

TONY DUGDALE



I was born in 1958 in Wath-on-Dearne (a small coal mining village to the north east of Sheffield) in South Yorkshire. My Mother was widowed when I was very small and when I was 6 we moved, with my grandparents, to Bridlington on the east Yorkshire coast. At 19 I moved to the south east of England and have been there ever since.

I started playing the violin at the age of 7, got switched to the viola at 9 and took up the guitar at 12. Since then I've played in a variety of bands

and styles. I never made any sort of living at it and so in my late 20s I went into I.T. That part of my life came to an end in 2001 but that's another story.

So how did I end up playing Jake Thackray songs?

In the early 70s (1972-ish) Jake played the folk club in Bridlington. The format for the evening, when we had a guest was that the least embarrassing members of the club would perform for the first half of the evening, and then in the second half the guest would get up and make us all look bad.

I got up, did a couple of numbers and sat back down. Jake was sitting a few feet away, he leaned across and tapped me on the arm, "Well done, young man," he said, "I like what you did."...and that's where my memory of Jake ends...total blank, absolutely nothing, even the performance Jake gave that evening is gone. Fast forward to...

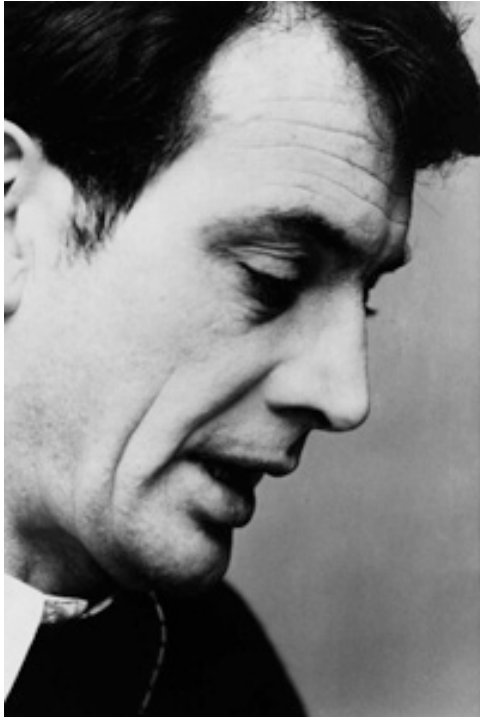
Late 2006 and the good old BBC show a documentary about Jake on BBC4. I am truly horrified. How could I have allowed this man to slip from my memory? For 34 years!!!

Anyway, out of guilt as much as anything else, I decided to try and learn some of Jake's songs and, much to my surprise, I found I could within reason play them. Initially I inflicted them upon friends and neighbours until someone eventually "suggested" that I try them out on total strangers. This seemed to work.

Now, let's get one thing absolutely clear. I am NOT a one-man Jake Thackray tribute band. I do not attempt to look like Jake nor do I attempt to sound like him. I have done my best to recreate the guitar parts for the songs but, for various reasons, that has not always been possible. In these cases you get me doing a "Jake T style" backing.

Oh, one other thing, don't expect any "showbiz" type stuff; you're not going to get it. What you are going to get is a bloke sitting on a chair bashing out some of the best songs ever written by a native of this land...just the way Jake used to do it.

JAKE THACKRAY



Jake Thackray was born in Leeds in 1938. He was educated by Jesuits and was a devout Roman Catholic all his life. In 1956 he went to Durham University to study Modern Languages.

After graduating he went to France to teach English and also spent a few months in Algiers which, at the time (1961/62), was trying to gain its independence from France.

He also discovered the music of the legendary French political/satirical singer-songwriter *George Brassens* on whom he based his musical style.

On his return to England (1964) Jake got a teaching job at the Intake School in Leeds and took up the guitar. To alleviate the tedium of the guitar exercises he was doing he started to write songs around them.

He played these songs to the kids in his classes, then he played them at local folk clubs and similar small venues and this got him on to his local BBC TV and radio stations.

From there Jake went on to record his first LP, *The Last Will and Testament of Jake Thackray* (1967) and to appear regularly on shows such as *The Frost Report* with David Frost, *Braden's Week*, *That's Life* and his own show's, *Jake on the Box* being one.

Over a 15 year period Jake made over 1000 TV appearances and also played many live shows in increasingly large venues.

By the early 80's Jake was starting to fall out of favour to some degree, he was also unhappy being what he called a "performing dick." Celebrity did not

sit well with Jake; he allowed nature to take its course and largely disappeared from TV. He continued to perform live but less and less frequently. By the early 90's Jake had effectively retired.

He died on Christmas Eve 2002 at his home in Wales.

So them's the facts. Or are they...?

One very important thing you need to know; Jake was a story teller, and not just in his songs. As his performances diminished he took to writing articles for newspapers. Read 3 articles by Jake about himself and you'll think you are reading about 3 different people. Putting it politely, Jake made stuff up about himself. Lots and lots of stuff.

So where does this leave us. It leaves us with his songs. If you want to get to know Jake Thackray listen to the songs and you'll realise how he felt about the people and places he sketched in them. The characters and situations may, or may not, be fictional, but the feelings are absolutely true. And that's where Jake still lives on again, on again!