

LIFE SINCE THE SECOND EDITION OF THE BOOK

Around 2014-2015 due to family circumstances, I was homeless on and off for about 17 months. I was homeless in London sleeping mostly in the bushes outside a large commercial building near Heathrow opposite McDonalds. The bushes were amazing, all you had to do was snap the branches off to make a way through them. I was lucky to find an opening in a long line of bushes where someone had cleared an entrance. One night around 1.30am I was awoken by a guy who looked drugged out of his mind. Luckily he left after I told him to go to the McDonalds opposite.

McDonalds was great because they had an offer on their coffee; there was a sticker on each cup and if you collected 6 stickers you could have a free coffee. I was lucky to find cups in the bins at night in the carpark with stickers on, so I could usually have a free coffee in the morning. Being close to McDonalds was great because I could also wash and blow dry my fringe in the toilets and access free Wi-Fi.

Luckily in a London park near Kensington High Street, I discovered a clean pig ark which was great as it afforded shelter from the rain. It was winter and the tiny ponds beside it had frozen ice several millimetres thick on it.

Unfortunately, I was only able to stay there for one night because on the first night having settled down to sleep, a couple of park police pulled the tarpaulin away from the opening and told me that I couldn't stay there. I told them that I didn't have anywhere to go and luckily they let me spend the night there. I returned late afternoon the next day to discover that they had bordered up the entrance.



THE PIG ARC WITH FLOOR IN A LONDON PARK



INSIDE THE PIG ARK

Once I laid out a tarpaulin amongst the scrubland in a London park and was lucky enough to have a pretty robin come by.



WITH NO RADIO OR TV I WAS OVERJOYED TO HAVE A ROBIN TO TALK TO AND ENTERTAIN ME FOR HOURS AS SHE CAME AND WENT, SHOWING ME THE TINY GRUBS THAT SHE COLLECTED FROM THE MULCH I HAD CLEARED. I WAS AMAZED AT HOW FINE HER LEGS WERE IN COMPARISON TO HER BODY SIZE.

When my small monthly pension came through, I sometimes used to travel by Megabus to Birmingham to stay in a hostel to get some sleep, wash and cook. I did a brief trip to Carcassonne in the south of France, where I discovered a magnificent castle and took a train to Venice to take advantage of the warmer weather, as I had been in London during the winter. Megabus was great because it was so clean and cheap.



THE CASTLE IN CARCASSONNE NEAR TOULOUSE

In Carcassonne, I slept on the grassy area around the castle slightly hidden by trees. I worried that I might be caught because some dogs were out on a walk and started barking. Fortunately as it was a tourist area there were toilets during opening hours.

I also slept in a pagoda style Chinese restaurant that had been totally wrecked inside; it was very convenient because it offered shelter from the rain and had a large supermarket almost next door where there were toilets.



INTERIOR OF THE ABANDONED CHINESE RESTAURANT. THERE WERE PILES OF BROKEN FURNITURE BLOCKING ONE ENTRANCE. I WAS LUCKY IN THAT THE MAIN DOORS TO THE RESTAURANT WERE UNLOCKED.



IN CARCASSONNE I ALSO SLEPT IN THE WOODS UP A HILLSIDE

Around 2006, I had started writing songs and posted them up on the internet site Myspace hoping to attract a composer for my lyrics. In 2010 I discovered that many songs had been stolen and three different artists had recorded my songs. Two songs enabled two different singers claiming to be singer-songwriters, to win prestigious awards one valued at about £8,500.

Motivated by having many of my songs recorded, in 2022 I took part in the UKSC Song Writing Competition (www.songwritingcontest.co.uk) which received over 6,000 entries from over 60 countries. The Results were published in January 2023 and I had 20 Semi-Finalist songs and 2 Finalist songs; only 1-2% of songs entered reached the Finals.



I have also written lyrics to well-known songs, which I call 'SOS' songs, Songs over Songs as I didn't have a composer. One is 'WHEN YOU FIND LOVE' written to Elton John's 'Circle of Life' from the Lion King. I have also written lyrics to instrumentals, one being 'IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING (IN THE RAIN)' to Kenny G's 'In the Rain'.

I hope you enjoy the songs I've posted.
All the best.

Lisa