



Craigmillar Park in August 1978.

An RAR fanzine, Temporary Hoarding, ran for 15 issues, and featured era-defining work by Never Again! Rock Against Racism & the Anti-nazi League 1976-1982 by David Renton is published by Routledge Books, £16.99, and is

launched at Augustine United Church, Edinburgh, Friday, 7pm; STUC, Glasgow, Saturday, 2.30pm [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com) photographer Syd Shelton. In 2017, Street Level Photoworks in Glasgow hosted an exhibition of Shelton's evocative images of bands, fans and activists. This was augmented by enlarged images from the Temporary Hoarding archive, as well as posters from Scottish RAR events. Some of the latter was taken from the collection of Paul Robertson, who in 2012 curated an exhibition of RAR and ANL posters at Summerhall in Edinburgh. This included some from Robertson's own collection, including a poster from the Edinburgh Carnival. Robertson, incidentally, was one of the young activists guarding the Victoria Park stage overnight back in 1978.

That year saw RAR become a major force, with the first Carnival attracting more than 100,000 people to a free concert featuring The Clash, Steel Pulse, Tom Robinson Band, X-ray Spex, Sham 69 singer Jimmy Pursey and Patrik Fitzgerald. Misty in Roots played on the back of a truck leading the six-mile march to the park. The second, in September, took place in Brixton, and featured Aswad, Elvis Costello and Stiff Little Fingers.

The Northern Carnival in Manchester was headlined by Buzzcocks, Steel Pulse and The Fall, while

smaller events included a Liverpool open-air concert witnessed by this writer, and featured alternative theatre companies Belt and Braces and The Sadista Sisters alongside local bands Ded Byrds, Kilikuri and 29th and Dearborn. The Craigmillar Park Edinburgh Carnival might not have had The Clash, but Aswad and local luminaries Scars, The Freeze, The Valves and The Deleted did appear.

Renton was a small child when all this was going on, but became aware of racist activity from an early age.

“At primary school, the desks were covered in swastikas,” he says, “and there were people talking about ‘Jewing each other’, and people being racially abused. I remember that happening, but then it went away really quickly, and I never understood why.”

This has influenced everything Renton has done since, both as a writer and activist. In his day job as a barrister, one of his highest-profile cases to date was representing construction worker Dave Smith, who successfully sued Carillion Ltd after it was discovered Smith and hundreds of others had been blacklisted. This era was documented by artist Lucy Parker in an exhibition and film seen at Rhubaba gallery in Edinburgh.

Today, organisations such as Love Music, Hate Racism (LMHR) have picked up the baton of RAR. While

LMHR continues to fly the flag through regular events, the days of massed carnivals appear to be long gone. Meanwhile, another pocket of resistance has just begun through AF Trax, a new sub label of iconic Glasgow club night Optimo founded by Keith Mcivor, aka JD Twitch, with the AF standing for Against Facism.

Forthcoming releases by live artist and DJ Guy Veale, aka Logtoad, Al Jerry and Hot Chip's Joe Goddard may sound different from the class of '78, but Mcivor has credited RAR as being the inspiration behind the label, and each release will feature a manifesto on the sleeve. While such a move is to be welcomed, Renton sees the main centre of activity moving beyond music.

“We need something with the same energy as RAR,” he says, “but which isn't just copying it. But the racist cultural milieu isn't music any more. It's online.”

Renton cites a group called Game Workers Unite, which promotes antiracism online. “They put out messages against racism,” says Renton, “and work against the racist cultural milieu in a fantastic way. Just as RAR was really important for the few years it existed, what they are doing now is just as vital.”

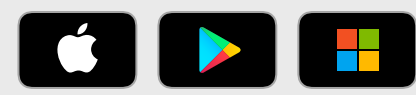
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