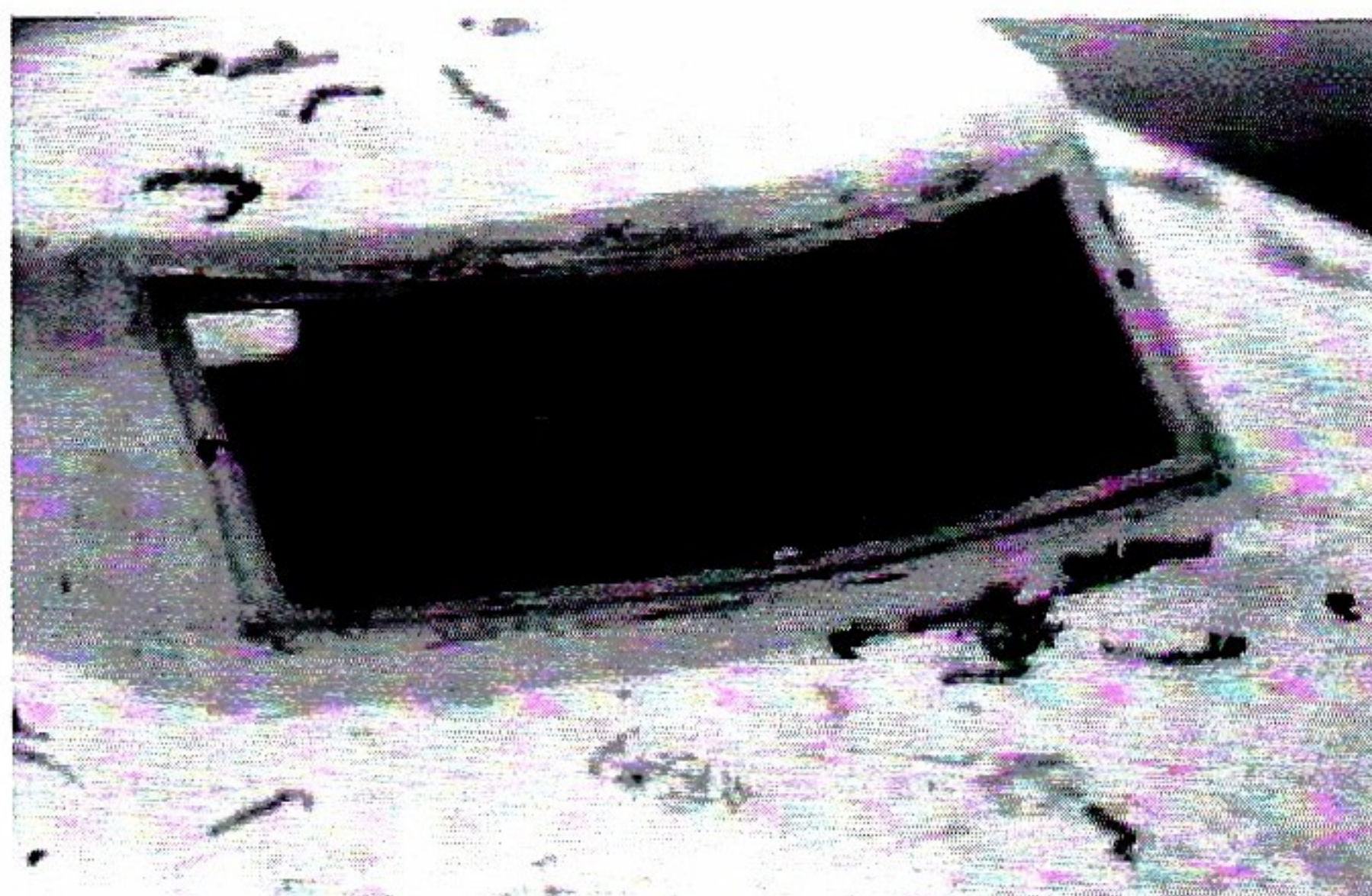


THE BITTER SPRINGS 'Everyone's Cup Of Tea' Harvey Records
HARVEYCD004 (2xCD) (69m00s) (71m42s) (UK) Feb 2013
[\[www.thebittersprings.com\]](http://www.thebittersprings.com): After 7 years of working on this (their first album since 2006's **'That Sentimental Slush'**), and in the interim delivering a number of EPs to keep us happy (with many of those tracks on the 2 CDs presented here), then it ends up as a very long work of 26 tracks & almost 141 minutes. **CD1**: Kicks off to a great start via **'A Better Offer'** which grabs the attention via crunching distorted organ & guitar plus **Simon's** dead pan vocals *"Together forever"*. **'Cruel Britannia'** doesn't quite do the same & reminds more of an early 80s pub rock'n'roll track. Next up **'My Life As A Dog In A Pigsty'** is a solid cutting social commentary & back to excellence *"They would never expect to be happy"*. **'Hail The Lifeboat Man'** has interesting touches & turns out as a great catchy sing-along *"Hey this one's still alive"*. Then the wonderful discoish **'And Even Now'**, the original **'Harry Hippie'**, the atmospheric **'The Mollycoddled Laughs'**. 8th cup **'The Life & Not Entirely Uneventful Times Of A McAlpine Fusilier'** is quite brilliant & a folk banjo affair with as always cutting lyrics *"and the past is coming up to meet my shovel going down...just me against the ground"* and probably my favourite here (please **BBC Radio** get them in for a live session & get this up on **youtube**). **'TV Tears'** is excellent as also **'Gary Glitter Fan Convention'**, then **'Don't Write A Song'** with a fine additional emotional vocal by one **Johnny Brown**, **'The Wounded'** & finally **'Your Leather Boots'** continues the magic. **CD2** is subtitled **'The Bitter Springs Destroyed My Life'** and **'Powerless (Pt 1)'** is a strong opener before moving onto one of those already released EP tracks **'Sirens Everyday'** with more wonderful melancholy bitter twistedness. Then the harmonica wailfully sounds to introduce a very beautiful gentle acoustic **'Our Ghosts'** (reminds of **BS's** 1995 **'Girl On A Mountain Bike'**). **'Purely Medicinal'** is 60s blues ala **Buffalo Springfield/Fleetwood Mac** but is also really nothing like them. **'Powerless (Pt 2)'** follows & then another EP track **'Free To Kill Again'**. 7th the long chill vibe **'Undercover'** works really well as also does **'The Hospital Run'** & **'Powerless (Pts 3&4)'** and forms a strong section. 10th track **'White Noise (And Even Now)'** is slow beautiful & emotional. **'TV Unplugged'** with acoustic guitar is an unplugged version of **'TV Tears'**. The wonderful hypnotic 11 minute long **'Snowflakes In June'** with then **'A Temporary Hush'** bringing this huge work to a close. Initially I thought that CD1 was the better but then with repeated plays CD2 seems perhaps a slightly more cohesive & stronger outing. If you find it too long then you can always choose your favourites & make a 65 minute album & so have foolishly tried to select just 10 numbers. CD1: 1,3,4,8,9,10 & CD2: 2,7,10,12 but that has meant leaving many good ones out. Bitter sardonic social commentary & observations of everyday life, with a dose of cheeky spring fun, poignant lyrics & indie backing. (8½/10) (R.C.)

The Bitter Springs



Everyone's Cup of Tea