



Organised Chaos by Annebella Pollen

SEPTEMBER 7, 2017 • DARK AGES • 2023, ANNEBELLA POLLEN, BADGER KULL, BILL DRUMMOND, BURN A MILLION QUID, JIMMY CAUTY, KIBBO KIFT, THE JAMS, THE JUSTIFIED ANCIENTS OF MU MU, THE K FOUNDATION, THE KLF, WELCOME TO THE DARK AGES

We welcome a very special *guest writer* – Art Historian and Author of [‘The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift: Intellectual Barbarians’](#), **Annebella Pollen**. On ‘Day 1’ of ‘Welcome To The Dark Ages’ a public hearing was held at The Black-E, Liverpool to find out ‘Why Did The K Foundation Burn A Million Quid?’ A panel of experts was formed to give their thoughts on the matter. Dr Annebella Pollen was one of the five individuals selected and was exceptionally well received by the attendees. Now, Annebella reflects on the event and shares her story with us.

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THE JUSTIFIED
ANCIENTS OF MU MU
PRESENT ‘WELCOME
TO THE DARK AGES’ IN
LIVERPOOL (1H24M)

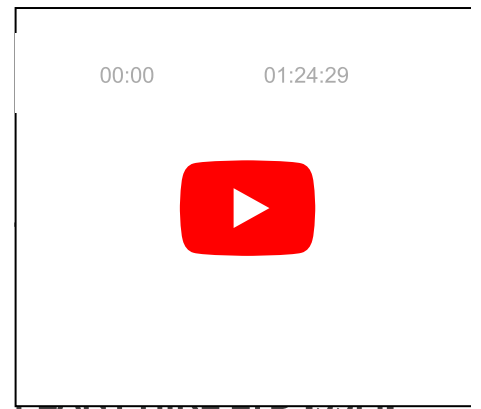
Organised Chaos

Art historian [Annebella Pollen](#) goes native with the KLF



It's Friday 25 August and I'm in a warehouse nightclub in Liverpool at the stroke of midnight, hysterically cheering on [Badger Kull](#), a band with only one song, who didn't exist three days ago. I'm dressed in a hooded yellow plastic robe bearing symbols and slogans unfamiliar to the uninitiated, pock-marked with burn holes from the embers of a grand ritual pyre. My face is smeared with the sweaty remains of black and white skull paint. As I look around me, 400 others look the same. A man I barely know embraces me. *Look!* He says, *We did all this!*

Back track a couple of days... It's Wednesday morning and I'm making some final tweaks to my notes for a [panel event](#) in the evening. I take part in public discussions all the time as an academic, but this event is a little different in form and content from most, and I'm feeling uneasy. Earlier in the summer, artist and writer [Tom James](#) had written out of the blue asking if I'd ever heard of the KLF. Well, yes. I'm certainly the right age. In my long-



ARCHIVES OF MU

- [The Dark Ages have now left the building](#) August 11, 2019
- ['Forever – Book 1': The Review](#) December 9, 2018
- [Discordia Toxteth Visits The JAMs 23/11/18](#) by Discordia Toxteth December 1, 2018
- [JAMs: Job Cards – the 'Toxteth Day Of The Dead 2018' collection](#) November 25, 2018
- [Toxteth Day Of The Dead 2018 – Beating The Bounds: Map – \[Photos\]](#) by Mike Cooper November 25, 2018
- [The Introduction To The Manual \[How To Build A Pyramid Of Stolen](#)

distant rave years I came up to *What Time is Love* and came down to *Chill Out*, but didn't we all?

Back track a little further... I'd only met Tom once before, and briefly. He'd come to a talk I was giving at Whitechapel Gallery in London in early 2016. I was discussing the subject of [my exhibition](#) there, the quirky camping and campaign group of the 1920s, the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift. Specifically I was exploring their artistic influences and their artistic legacy in conversation with [Judge Smith](#), the brilliant and barmy co-founder of prog rock band, Van Der Graaf Generator, and the co-author of a musical, *Kibbo Kift: A Rock Show*, in 1976. Tom spoke to me at the end, full of new-found enthusiasm for the curious campers, who share a post-apocalyptic tendency with his tongue-in-cheek survival guide, [A Future Manual](#).

Tom suggested in his 2017 invite that I might be able to tell an interesting story that linked Kibbo Kift with KLF. I was fairly certain that there were no material connections between the two, but that wasn't going to stop me. My Kibbo Kift research has already led to interesting intersections with new communities, from [communes](#) in the Oxfordshire countryside to Black Metallars in [Oslo](#). The KLF connection seemed particularly tenuous, but I gave it a whirl.

As I immersed myself in all things Justified and Ancient, I found a number of persuasive parallels. The first and most striking was visual; both K groups conducted [strange goings-on](#) in stone circles and beneath pyramids, and paraded in robed rituals of mysterious purpose. These might be visual homonyms – things that look similar but have differing meanings – but there was much philosophical parity too. The application of ideas from avant-garde art and advertising to public messaging – even when the message was less than

[Shopping Trolleys The Easy Way](#)] – The Justified Ancients Of Mu Mu Reveal Their Zenarchistic Method Used In Making The Unthinkable Happen – [Photos] by Chris Payne & [PDF Scan] by Andrew Lee November 25, 2018

- [Toxteth Day Of The Dead 2018](#) presented by K2 Plant Hire Ltd [Video] by dfegroups November 25, 2018
- [JAMs: Job Cards – the 'Burn The Shard – Part One' collection](#) November 21, 2018
- ['Vision 2040'. The Review](#) November 17, 2018
- [You Join The Collective – The internal monologue of a first-time drummer](#) by Lee Ashcroft November 17, 2018
- [The 400 Remix Project – The Officiator, Oliver Senton speaks...](#) August 6, 2018
- [Vision 2040: Excerpt](#) by Pries Verhon August 5, 2018
- [The 400 Remix Project – Sleeve Notes Pt.2](#) by Various Artists July 24, 2018
- [The 400 Remix Project – Sleeve Notes Pt.1](#) by Various Artists July 23, 2018
- [From The Ashes: The400 Remix Project](#)

clear – meant that a similar tenor was sounded between the two organisations across time, and a sense of cultural rebirth and eschatological fervour was present in both groups. Most extraordinarily, this resulted in both cases in a fixation on [money and its illusions](#).



KLF: Still from The Rites of Mu, 1991

I pieced these things together into a historical and mythical dialogue of words and images, and packed them in my bag to take north. I was still nervous, however. News sources were saying that 400 tickets for the three days of events had sold out in less than an hour, at £100 each. I pictured an audience of KLF uber-fans collectively stroking their chins at my counterfactual claims and impatiently correcting me with their infinitely superior knowledge of who had played on what B-side, and their meticulous memory of every last KLF utterance. That my presentation was wholly conjectural was confirmed by Tom on the way to the Black-E panel venue, when he told me that Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty hadn't heard of Kibbo Kift until he had showed them [my book](#) a couple of months before.

Story by Andy Gell May 20, 2018

- [The Sentence by Alistair Fruish](#) – an essential, innovative and important piece of modern literature April 2, 2018
- [‘Together’: The Review](#) February 28, 2018
- [The Lost Voice – A Dark Ages Memoir by Carlboy](#) January 29, 2018
- [Sidebets and Forced Futuristic Art – Part 3](#) by Pries Verhon January 25, 2018
- [Sidebets and Forced Futuristic Art – Part 2](#) by Pries Verhon January 25, 2018
- [A Tale Of Two Books](#) by Ben Graham January 21, 2018
- [Gatecrash The Shard](#) by Darren Tyler January 7, 2018
- [Tales of Repetitive Beatnik Glory](#) by Michelle Olley January 4, 2018
- [Manhole \(Cover Story\)](#) by Burning Wheel December 13, 2017
- [Badger Kull – A Fan Art Gallery...](#) by Lone Resident December 9, 2017
- [Sidebets and Forced Futuristic Art – Part 1](#) by Pries Verhon December 5, 2017
- [Badger Kull 2.0 – Cally Badger Speaks...](#)



Kibbo Kift: Members at camp, 1928. Photo courtesy of the Kibbo Kift Foundation.

I needn't have worried. The spirit of playfulness was palpable on entering the venue on Wednesday night, and my economist, artist and journalist panel companions were in an equally amused mood. None of us, of course, knew why the K Foundation burned a million quid but each had cheerfully taken up the gauntlet. When I made my claim for a relationship between KK and KLF, there were sympathetic laughs, whoops and cheers. I ended:

These K-based shapeshifters are on a continuum, drawing on sometimes bewildering shamanic, retrofuturist and apocalyptic symbolism and ritual. They each seek answers deep in the past and future, outside everyday life, and beyond the rational. Through this lens, the burning of a million pounds by the K Foundation can be explained as a ceremonial annihilation of excess and a spectacular magick act, designed to disrupt the prevailing order, to expose the fiction of conventional economic value, and build alternative social status. The KK is dead! Long live the K!

December 4, 2017

- [Badger Kull – For One Night Only](#) by Matthew Crampton November 30, 2017
- [‘Who ate all the pies?’ b/w ‘Chasing after Winnie’](#) by Ade and Amanda Cartwright November 29, 2017
- [Burn The Shard: Part One – A Walking Tour of 2023’s London](#) November 26, 2017
- [Pulling North](#) by Mike Cooper November 18, 2017
- [My parts in unfolding the continuing story of the Justified Ancients of Mu Mu](#) by Nick Gilmour November 16, 2017
- [You Join The JAMs – The internal monologue of a JAMs Choir Member](#) by Lee Ashcroft November 15, 2017
- [‘Whatever’: The Review](#) November 12, 2017
- [Whatever: Excerpt 2](#) by Andy Gell November 7, 2017
- [Dead Perch Merch – Interview: Welcome To The Dark Ages](#) November 6, 2017
- [Whatever: An Excerpt](#) by Andy Gell October 23, 2017
- [Neither Odd Nor Even](#) By The Lost Page October 23, 2017



Panel: Why Did the K Foundation Burn a Million Quid?
Photo by Dan Dares.

The fate of the presentation was sealed with a bucket full of pound coins, miscellaneous small change and a token for the fairground at Pier Head. The KK / KLF historical mash-up won the public vote and I was happy to receive a nonchalant *Whatever* from Drummond and Cauty. The resonance of a K-continuum was reinforced by an eager crowd of people pressing affirming gifts into my hands, from G&T, a can of Red Stripe, business cards and invites, to a badge featuring the penny farthing from *The Prisoner* and the magic number 23.

I only intended to stay one night for the panel. I had work engagements the following days, and I wasn't sure the rest of the event was for me. I'm intrigued by KLF but I'm not serious enough to be described as a fan. When I mentioned that I was going to leave, however, I was press-ganged to remain by a gaggle of new friends. I thought I would at least take a look at the following day's activities, and ended up appointed one of the Page Holders of KLF's new [2023](#) novel. I began to get further drawn into the strange new religion of DIY art-makers and performers, magicians and techies. I found myself singing an alternative Christmas Number One at the top of my lungs and gleefully staying on. Each day I planned to go home, but each day I added extra night to my hotel. Phoning my

- [The Greatest Job Of All / AKA How I Became Yoko Kunt by Mari Gustafson](#) October 22, 2017
- [From the Florrie to the Factory by Mandy Winter](#) October 22, 2017
- [A Scale of Value and Values... October 19, 2017](#)
- [Making art to make artists to make art by Andy Gell](#) October 15, 2017
- [The @badgerkull rollercoaster by Giles Perkins](#) October 15, 2017
- [DJ Greg Wilson @ The Invisible Wind Factory Graduation Ball](#) October 12, 2017
- [The Dark Ages: Episode I – The Dead Perch Menace by Aden Bos](#) October 2, 2017
- [All Bound For ... ??? by Joe Turner](#) September 30, 2017
- [2023 – Reviewed | Battle Of The Book Clubs: Luke Elston -VS- Aaron Nathaniel Standen](#) September 27, 2017
- [Why Did The K Foundation Burn A Million Quid? The Court Sketchings by Hugh Roberts](#) September 25, 2017
- [Why did The K Foundation burn a million quid? Interview with Gay](#)

family, wearing a pointy hat crafted from a Tammy Wynette record sleeve, I explained: *I'm not coming back. I've joined a cult!*

As time rolled on, I became ever more impressed by the open-minded commitment and creative risk-taking of the Volunteers, and by the strange synchronicities building through myth, chance and willing. With every passing performance, I became ever more convinced of the K-parallels I had posited. On the final night's procession, I walked most of the way to the pyramid pyre with Andrew Lee, the creator of the KLF [Kartographic](#), and discovered that I was having excellent fun with the embodiment of the person I had most feared, the Ur-fan with encyclopaedic knowledge of the band in all its forms. His warm reception – along with everyone else I spoke to during the event – blew away the last of my preconceptions about KLF's audience and my place within it. As I left the Invisible Wind Factory venue finale, I bumped into Jimmy Cauty. When I introduced myself, he asked if I'd seen the banners and totems of the final parade. *I based them entirely on Kibbo Kift*, he said.

My work here is done.



Toxteth Day of the Dead banners and totem bearers, 2017. Photo by Gareth Ellis.

Byrne: [The Late Late Show, 1995 \[Video\]](#)

September 20, 2017

◦ [Confessions of a Badger Kull Hardcore Fan by Andy Gell](#) September 17, 2017

◦ [Badger Kull – Through the lens of their Manager: Pete Woodhead](#)

September 14, 2017

◦ [Welcome To The Dark Ages: The JAMs Return by Josh Ray](#) September 13, 2017

◦ [The Stylist's Tale: A story of black paint, Elvis's long-lost son and 'the band who spent more time on the f**king stairs than on the stage'](#) by Becci James

September 8, 2017

◦ [Organised Chaos by Annabella Pollen](#)

September 7, 2017

◦ [The KLF in Liverpool: Day 3 – Badger Kull, the funeral procession and the Graduation Ball \(Extended Mix\)](#) by Gary Aster

September 6, 2017

◦ [Why 'Welcome To The Dark Ages' is the ushering in of the Horkosian era of Discordianism – a talk by Daisy Eris Campbell](#)

September 6, 2017

◦ [Badger Kull – Interview with Babaluma Badger \(formerly known as Ian Bryce\)](#) September 4, 2017



Kibbo Kift with Totems, 1925. Photo courtesy of Kibbo Kift Foundation.

Annebella Pollen Panel Photo courtesy of: A. Lee

You can also read [‘The KLF are back – but are they any closer to answering that burning million pound question?’](#) by Annebella Pollen for The Conversation [here](#).

« The KLF in Liverpool: Day 3 – Badger Kull, the funeral procession and the Graduation Ball (Extended Mix) by Gary Aster

The Stylist’s Tale: A story of black paint, Elvis’s long-lost son and ‘the band who spent more time on the f**king stairs than on the stage’ by Becci James »

6 COMMENTS

Michelle Olley says:

September 8, 2017 at 9:05 am

- We are active participants in the world and of the world by Iain Macpherson September 3, 2017
- Liberation Loophole by Stephen Clarke 1980 September 1, 2017
- For the People and of the People by Oliver Senton August 30, 2017
- Justified & Ancient – a clue to The People’s Pyramid... August 30, 2017
- Power to the people – and their pyramid... August 28, 2017
- The band name had a ‘k’ in it... August 27, 2017
- A ticket to a gig for the dead by Jon Bounds August 27, 2017
- The Return Of The UK’s Foremost Art-Pop Pranksters: A Live Blog (Day 3) by Seb Tiley August 27, 2017
- The Church of Odds & Evens August 26, 2017
- How to solve a 23 year old riddle – the K Foundation way... August 25, 2017
- JAMs: Job Cards – a collection August 25, 2017
- The Kult of K – Initiation... August 24, 2017
- A wristed development August 24, 2017



Brilliant. Just... brilliant x

◦ [Here endeth the moratorium... Here starteth 2023...](#) August 23, 2017

◦ [Contact](#)



Human says:

September 8, 2017 at 9:29 am

Ha ha! Brilliant indeed! 😊



Ian Bell says:

September 8, 2017 at 9:48 am

Great stuff Annebella. Where you in my chapterBook 3 book 2? Ian – in Australia



Annebella says:

September 8, 2017 at 6:49 pm

Hi Ian,
I am the Page Holder for p. 245 – think this is a bit later in the book... Hello in Oz!



Mandy Winter says:

September 8, 2017 at 9:51 am

I'm so glad that you stuck around to witness the magick of the occasion, it was so much fun,

and yes, I definitely think we have been lured into a Kult, but it's a nice Kult to be in 😊



Cath says:

September 10, 2017 at 6:58 pm

Never knew about any of this before – fascinating, thanks Bella

Comments are closed.

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