The Holloway

Album by Milton Hide

**TRACK NOTES**

**All Gone South**

A stomping, up beat song with recurring celtic style clarinet riff and a catchy chorus. It’s a song of three parts all on the theme of things ‘going south’ - both literally and metaphorically. The first verse is about a fellow musician, Dave, who moved to France and every year headed south to winter in Spain - he was the first inspiration for the song which Jim wrote on a small, slightly wonky guitar hand made by Dave. The second verse is a lament about the English ‘north/south divide’, manufacturing having taken a back seat to financial services. The final verse is about the perceived hypocrisy of some well-known Brexit supporters who retain property in Europe!

**Cuckmere**

A gentle Sunday afternoon, laid-back song featuring sparkling twelve string guitar overlaid with mellow yet soaring clarinet and delicate vocal harmonies. Originally written by Jim for a previous band he played with, The Dawgs, the lyrics have changed from a country style death-row song, to become a sentimental song about the nature and landscape of Josie and Jim’s beloved Cuckmere Valley. (Interestingly, the chorus is unchanged from the original ‘death row’ version)

**Found Drowned / A Perfect Place**

Both heartfelt laments, *Found Drowned* is an a capella duet, inspired by a painting of the same name by Frederick Watts. The term ‘Found drowned’ was used on death certificates in Victorian times for those who had taken their own life so they could have a christian burial. It is used here as a metaphor for the feelings held at the time by many after the result of the Brexit vote. *A Perfect Place* is a hauntingly melodic instrumental piece on guitar and clarinet - originally recorded with lyrics as *A Perfect Place To Hang* on Milton Hide’s debut EP, *Little Fish* (2018).

**The Ballad Of Gabriel Oak**

With simple, classic mandolin and pure vocals, this folk song epic relates the story of *Far From The Madding Crowd* (Thomas Hardy) centring on the book’s hero, Gabriel Oak. The chorus line ‘…when I look up it’s you I’ll see. When you look up it’s there I’ll be’ is borrowed from a well known phrase in the book. The tune was composed on a mandolin Jim bought from the estate of local amateur luthier, Ronnie Moore. The instrument was one of hundreds of unfinished instruments Ronnie created from wood reclaimed from his job as caretaker at the old Hellingly mental hospital.

**A Little Bit Alike**

Gently swinging with slight Americana feel, the instrumental riff based on a traditional cajun tune, this call and return duet with single guitar is about how the differences between us make life good. The band perform this as both a gentle sentimental song and an up tempo rocking song - they recorded the slow version for the album in a single live take.

**Widow’s Revenge**

The tale of a woman wrongly accused of being a witch who returns to wreak her revenge, this atmospheric and dark track features layers of vocals, rhythmic and melodic guitar as well as double bass, clarinet and cajon. The song gradually builds from a gentle, melancholic start to a frenzied pagan dance. *Widow’s Revenge* is a follow up to Milton Hide’s murder ballad, *Monkyn Pyn* which featured on their debut EP, *Little Fish* (2018).

**Anning’s Fossil Depot**

A beautiful string arrangement by Simon Yapp weaves amongst the delicate guitar and vocals of this track. Originally composed on piano, the riff in this short melodic song gives a gentle nod to the *Fossils* of Camille Saint Seans’ *Carnival Of The Animals*. Mary Anning was an 18th century palaeontologist who lived in Lyme Regis. Her contribution to science has only been fully recognised in relatively recent years.

**Sparkle Jar**

Inspired by the book *Fingers In The Sparkle Jar* by Chris Packham this track has the natural, gentle feel of *Tales of the Riverbank*. Dreamy twelve string guitar meanders around the vocal harmonies and clarinet. It tells the story of a boy totally absorbed in the ground level world of nature and trying to find his place in the world. *“…beautifully worded song”* Chris Packham

**Unsaid**

Unsaid was written after the sudden passing of a friend who had gifted Jim a twelve string guitar. With its heartrending soaring chorus and contemplative quiet moments, this is a very emotional song which is sometimes challenging for the band to sing through tears. Their friend left a young daughter without being able to say goodbye properly and this is Josie’s imagining of what he might have said to her - the mundane and the profound.

**The Happiest Man On Earth**

A surprisingly upbeat song with a gentle country rock feel featuring additional bodrahn and electric guitar, *The Happiest Man On Earth* is a tribute to a book of the same name by Eddi Jaku. Auschwitz survivor, Eddi, was an inspirational speaker, having vowed to be the happiest man on earth as a mark of respect for all of those lost in the holocaust.

**The Holloway**

As title track, this is the only one written specifically for the album. A very short but emotive instrumental piece, slow clarinet flows through lilting guitar, guiding the listener along the dappled holloway. To walk along a holloway is to tread a well-worn, ancient path. Shafts of sunlight guide you through a tunnel of intertwined trees.