

IAN HINCHLIFFE



Drawing by Ian Hinchliffe (2009)

Ian Hinckley -  
"Down by the Riverside"

In 1987, I made a performance entitled "On Reflection" at the Riverside Studios. The piece was part of a NRLA event. After the performance was over, I somehow found myself performing again, this time in a workman's hole in the street. This had for me, somehow turned itself into a trench on the Somme. I proceeded to make mud sculptures whilst singing and chanting W.W.I. and music hall songs. These were interrupted by wails and screams.

A certain Mrs N. E. Cheese-Probart, a passer-by, didn't like it and was compelled to write. Here are some excerpts from her letter.

"Dear Madam,

You may be aware that Chancellor Street, in which I live, is opposite the Riverside Studios. On Sunday, 11th of October at 3 p.m. I went to my car which was parked outside the studios only to find a man sitting in a workman's hole. The man was stripped to the waist and covered in mud and appeared to be in a very distressed state. He was shouting in an incomprehensible manner and smearing further mud over his body.

After studying the man for a few minutes I decided that something had to be done and I called the police who arrived very promptly. The three officers then proceeded to question the man who eventually disclosed to them that he was in fact part of the NRLA being held at the Riverside. He was not apparently drunk, insane or under the effect of drugs and yet it was some time before he disclosed his identity and confirm that he was not in need of assistance. Had the man been in need of medicinal, psychiatric or other assistance, I would have been disturbed to see him at the top of my street, however, I would have been sympathetic to his plight. Give the actual circumstances I was disgusted at the way the police were treated, they should have been informed that there was no cause for alarm, however, this did not happen.

I apologised to the police for wasting their time but they assured me that I had taken the right steps and in fact they were taken in by his performance.

I understand from Riverside that this particular individual is of a very temperamental nature, however, this type of behaviour in our society cannot be tolerated. If he is unable to tow the line and conform to the minimum acceptable standards then I do not consider that he is a fit and proper person to be performing at Riverside Studios and hope that you will take a similar view when next he is booked or programmed for another performance.

Yours Sincerely,

MRS N.E. Cheese-Probert "

Copies were sent to Nikki Millican, Riverside Studios, the Arts Council and the Police.

This drawing is of my thoughts on the matter:

As for what I'm doing these days, I still live in my flat in South London and when I'm not in the pub, I'm usually fishing, painting or drawing - not necessarily in that order. I don't perform very often but was lucky enough to have a large scale retrospective at Chapter, Cardiff last winter. I spend time in Arkansas every now and then when we visit my partner's mother, who is 95 this year. My own father died last year and I will miss my trips to Yorkshire and the moors. I left that part of the country to live in London in 1960. Apart from a period of 18 months when I went to live in Leeds in the 70's, London has been my base camp.

I am now a pensioner officially but as an artist, you never retire. Anyway, see you around.

Ban the Bomb.

Jan Hinchliffe.