

To Ian With Love

Our Tributes

FOREWORD

Since Ian's death many tributes have been paid to him, so rather than add yet another, GMCDP has decided to collect them together and include some of them in this supplement to the monthly bulletin. The first tributes are those from family and friends read out when we gathered to say farewell to Ian on Monday 7th December 1998.

It is hard to express the feeling of loss we all felt but it is now time to remember all the positive things Ian has left with us. We must all now try to carry on the excellent work for disabled people that Ian believed in and worked so hard for so that his legacy will never be forgotten.

We will always miss you Ian, but will not rest until, we have won all the struggles that you fought so tirelessly for. This was so that disabled people would have an equal place in society and have all the rights you believed we deserve.

GMCDP Officers.

Ian Stanton - "Not Dead Yet"

> We are here today, as friends of Ian Stanton (the incredible shrinking man), not to say goodbye but to celebrate life and to reflect upon what Ian shared with us; because Ian's life was not about giving and taking but was very much about sharing. Sharing his time, his love, his music, his humour and his undying love of life.

Central to Ian's life was his family; Audrey, Brett, Chris, Nic, Val and his brother Dave and Audrey's sisters and their partners. Ian would frequently say that the last eight years with Audrey have been the happiest times of his life.

Ian refused to waste a single moment of their precious time together and would be forever planning his and Audrey's next holiday. Planning holidays was probably the only planning Ian ever did, everything else was usually left to the last minute, or done late; especially the Coalition magazine which was the other great love of his life.

Despite his chaotic lifestyle and his anarchic time-management Ian never liked letting people down. When he was in hospital he even asked Audrey to apologise for the next Coalition magazine being late.

Ian and Audrey had a very large extended family; friends, fellow musicians, disabled activists and everyone, in fact, who ever met them. We've tried hard over the last few days to try to remember anyone who Ian didn't get along with and have failed. That's not to say Ian was a saint, he would occasionally fallout with people, but not for long. No matter how badly he had been let down or badly treated he would quickly make up with people.

Ian and Audrey always found time for their friends, old and new, and never placed people in a pecking order, or displayed any jealousy of the time spent with others. They were always there for us in good times and bad. Audrey still is. Over the last few days anyone who has been able to get through on the phone has been greeted by Audrey asking "how are you", and demanding a joke or humorous story because having fun was central to Ian's life.

Ian would often tell me about the tremendous buzz he got from being able to do everything in his life he ever wanted to do. He achieved all of his ambitions, his only complaint was that he wanted a bigger portion of life.

Ian was proud of passing his 11 + and going to Grammar School, but was quickly bored. He ran away when his friend got into trouble, or more accurately got drunk at a prize giving ceremony at the Free Trade Hall, and spent two weeks on the run in Blackpool. He decided upon his return that he wanted to be a printer and got a job soon after leaving school at a print shop in Manchester. This developed his love of magazines and he subsequently published the "Tuppenny piece", "New View" and "Coalition".

The rebel in Ian made sure that each magazine took things to the edge, and he was proud of challenging "authority": he managed to get expelled from the rehabilitation training college he went to for exposing the abusive regime; made Oldham Chronicle when he attacked Oldham Social Services Department; and was threatened with legal action by Marjorie Proops and the Daily Mirror for attacking their patronising views of disabled people.

Ian was a natural born campaigner who tackled injustice throughout his life and was a talented musician, which we will hear more about in a moment, but he was also an aspiring actor. He had recently filmed a part in the drama spin-off from Casualty, which will be shown early next year. Ian plays the part of a 40ish, hippy, dope smoking, double amputee. When he went for the audition we joked that if he couldn't land this part then he would never make it as an actor.

Despite his many skills, his seemingly unlimited talent and his genuine good nature, you would never hear Ian talking about himself. His quiet self-deprecating style quickly put people at ease and won over their support. You would never find Ian playing the big ego-trip, what you saw was what you got.

My mate "No-Legs" was a truly amazing person and am proud, as we all are, to have been his friend.

Ian was not much into preaching but I am sure he wouldn't mind me ending by saying "don't ever say 'if only'". If you want to do something, go for it. Ian will always live on through his writings, songs and in all our hearts.

A little bit later we will be hearing one of Ian's songs, "Tragic but Brave", which Ian would have wanted people to join in with, so let's do it for our mate.

Martin Pagel

> Although Ian and I were only nephew and uncle we were very close. From when Nicola and I were very young he took the time to travel long distances to see me and Nicola compete in sporting events ranging from my fights which broke into football matches to Nicola's dancing shows. He always let us know how proud he was of us and we were very proud and fortunate to have an uncle like Ian.

Recently I went to see him play a gig in Manchester. I hadn't seen him play since I was a small boy and I'd forgotten what a great singer and songwriter he was, how he always got the audience involved in his party piece, it was a great night.

I always enjoyed our visits to Ian and Audrey when my dad, Ian and Audrey played cards and scrabble. The swearing and shouting as my dad was a very bad loser and Ian's sly grin when he managed to put one over on him. The last two years the three of us played football computer games with dad and Ian spending hours arguing over players and me usually winning anyway. They'll both be up there now nicking all the best players and by the time I get there there'll be none left, the tight pair of buggers.

When our dad died he put aside his own grief at losing his brother and helped us through it, I loved him to bits and will really miss him.

Chris

> I will miss Ian for many reasons. He was a friend as well as an uncle and I spent many happy times in his company.

I remember especially the times we were all together at Centre Parcs, we had such good times. He was such good company and I never felt I had to be on my best behaviour with him or Audrey.

I am so proud of him and everything he achieved in his life. He will always be an inspiration for me and I will always remember him with love.

Nicola

> I have know Ian for over 30 years. He's always been there through thick and thin, a great brother-in-law, a good friend, but never more so than in the last 12 months. I am so happy that he and Audrey met and gave each other so much happiness. They packed more life and love into their time together than most couples achieve in 50 years.

I have a lot to thank Ian for, his love and support always for Dave and for me and Nicola and Chris, and last but not least I thank him for bringing Audrey and Brett into our family, they have enriched our lives as they enriched his.

Brothers in arms are together again, what havoc they are causing I dread to think.

Val

>I am going to try to illustrate Ian's contribution to the Coalition and the wider movement by describing what it was like to work with Ian, in a variety of relationships (all of them innocent Audrey, honest)

In the very early days of the Coalition we actually "pinched" Ian from New Vale House, a local day centre; someone had heard he did a mean news- letter, so I guess we "head hunted" him. We really had to persuade him though, he didn't want the job at first, he was worried about his benefits!

I worked alongside Ian for 6 years. we shared a desk for a while -I had 12 inches and he had the rest plus the phone! He always had butter and brown sauce in the fridge, and didn't seem to need much else -except some bread to pile them on. And

his sense of direction was appalling -I swear he once went to London via the Mersey Tunnel.

Ian was so laid back he was almost horizontal and, as his boss he gave me much valuable practice in project management, all on his own -we once pinned a cartoon above his desk, of a monk working on his own carefully on an illuminated manuscript saying "deadline, what effing deadline?"

Ian also had a strange notion of a working day, which he seemed to think began about 11 am in the morning and ended late into the night! Needless to say, we had a constant struggle with Ian's laid back approach to make sure the mag came out regularly!

But what we were all aware was -that if we sacrificed a little quantity and frequency, we were more than rewarded by the quality of Ian's ground breaking work, which covered three major areas-

Firstly the Infosheet, which quickly became the model for all newsletters to imitate,

Secondly the "Coalition" mag -Ian was both contributor and, his most treasured role, editor. The mag is still second to none for analysis and debate, and was a vehicle to taunt the establishment -being threatened with legal action by prominent figures from Leonard Cheshire to Marge Proops, was almost entirely to Ian's credit -well we tried to blame him at least!

Thirdly, the Info Service -Ian's files were one of the wonders of the modern world -HE knew where things were, but it made little sense to anyone else -AND his address book was something to covet -his contacts and resources were second to none. In addition to this is the support that Ian gave to Coalition and other campaigns, whether local or national.

Despite all this activity, Ian was a modest man.. once I told Ian that he had been described in a book as an "organic intellectual" and he laughed, and

said "Bloody hell, what does that mean?"

When I asked people who have known Ian and worked closely with him, either for a very long time or only recently, they asked me to mention ...

- * how he would make you feel at ease when you made a gaffe -such as Thelma looking for a light typewriter that he could carry on his knee.

- * inspiration -both on a personal level and more widely through his writings and his music.

- * a patience -to explain messages behind his songs, for example. * a calmness, when others were stressed and panicking * a priceless legacy, for us to keep alive

- * an abundance of memories and a wealth of love.

Ian was also a man of integrity and a team player -both within the Coalition staff group and after he "retired" -and I use that word advisedly. He was on sub-groups, he was a DA T trainer, Ian was on the Executive Council -and had recently been nominated to return; he was first point of contact for some staff, he was co-Chair with myself for a while.

In all his roles, he had a gentle way of saying incisive and sometimes difficult things, but he would also be supportive. Ian's political analysis, and understanding of the rapidly changing politics of disability, he shared with us all, and by doing so helped strengthen the pool of knowledge and insight available to the Coalition.

Ian's support and influence have contributed to the movement in ways I find impossible to analyse and present to you here. But the fact that the Coalition is and has been one of the leading organisations in the disabled people's movement owes much to Ian's contribution and it is no exaggeration that his influence stretches from Oldham and Manchester, throughout the country and beyond.

We will miss you deeply Ian

Lorraine Gradwell, on behalf of GMCDP

> It has been a shock at losing Ian and great loss to us all. All my thoughts are with Audrey in particular and Ian's close family right now..

But Ian's legacy to us is a wealth of superbly crafted songs, hours of video footage (much of which landed on the cutting room floor due to his sheer mischief) and many wonderful happy memories.

Ian was one of the giants of the Disability Arts movement (although he'd cringe at my saying this as he had such humility about him). Ian was all heart. His music was a passionate appeal to common sense and spilled over with his humanity. I feel blessed to have know him and very privileged to call him my friend. We clicked at once when we first met on the music scene, on the disability arts circuit.. there was always mischief afoot, singa-longs over a bottle of brandy and some wicked ribbings..

There was a beautiful photograph of Ian that was taken as part of the Images of Movement exhibition which has never been shown because one particular woman described it as sexist.. apparently Ian holding his banjo aloft, resting on his wheelchair was aping an erect Penis! I always thought this was bloody stupid and said more about the woman herself.. what's wrong with sex? And what is it with banjos? But this started an on-going ribbing with Ian, so whenever he appeared on stage (and we were frequently on the same bill) I'd be heckling: "Oyo! Ian, your banjo's showing.. or, Hey you, what are you up to with that banjo? You're NOT taken' THAT to bed..."

He loved it.. I want to give you this piece that I wrote after the direct action in Derby, because Ian liked it, and it gives you a flavor of him..

We're standing in the frontline, our placards flapping proud
the whistling winds are whipping up
frustrations in the crowd
"You should be in institutions! Get off our bleeding bus!
You're all Marxists causing mayhem!.. all this bloody fuss!"
Well we've stopped the traffic smartly
and the depots flanked in chains
Nail's cuffed himself to a single
Barbara's under wheels again
And Johnny and Ian are ranting some anthem to the throngs
of disgruntled Derby shoppers
not too impressed with songs.
The police patrol have lost the plot
not one of theme's too sure
"how do you grip a rip when your arresting Sage?
they're all draped around the floor.."
Audrey's looking tickled now
at Sue's antics in her chair
she's into fancy dancing' with her banner in the air
"Piss on Pity, Civil Rights Now!
You say this bus is PUBLIC
Well come 'ead show me HOW.."
and I catch myself despairing

that folks won't really sus
Why we're trapping all the traffic,
why we've repossessed their bus
So I drag out one of Christie's tunes
to explain the situation
and Johnny and Ian sing out loud
the politics of the nation...
"Oooh you ride the finest Bus we have ever seen
standing their without a ramp
where it could've been
and you ride that bus so well
hands light to the touch
but we could never ride with you no matter how we wanted to..
Ride on.. see you, we could never go with you
no matter how we wanted to...
we could never go with you, no matter how we wanted to.."

Ian, thank you for your music, your compassion and tenderness in your reaching out to all the people who passed through your life. Thank you for your passion and politics, and most of all, for your love. You are still in our hearts.

Julie McNamara, on behalf of the Disability Arts Movement

> I do believe it is only when you look back on your life that you realise there are certain moments, certain events that shape who you become in the rest of your life. One of these very few and precious moments happened to me when I met Ian about 16 years ago.

I had started a new career, I was full of energy and ideas but very naive. Ian on the other hand, was laid back, thoughtful, clearly more life experienced than me, and was just about to sparkle even brighter in the world.

Within a matter of weeks we became very close friends, and as the relationship grew I think people though we were almost joined at the hip. What one did the other would support, what one thought the other would encourage and where one would go the other followed. We philosophised, theorised, debated, argued and consoled. We started a band, a disability newspaper, played our latest songs to each other, worked hard and played hard. We also had some of our lightest and darkest moments together.

And within this, particularly at a time when I didn't know where I belonged, Ian made me feel like the most important person in his life. He was never judgmental, always unconditional, supportive, caring, honest and true- **but then there was snooker!**

Snooker was a recurring passion throughout our friendship, one which we shared with numerous other friends. Ian would bring his mates, I would bring mine, and lasting friendships were born. However, snooker did have an adverse effect on Ian, it had a way of putting on hold all those wonderful attributes and qualities we know he possessed.

A typical session would involve him in changing the rules mid-frame, indeed mid-shot. Exploiting the opponents weakest link was a tool often used, but reverting to childish antics was his main strategy. Throwing the snooker chalk on the table while his opponent was taking a shot, was nothing compared to him unscrewing his opponents cue, leaving it leaning against the wall only to indulge in juvenile belly laughter when his opponent picked it up and it fell apart. But we of course, his friends, would never dream of stooping to such underhand tactics. To this day I have no idea where he got these notions from!

I don't necessarily see Ian's passing as a loss, the real loss to me would have been if I hadn't met him in the first place. I feel happy with the choices I have made in life but if it wasn't for Ian I wouldn't have taken some of those choices, I wouldn't even have known what some of them were and for that alone, I feel very privileged that he wanted to share part of his life with me.

Ian, I love and will miss you but you have left me with wondrous memories that will guarantee you stay my closest and dearest friend for ever.

Happy journey.

Derek Broadbent - friend.

There is so much more that could have been said about Ian, but like his gigs things had to be left out of the "set"

Ian took life to the limit and put his last energy into taking control of his life and preparing us all for his death. Ian has given us all his strength and love of life and it's now up to us.

"When Ian arrived at the Pearly Gates, he rang the bell. St Peter opened up and asked "are you Ian Stanton?" Ian nodded, "well where the hell have you been for the last five years?"

Safe journey buddy,

Martin Pagel

The following have been taken from the message page opened on the Ian Stanton,
Rollin' Thunder Web Site
www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/5308

> Whilst knew you for such a long time, having met in the pubs of Oldham when I was about 18, I didn't realise how many people were going to miss you. Why didn't you let on that you were famous? You're a great bloke Ian. we'll all miss you. Thanks for being with us when you could, and for leaving us your music when you couldn't, we should name something after you.

> Those who are special will never lose you, personally I've just been surfing round this little ol' website and found a "What the Critics Said" section -who are you kidding, you never had any critics did you?

> The disability movement has lost yet another of its activists and fighters with loss of Ian Stanton. I have always found his words, both lyrically and textually, reassuring and recharging. Through his articles and songs, he has always reminded me of society's role in the oppression of disabled people, and of the ongoing struggle for civil rights. Thank you Ian, have watched with pride your performances across the country.

> Ian was a great friend and supporter of the scheme to set up the Leeds Centre for Integrated Living and was to have spoken at the opening ceremony in December. To pay tribute to Ian as a leading member of the Disabled People's Movement, and as our friend, we dedicated the opening of Leeds CIL to his memory.

> What shall miss most about Ian was his warmth. Any time! turned up to a gig and found Ian sitting there with is pint and a fag, I knew that, whatever the audience was like, it was going to be an enjoyable night. Ian's politics and his music were rooted in that same tremendous humanity. With his death we have suffered a great loss.

> At times like this we begin to wonder IS there an "other side"? And if there is would it REALLY be this promised land of equality and rights? If not, we know that Ian would be waiting with our torch burning, lighting our way as he did in life. Thank you to Ian, a warrior who will always be remembered, a sad loss to his family, disabled people and the movement as a whole.

> Its really hard to say this but "goodbye Ian". So sorry you could only stay with us a short time. You've been such an important and inspirational figure in our movement and I'm very glad I had the chance to meet you and spend a little time with you. Apart from your songs that I can hum even after not hearing them for a while, what I remember most about you was your warmth and your laugh. You were such an unpretentious and modest man but you had wonderful talents which you used fully to

the benefit of all disabled people. We will miss you very much but we will never forget you.

➤ It always seemed as if Ian hadn't an enemy in the world. In fact, as these tributes will demonstrate, Ian lastingly touched the lives of all those people lucky enough to have met him. I first met Ian when he joined the staff of GMCDP as the information worker. It soon became clear that his commitment to the disabled people's movement and to GMCDP was absolute, often taking on more work than he could find time to do! Ian forged the GMCDP magazine into the respected publication it is today which now is a lasting legacy. Later when he retired from work and joined the management committee, Ian still had problems saying "no" and took on more and more responsibilities. The only way Ian could reduce his work-load was to leave the management committee. This he could only do for a year -he had accepted nomination to return at the next AGM. His contribution will be missed. It was quite a while after he joined GMCDP that I discovered he was a musician. At the time I was doubtful about the value of "disability culture" and the arts scene. Many conversations with Ian, and listening to his music, changed my view considerably. When Ian tried to reduce his activity in GMCDP I was pleased to be able to keep contact over the Internet. We discovered a common interest in Chess which we played together via Email. I'll miss sharing a pint (or 2) with Ian at conferences, I'll miss putting the world to right with him (after those pints), I'll miss looking forward to his next new song, I'll simply miss our conversations. In future years someone new to the disability movement will say "so who was this Ian Stanton?". Each of us who knew him will have a different answer. I would probably say that Ian was a loyal and tenacious disabled activist with a big heart who sung. We have suffered a great loss.

> Ian -how to describe my feelings of loss? For me, I will miss our evenings playing estimation whist or scrabble; our gossip and our political analysis and sorting the world out; the fact that I could talk with you about, well anything really. To borrow your own words -and probably not for the last time(!) -"I can talk to you you understand..." You have been ~y longstanding (pardon the pun) colleague, my "touchstone", and my friend, I shall miss you.

> Ian was an inspiration to myself and all the Young Disabled People that had the opportunity to meet such a wonderful man. What I have gained over the years of knowing Ian Stanton will always live on in me and others to. I am grateful for being introduced to such a talented man, had I not been I would have missed such a good opportunity to learn so much about Ian personally and through his music, I just want to thank him for working with me over the years, I would not be where I am now. I will continue to write poems in his memory as he was the inspiration behind me starting to write disability poems. I will never forget that evening in the Green Room.

> Ian's tape is the "most played" on long journeys (even though some of our able bodied passengers look puzzled) We only met him a couple of times but he was one of those "once met never forgotten" people. We will never forget him and the fun he has given us.

> To Ian, To have given so much inspiration through your music and humour alone is truly a legacy to be proud of. When you add the legacy of Coalition -still the most productive and thought provoking vehicle for writing within the movement -your contribution to so many people's lives has simple been awesome. For this, and all the other reasons people have already stated, you will be so greatly missed. I have the greatest respect and admiration for you.

> Ian -how can any disabled person say one thing about him because he was all things to all disabled people. A friend, a colleague, a great musician, an advisor, a role model, a fighter -the list is endless. All I can say is that my personal world will be smaller without him but I know that I will always have the way he influenced my life as a lasting tribute to him. He didn't let the bastards grind him down!

> Your music said what I could not, and brought a smile to my face. You will be so greatly missed by the disabled community and beyond. Thank you Ian for your music and for inspiring so many.

> Ian you will be sadly missed and all can think to say is "Thank you so very much". When I met you I developed a world of friendly thoughts and have always had such warm regards for you, Goodbye my dear friend.

> Ian, you and Audrey helped me more than you will ever know, I really did respect you, I am just sorry that I didn't get chance to tell you. love mate.

> Ian Stanton -Ian was much more than a work colleague, working with him was a learning experience; an opportunity to increase our own knowledge of the Disabled people's Movement. Despite his numerous commitments Ian always made the time and was always ready to listen and to offer support to GMCDP staff. Most of all working with Ian was great fun. Putting across the very important issues disabled people face was a real talent of Ian's, he did this through the Coalition magazine, often through his wicked and highly infectious sense of humour. Ian's commitment and enthusiasm was contagious. He didn't demand our respect but earned it- he made no judgments. Being committed to all social injustice not just within the disabled people's movement made him a genuinely all round decent bloke. We will miss him very, very much.

> Ian was one of the very rare and remarkable people who have made the world a better place. It seems impossible to guess how far his influence goes because his deep

commitment to, and his involvement in the disabled people's movement is so far reaching. But it is clear that Ian's presence is an essential part of both the political disabled people's movement and politically-orientated disability arts. Ian never sought or expected any personal gain, he just gave, he was very reluctant to accept anything in return, be it compliment or applause, let alone anything more. Ian communicated his wisdom and humour in a way that was easy to understand. His modesty, humility, affection and inoffensive manner was stunning. The loss of Ian is a devastating blow to everyone who knew him, he must be one of the most loved men ever. I consider myself to have been privileged to have know Ian for the past six years. I consider myself to be always one of his friends.

> It should be written in mile high letters, splashed across every newspaper... It should be announced on the hour, every hour across the airways. The lights should all go out mysteriously, in all the major cities of the world. But life goes on, and life goes on, and life goes on. And we are left to fill up the empty places with Remembrance and Pride and share our hurt down the phone lines and across the Internet, passing on the responsibility of Grief towards the finishing line, Towards the Finishing Line in the middle distant future. When we cross it exultant Ian will be carried along with us.

> Ian was a hard line activist who was universally loved. The disability movement is hugely indebted to him but his music will ensure the immortality of a wonderful man.

> Ian, you were such a great life-force, principled, original and deeply caring, and I shall miss you greatly. Recently I asked you to write a reference for me, and I shall treasure it always. When I asked how I should describe you, without hesitation you said "Editor"!

> Ian, I had only the chance to know you briefly, to hear your words in song and in conversation. In public and in your home I noticed the warmth and affection that people showed to you, a warmth and affection that came from you. I feel that those who knew you will be celebrating you, your life and your work.

> Goodbye Ian. It was a privilege to have know and worked with you. You represented the finest aspects of the disability movement, passionate committed, funny and open to all. You will be sadly missed, but your music and message lives on.

> Ian was one of the rare men I knew who was universally loved. He has been a great source of strength, and losing him will leave a massive gap in our community. We'll miss you too much.

> Ian there was no better person equipped to put the message across the world for all disabled people, tolerant, kind, an enormous friendly attitude to everyone you came into contact with at every level. Within your company I never heard you complain,

you challenged the system and beat it! Your songs will go on for ever! What a guy from Yonnerland!

> Ian was a giant, his music, his art was an inspiration to us all. Its hard to imagine disability arts ever being the same again.

> 12 years, 5 months and 25 days you were my personal friend, my work colleague, my listening ear, my advisor, my teacher, one of my Boss' (being on the management committee), the list could go on and on. Being your friend was like being one of your family, because that's how you and Audrey always made me feel, you extended that same feeling to members of my family to, each one having their own personal memories of you, like the nail you removed from my daughters foot when nobody else would touch it, the way you responded and chuckled at my young son's comment when driving with you in your first car (remember the mini), that his remote control toy car could get up the hill faster than yours was going, the love of music and gigs my eldest son shared with you, to the way you put up with my grandson pushing you round the bungalow in your wheelchair when you dubbed him "a budding social worker"

I have read all that others have written about you and find I can add very little, it has all been said but personally on the work front I always had the greatest respect for you, your companionship as a work colleague, your way with words and your wealth of knowledge, not just about disability issues either although they were usually the topic of our conversations. I have to plead guilty to the fact that even after you retired almost a year ago I still contacted you often for advice and guidance, and as always you never said no, or you had no time, or could it wait a few days. Working with, and being around you has been a valuable learning process for me, someone who was very "green" on disability issues 12 years, 5 months and 25 days ago, I couldn't have wished for a better teacher.

You were one in a million Ian and I will miss you so much, but one thing you can be sure of, through my many wonderful memories, your music and my work at GMCDP you will always be with me -love you lots.

The following are messages received at GMCDP

via Email or the post.

> Ian will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him. He was as you know, a great teacher as well as a great song writer and performer. He taught me from the beginning on disabled rights and was by nature a true gentleman. If we meet. in our lives one person like Ian Stanton, then it was a gift from God and our lives are richer for

knowing him, we are privileged indeed. Play Rollin Thunder in your homes as loud as your neighbours would allow you to, we should celebrate his life.

> I wilt really miss Ian, as we worked together so many times. He was always fun to be with, and I learnt so much from him about Disability Culture.

> Ian's contribution to life was considerable. He inspired so many disabled people through his presence, It is a tragic loss for the national movement.

> One of the original fighters for full Civil Rights for disabled people, he will be greatly missed by the movement. It's thanks to people like Ian that disabled people have come so far in such a relatively short space of time. To quote his own words from Coalition, the GMCDP magazine.." we are no longer passive recipients of whatever crumbs are thrown our way, we have progressed to fight for our rights, by all the means at our disposal", I was proud to call Ian my friend, I'll miss him.

> Ian and Audrey, in the time that I have know them have given me nothing but unconditional support and went out of their way to be there for me when things were tough. I know they have given this support to countless others as well. Ian was rare and priceless, and everyone I know has nothing but good to say about him. Everyone who has known him will be deeply hurt over losing him. I for one owe him a great deal.

> I am devastated that the movement has lost yet another of its great campaigners. I found him a wonderful friend and comrade, especially after the loss of my own partner when my life felt as if it had completely fallen apart. I appreciate that no words can fill the enormous gap that Ian will leave in the life of all of us who knew him, and valued his humour and wit. One great advantage is that we shall always have Ian's presence with us (if only second hand) through his music and songs.

> I only spoke to him once on the telephone but I knew of all the work he did on our behalf to make the world a less disabling place to be. He will be missed amongst so many, who like me, hardly knew him but were touched by his humour and resolve and his strength.

> I have fond memories of Ian's cabaret nights for SCOOP AGMs at Nottingham and of course his cassette tapes will live with us for many years to come and remind us of his strength and humour.

> Everyone who knew Ian, both personally and through his perceptive, funny and dynamic protest songs, is deeply saddened that his life, which enriched us all, has suddenly ended. Ian was a warm, humorous campaigner in the movement, who could sum up our feelings and struggles in one telling anecdote. He came from a tradition of

identifying with every struggle for rights and recognition. One October some years back he performed outside Manchester Town Hall as part of Time off for Women, which we co-ordinate. Despite the freezing cold he managed to liven up the crowd which had put on the clothes from our jumble sale to keep warm. His experience, care for others and commitment are captured in the interviews and songs he recorded. His memory will live on and he will encourage us in our campaigning for a better life for disabled people and for everyone.

The following is a tribute paid to Ian Stanton in the Guardian Newspaper -written by
Tom Shakespeare

Ian Stanton who has died aged 48, was the British disability movement's best-loved activist and premier sing songwriter. His lyrics encapsulated the humour and anger of the civil rights struggle of disabled people, his songs enlivened the Direct Action Network's demonstrations nationwide. He was universally respected and admired for his integrity, commitment and passion.

He was born in Oldham and educated at the local grammar school. His ambition was to be a printer, and he was one until developing Berger's Disease in the 1970's which led to the loss of both of his legs. Later he was to compare himself humorously to a more famous amputee in a song which began "When it seem life's getting harder I remember Douglas Bader" and went on, "I am sad', yes I'm pathetic, I'm a fan of Oldham Athletic",

Ian was never pathetic. Sent to Queen Elizabeth Rehabilitation College, he became the first person to be expelled for producing a samizdat newsletter denouncing what he saw as bad practices at the institution.

His journalistic career continued at an Oldham Day Centre with another users' newsletter attacking paternalism. When Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People was formed in 1983, Ian was the obvious candidate to edit the journal, "Coalition" which became required reading for disabled activists across the country.

His musical career took off after a course at Northern College taught by Richard Stilgoe. He started singing at clubs around Oldham and Ashton and subsequently went on to perform in day centres, disability arts cabarets, rallies and at mainstream events. He appeared at the Glastonbury Festival, at Belfast's Lyric Theatre, and performed at the 1992 Vancouver Folk Music Festival and the 1996 Cambridge Folk Festival. Ian poked fun at the prejudice that disabled people face, and songs such as "Tragic but Brave" and "Chip on Your Shoulder" have become anthems for the disability movement.

His was a self-deprecating wit, winning friends wherever he travelled or performed. But his health became steadily more uncertain. His marriage was brought forward in 1993 because doctors had given him 24 hours to live. He rallied, with his usual stubbornness, and found great happiness with Audrey, the love of his life, and his stepson Brett.

Ian's rebellious spirit continued until his final stay in hospital. Denied alcohol he swigged mouthwash, showing in his last days the determination which had served him throughout his life. His last message to his colleagues at the Greater Manchester Coalition was an apology, their journal was going to be late. Resuscitated after his heart had stopped, he survived long enough to watch the Manchester United match and say a proper goodbye to Audrey and his friends.

His biggest ambition was to act on mainstream television, which was recently fulfilled when he played the part of a forty something dope smoking disabled rebel on next January's Casualty spin off. It is a fairly accurate portrait of the man, but his memorial will; be the major contribution his music made to the civil rights struggle of disabled people.

Tom Shakespeare,

Ian we will all miss you so very much
