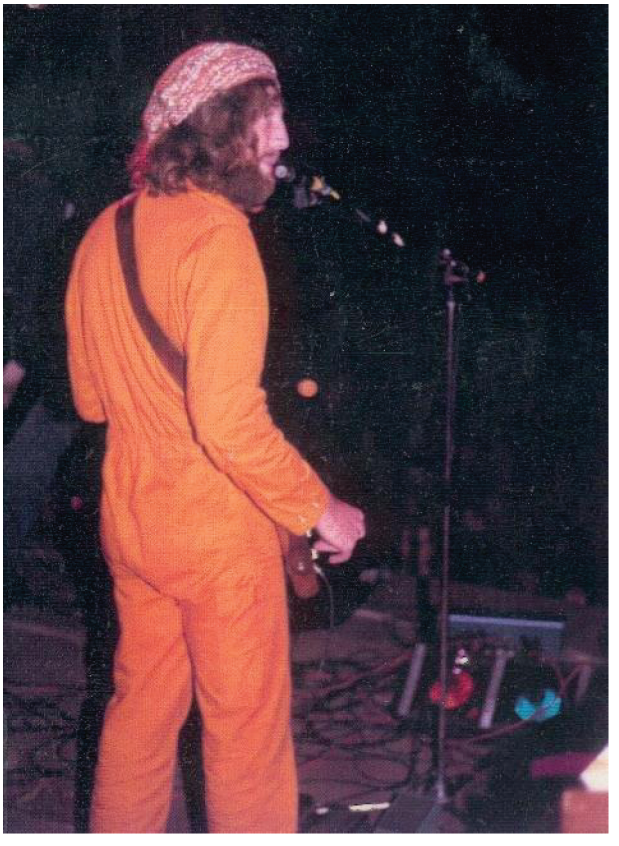

Figure 3. Steve Hillage at Deeply Vale 1978 (copyright Chris Hewitt).

Deeply Vale was also a site of political activism (Clarke). When Hewitt was asked about the mechanics of the interaction of punks and hippies, his response was: "Very well, really . . . .I think Rock Against Racism was . . . a common denominator for punks and hippies and I think that where it perhaps differed, at Deeply Vale . . . I think there was much more of a crossover in the north than perhaps there was in the south" (*Tales* 42).

As well as mixing different genres of music, Deeply Vale was significant in introducing a great many new bands and music. The Fall made some early appearances at Deeply Vale, with lead singer Mark E. Smith holding the festival in very high esteem. Durutti Column played their fourth ever gig on the Deeply Vale Festival stage. Both these bands were introduced by a young Tony Wilson, who had just started the independent record label Factory (Figure 4).

For Graham Massey of 808 State, the ability to contribute evinced a DIY and local approach to music making. For Massey, the event was also embedded in the local. As Massey says, "I'm always sort of harking back to Deeply Vale as the blueprint for a festival. For me it just had that sort of made-up-for-the-people vibe. The thing about Deeply Vale is that it felt like local action" (Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale film). In a way it could be said that this emphasis on the local was

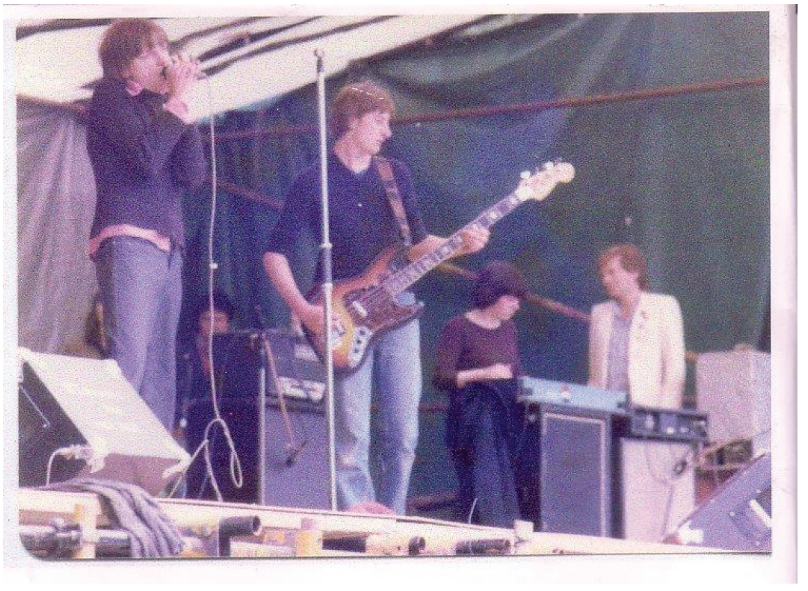

Figure 4. The Fall and Tony Wilson at Deeply Vale 1978 (copyright Chris Hewitt).

potentially a disadvantage when compared to large music festivals nowadays, which present themselves as global events.

In many aspects, the Deeply Vale festival had a significant impact on the Manchester music scene of the 1980s. The festival provided a platform for local bands to perform and gain exposure. It also attracted bands and musicians from across the UK. This enabled much greater attention to be given to the music scene in the area. The festival helped foster a sense of community and collaboration among the musicians as well as a DIY ethos that emphasized self-organization and artistic experimentation. All of this is evident in the Manchester post-punk independent music scene that followed on from Deeply Vale. The impact is illustrated in the long list of local musicians who were inspired by the event. According to Hewitt, "Those looking on and duly inspired included future musicians Ian Brown (The Stone Roses), Andy Rourke (The Smiths), David Gedge (The Wedding Present), Boff Whalley (Chumbawamba), and Jimi Goodwin (Doves)" (Wyatt, "Return"). All of these people became key individuals in the local 1980s independent music scene – a scene that then metamorphosed into the Madchester music scene.

The Demise of the Deeply Vale Festival

Several factors contributed to the demise of the Deeply Vale Music Festival. Residents, who saw the event as a disruption and nuisance, worked together with local authorities to place injunctions on the event. Jim Milne, in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*, explains that the authorities spent thousands of pounds trying to stop the event. As time went by, they got better at trying to stop it, and eventually they succeeded in stopping it.

After the 1978 Festival, the Civic Societies of Heywood, Bury, and Rawenstall objected to the use of the Deeply Vale area for pop festivals. This was based on the idea that the

numbers of people were beyond the powers of the organizers to cope, the length of time the participants stayed on the site was unacceptable, the problems of refuse disposal and general tidying were extremely difficult, and the use of the site for such purposes was incompatible with its character and traditional use as a quiet country area (Hewitt, *Tales* 44). Working with Rossendale Borough Council, the Civic Societies served notice on the 1979 Festival. However, the Festival organizers appealed to the High Court, where a ruling was given that, as the landowner had already given verbal agreement, the 1979 festival could go ahead (Hewitt, *Tales*). Hewitt notes that, by 1979, the authorities' position was that you couldn't have 20,000 people pissing in temporary toilets being emptied by a tractor and gully sucker (*Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film). The Civic Societies went on to stress that their interest was mainly the care of the environment and that they implied no criticism of the rights of young people to congregate at pop festivals or to express themselves freely (Hewitt, *Tales* 44).

The 1979 festival went ahead, with a consent order that the valley on the 31st of August 1979 should be free of all rubbish and the gates and walls repaired. However, none of these conditions were met. The Council Report on the event was damning and played into the hands of Rossendale Council and Mr Neave (a neighboring farmer), who wanted the 1979 festival to breach the consent order so that the festival couldn't be held in the valley in 1980 (Hewitt, *Tales* 252).

With its demise in prospect, Hewitt says two factions came into existence: "One school of thought was just to carry on and ignore the authorities and not meet licensing conditions and just do it. Then there were people like me who thought the only way we could carry on with this was within the system but if you do that you inevitably become part of the system" (quoted in Anson).

The faction that said just carry on, and work outside of the legal system, moved the festival onto Pickup Bank, near Darwen, where it resumed on a smaller scale on 25–27 July 1980 and 10–17 August 1981. On both occasions the festival started and ended with violent confrontation. The Pickup Bank Festival occurred on a piece of common land between Haslingden and Darwen in the Borough of Blackburn. For the organizers, the festival was intended to be the successor to the Deeply Vale Festival. However, the Pickup Bank Festival never took off. The key reasons why it was not as successful included the location. It was on top of a moor, which was not sheltered like Deeply Vale. There was also police harassment, along with hostile local authorities and poor weather. Hewitt says the problems had nothing to do with the ethos of Deeply Vale, in particular its approach to drug taking. Hewitt says there were tents with signs openly advertising heroin for sale.

It could be said, though, that this move to harder drugs was already occurring at the Deeply Vale Festival in the later years. The change could be witnessed at the Deeply Vale Festival in 1979. According to Steve Clayton in *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*, heroin and cocaine gave the festival a different feel from earlier years when people were smoking dope and were chilled: "There was a change in atmosphere, to where you say to yourself 'I am not sure I feel quite as safe as I am used to, and I am not sure if I am as happy.' It was heavy drugs, people pushing certain drugs."

Jim Milne, in *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*, points out that Deeply Vale could have gone corporate. The organizers were aware that they could have involved management companies and that they could have been more formal, with things such as contracts

involved. However, Milne says that was not what the organizers cared about. For Clayton, in *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*, "it is better just to keep the memories, and it is good to stop sometimes. It was time it ended. It lasted as long as it should have done."

The Success of the Glastonbury Festival

Let us now consider the reasons that Glastonbury became the largest and leading greenfield festival in the world. Let us also identify what prevented Deeply Vale from surpassing Glastonbury despite it being originally better-organized and bigger than Glastonbury.

Organizer Michael Eavis hosted the first Glastonbury festival, then called the Pilton Festival in 1970, where there were 1,500 in attendance (Eavis and Eavis). In 1971, the festival moved to the time of the Summer Solstice and was named Glastonbury Fayre. An estimated 12,000 attended. Between 1971 and 1978 there was no Glastonbury Festival. It was not until 1979 that Eavis decided to resume the festival. It became a three-day event but was still referred to as the Glastonbury Fayre. Again an estimated 12,000 people attended the festival. Despite the large numbers attending, the organizers suffered a huge financial loss and did not want to risk another festival in 1980.

In 1981 the festival changed its name to Glastonbury Festival and ran in conjunction with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). There was an estimated attendance of 18,000, with performers including New Order, Hawkwind, Taj Mahal, and Aswad. In this respect it could be said that the Glastonbury Festival was now following the approach taken by Deeply Vale, with its mix of musical genres. The 1981 Glastonbury was also nearly the same size as the 1978 Deeply Vale festival.

Since then the Glastonbury Festival has become an annual fixture (McKay, *Glastonbury*). By 1990, the audience was well over 100,000. However, that year the festival ended in a violent confrontation between the security guards and New Age Travellers.[1] Those years were the festival's most difficult, due to drugs, violence, and rioting New Age Travelers (McKay, *Glastonbury*). The trouble at the 1990 festival led to the organizers not running the festival in 1991.

An expanded festival returned in 1992 and was a great financial success. It was the first year that New Age Travellers were not allowed onto the site for free. A sturdier perimeter fence was designed. However, despite the new fencing, throughout the 1990s many people were still able to jump the fence. By 2000, with so many people gate-crashing the festival, the District Council refused to give Glastonbury another license until the problem was resolved. This resulted in the Glastonbury organizers making the decision to work with the Mean Fiddler organization, which took over security for the festival in 2002 and installed a "super fence," which dramatically improved both security and ticket sales. The introduction of this fence meant that when 150,000 tickets went on sale in 2003, they sold out within 24 hours, in contrast to 2002, when it took two months to sell 140,000 tickets. Buying a ticket was now the only way to get into the Glastonbury Festival.

What Prevented Deeply Vale from Becoming as Established and as Successful as Glastonbury?

Despite having three or four years' head start on the Glastonbury Festival, Deeply Vale never became the UK's preeminent music festival. Certainly by 1978 it could be said that

the level of organization of the Deeply Vale was much superior to that of the Glastonbury Festival. The Deeply Vale organizers had also developed a means of funding and were successful in persuading bands and artists to play for free. Deeply Vale was also ahead of Glastonbury in its approach to mixing music genres and audiences. Finally, there was an awareness, certainly by organizers such as Chris Hewitt and Andy Burgoyne, that if the festival was to happen in future years the organizers needed to work within the legal system.

The Deeply Vale organizers also knew that they had to work with the landowner. As Hewitt says, "[t]he nice thing about Deeply Vale was that, because the festival organizers had permission to be on the land (unlike Stonehenge and many others) . . . .They were not constantly dodging writs (until 1979) hurled at them by authorities" (*Tales* 44).

However, the organizers of Deeply Vale did not have the same levels of support and connections, either locally or nationally, as the Glastonbury organizers did. They were certainly unable to develop the relationships with local authorities that were required to give the festival any long-term viability. The Deeply Vale organizers also lacked the capital, particularly in the form of land and money, to develop and expand the festival. They simply did not have access to the means of production, which Eavis, a farmer and landowner, had. Eavis was able to borrow against his farm (Worthy Farm) to put on the Glastonbury Festivals in the early 1980s.

It can be said, though, that there are many who attended the Deeply Vale Festival who are glad that it never became a Glastonbury Festival in scale and scope. For promoter Henry Kledjys, speaking in the *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film, "[i]t was a strangely beautiful place, in the middle of a northern moor, and in that place and at that time something happened, people came together, music was created, art was created, and people went away, and they left with the memories, and we have all moved on."

Many people accepted the transient nature of the festival. This was part of its appeal and one of the reasons why it is very difficult to replicate. If it were to be reproduced and developed, it would be a very different festival with a very different atmosphere. Mark E. Smith was happy with the way Deeply Vale was and did not want it to turn into a Glastonbury:

> I don't like doing festivals, but I liked doing Deeply Vale. It was good used to go there and walk on, what festivals are supposed to be about . . . .Nothing worse than playing Glastonbury with Bob Dylan, where you have to get there about twelve hours before and play in front of a load of boring bastards – wait eight hours to get out and play just for the money. (Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale)

The Influence and Legacy of Deeply Vale

Deeply Vale was highly influential in several ways. Firstly, it introduced punk to the free festival movement and was the first festival to mix progressive rock, punk, and reggae. The Drones were the first punk band to play the Deeply Vale festival, in 1977. The Ruts met at the 1977 Deeply Vale festival and then played at the festival in 1978. Grant Showbiz met The Fall at Deeply Vale and then went on to produce fourteen albums with The Fall. It would be a few more years before you would see punk bands at festivals such as Reading and Glastonbury.

Secondly, Deeply Vale provided stimuli for the creation of new bands. Many of the fans who attended went on to become influential musicians themselves. This includes members of the Smiths, the Stone Roses, the Chameleons, Doves, the Wedding Present, and Chumbawamba. Hewitt says that lots of networks were started at Deeply Vale: "If you were to draw a family tree of bands, it would be huge" (*On the Wire* 2014 audio).

Thirdly, Deeply Vale had a big influence on the 1980s Manchester music scene, which then went on to have a huge impact both nationally and internationally. Tony Wilson took the free festival approach to arts, culture, and space that he experienced at Deeply Vale and applied it to Factory Records. Combined with the Factory Records situationist philosophy, there was a transformation of spaces (Ingham, "Factory"). Wilson took the Deeply Vale method of creating transformative creative and experimental space and transferred it to the urban spaces of the Factory Club and the Haçienda nightclub in Manchester.

Finally, Deeply Vale's countercultural approach to music, drug-taking, and transformation of space went on to be influential for the North West acid house scene of the late eighties and early nineties. Wilkinson (*On the Wire* 2017 audio) draws a direct link between the counter culture at Deeply Vale and the Acid House Warehouse scene (Ingham, Purvis, and Clarke) in Blackburn and the North West a decade later. An underground counterculture away from the Establishment produced an activism in a corner of Lancashire that took on the world (Wilkinson).

Conclusions

For the Deeply Vale Festival to succeed within the legal system, its organizers needed access to capital and well-connected people. The Deeply Vale organizers also needed to persuade the audience to join with them and work within the law. Glastonbury managed to do this, not instantaneously, but eventually. The organizers of the Deeply Vale Festival were unable to follow a similar path.

The local authorities of Rossendale, Bury, and Rochdale could have been more supportive. They were blissfully unaware of the potential future economic and social benefits that a festival could bring. Hewitt says (in *Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale*) that "the same councils that wanted to stop us in the '70s now want all the photographs and footage in their heritage centers because they see it as a great cultural event."

Although Deeply Vale did not end up being a permanent annual music festival like Glastonbury, in some other respects it was as successful, if not more. It had a significant influence on the music scene in Manchester and the North West in the 1980s and 1990s.

The festival was significant in the way it brought different musical genres together. It was the first festival to bring New Wave punk together with hippie prog rock. It was the first rock festival to put reggae artists on. We now take this for granted, but it was not always the case. As Hewitt put it, "I think you could say a lot of seeds were germinated there" (quoted in Anson).

It can be said of Deeply Vale that it provided the blueprint for the modern music festival, with its ordered stage times, its mixing of musical genres and its annual fixture in the calendar. It provided an ethos that many festivals aspire to. Just as the town of Rochdale provided the blueprint for the English cooperative movement, Deeply Vale provided the blueprint for the modern music festival. As Luke Bainbridge says, "yes, it

was an absolute success. The fact we are still talking about it today makes it a success. It is part of musical history" (*Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale* film). We can also draw a direct link between Deeply Vale, Factory Records, the Haçienda nightclub, and the regeneration of Manchester: "The Haçienda nightclub envisaged Manchester as a post-industrial city. The Haçienda is where the city of Manchester can see that it can regenerate itself" (artist Peter Saville, in *The Haçienda: The Club That Shook Britain*). It can be argued that the final income generated by the Deeply Vale is considerably larger than the one generated by the Glastonbury Festival. Music festivals do not just adapt and respond to society. *Society also adapts and responds to music festivals.*

Note

1. New Age Travellers, mainly based in the UK, embrace New Age beliefs mixed with hippie culture of the 1960s. New Age Travelers often used to travel between free music festivals prior to a police crackdown in the 1980s and 1990s.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Chris Hewitt for comments and photographs. James Ingham is Principal Lecturer in the School of Arts & Media at the University of Central Lancashire. His background is in Geography and Music. He produces the much-acclaimed *On the Wire* specialist music radio show.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

James Ingham http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8477-3147

References

Anderton, Chris. "Festivals." In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music, Space and Place*, edited by Geoff Stahl and J. Mark Percival, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021, pp. 357–68.

Anderton, Chris. "From Woodstock to Glastonbury to the Isle of Wight: The Role of Festival Films in the Construction of the Countercultural Carnivalesque." *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 43, no. 2, May 2020, pp. 201–15. 10.1080/03007766.2019.1687670

Anderton, Chris. *Music Festivals in the UK: Beyond the Carnivalesque*. Routledge, 2019.

Anderton, Chris. "Risky Business: The Volatility and Failure of Outdoor Music Festivals in the UK." *LiveMusicExchange.org*, 14 Feb. 2019, http://livemusicexchange.org/blog/risky-business-the-volatility-and-failure-of-outdoor-music-festivals-in-the-uk-chris-anderton/. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.

Anson, John. "Deeply Vale–The Free Festival That Won't Be Forgotten." *LancashireTelegraph.co.uk*, 22 Aug. 2017, https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/leisure/15488840.deeply-vale-free-festival-wont-forgotten/. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.

The Archive: UK Rock Festivals 1960-90 & UK Free Festivals 1965-1990. https://www.ukrockfestivals.com/index.html. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.

Bennett, Andy. *Remembering Woodstock*. Ashgate, 2004.

Bennett, Andy, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward, edited by *The Festivalization of Culture*. Ashgate, 2014.
Clarke, Michael. *The Politics of Pop Festivals*. Junction Books, 1982.
Eavis, Emily, and Michael Eavis. *Glastonbury 50: The Official Story of Glastonbury Festival*. Trapeze, 2019.
Getz, Donald. "Why Festivals Fail." *Event Management*, vol. 7, no. 4, Apr. 2002, pp. 209–19, 10.3727/152599502108751604.
Hewitt, Chris. *Deeply Vale Festival – 40th Anniversary Weekend Booklet*. Ozit Morpheus, 2017.
Hewitt, Chris. *Tales of Deeply Vale Festival*. Ozit Morpheus, 2014.
Ingham, James. "Factory Records and the Situationist Influence on Urban Space." *Punk & Post-Punk*, vol. 5, no. 2, June 2016, pp. 163–79, 10.1386/punk.5.2.163_1.
Ingham, J., M. Purvis, and D. B. Clarke. "Hearing Places, Making Spaces: Sonorous Geographies, Ephemeral Rhythms, and the Blackburn Warehouse Parties." *Environment and Planning D, Society & Space*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1999, pp. 283–305, 10.1068/d170283.
Knee, Sam. *Memory of a Free Festival: The Golden Era of the British Underground Festival Scene*. Cicada Books, 2017.
McKay, George. *Glastonbury: A Very English Fair*. Gollancz, 2000.
McKay, George, edited by *The Pop Festival: History, Music, Media, Culture*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
Medhurst, John. *That Option No Longer Exists: Britain 1974-76*. Zero Books, 2014.
Robinson, Roxy. *Music Festivals and the Politics of Participation*. Ashgate, 2015.
Sandbrook, Dominic. *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979*. Penguin UK, 2012.
Spitz, Bob. *Barefoot in Babylon: The Creation of the Woodstock Music Festival, 1969-1979*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2014.
Waksman, Steve. *This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk*. U of California P, 2009.
Webster, Emma, and George McKay. From Glyndebourne to Glastonbury: The Impact of British Music Festivals. *Arts & Humanities Research Council/University of East Anglia*, 2016.
Wilkinson, Bruce. *Hidden Culture, Forgotten History: A Northern Poetic Underground and Its Countercultural Impact*. Penniless Press, 2017.
Wyatt, Malcolm. "Remembering the Bickershaw Festival, 50 Years on – Back in Conversation with Chris Hewitt." *Writewyattuk.com*, 8 July 2022, https://writewyattuk.com/2022/07/08/remembering-the-bickershaw-festival-50-years-on-back-in-conversation-with-chris-hewitt/. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.
Wyatt, Malcolm. "Return to Deeply Vale – in Conversation with Festival Pioneer Chris Hewitt." *Writewyattuk.com*, 12 Apr. 2018, https://writewyattuk.com/2018/04/12/return-to-deeply-vale-in-conversation-with-festival-pioneer-chris-hewitt/. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.

Audio

"Notable: Bickershaw and the Birth of the Theremin." Produced by Elizabeth Alker and Stuart Maconie. *Notable*. Podcast. 9 Dec. 2020. https://shows.acast.com/notable/episodes/bickershawandthebirthofthetheremin. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.
On the Wire–Radio Lancashire. 1 Nov. 2014. http://otwradio.blogspot.com/2014/11/playlist-1st-november-2014.html. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.
On the Wire–Radio Lancashire. 1 July 2017. http://otwradio.blogspot.com/2017/07/playlist-1st-july-2017.html. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.

Filmography and Videography

Glastonbury Fayre. Directed by Peter Neal and Nicolas Roeg. UK. 2018. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0810001/?ref_=nm_flmg_t_2_dr .
The Haçienda: The Club That Shook Britain. Directed by Matt Drury, UK. TV special. BBC 2. 5 Nov. 2022. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt23639030/.
Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970. Directed by Murray Lerner. USA. 1995. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0117028/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1
Truly, Madly, Deeply Vale. Directed by David Nolan. UK. Granada Television. 19 Nov. 2004. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truly,_Madly,_Deeply_Vale.

"2012 Bickershaw Festival Talk at Wigan Museum by Chris Hewitt.Wmv." Directed by Chris Hewitt. UK. 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-y1URhVmtc. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023.
Woodstock. Directed by Michael Wadleigh. USA. 1970. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066580/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1.