Excuse me, weren’t you in the Fall?

Mark E Smith’s band is legendary for its ever-changing line-up. Dave Simpson made it his quest to track down everyone who has ever been a member.

It’s a Tuesday morning in December, and I’m ringing people called Brown to see if they played in the Fall. He came from Rotherham and I wondered if you might be a relative. “The Who?” asks the latest Mr Brown. “No, the Fall – the band from Salford. He played bass for three weeks in 1978.” Is this some kind of joke? This has been my life for weeks. I’ve become an internet stalker and a telephone pest, all because of an obsessive drive to track down everyone who has ever played in the Fall. That’s 40-odd people, including drummers abandoned at motorway services, guitarists left in their own obsessions, with mental needs is not unlike being in a band.

“I’m trying to trace Jonnie Brown who used to play in the Fall. He came from Rotherham. My duties included keeping ex-members out of the dressing room.’”

I started with Smith, who sank into the Fall, and from then on it was a start in life’ for clarinet players who left in 1981. The numerous
time.
I was curious to discover how the Fall had been, so I rang Tony Friel, who founded the band with Martin Bramah, Una Barnes and a drummer nicknamed “Dave”, whose surname no one can remember and who was sacked for being a Terrier. Now living in a terraced house in Buxton, Friel, about three years ago, played in the Wood street Band; it was thanks to their website that I tracked him down. Friel “had been mates” with Smith and even coined the band’s name (from the novel by Camus), but hadn’t lasted long, quitting over Smith’s decision to bring in then-girlfriend Kay Carroll on management and backing vocals. “I thought she misedited it in,” she says, “although Mark asked me to stay.” I found Carroll, too, in Portland, Oregon. After emailing asking if I was “a stalker”, she mailed me an hour of taped Macanese vidiot. “I know that Mark got me in to fuck off Friel, and it worked,” she says. Smith was a natural manipulator who knows when people have outlived their usefulness. Carroll, who remem-bered the early Fall’s hardline approach to the music industry – was herself abandoned in a US bar in 1981.

The more people I found, the more I’d hear how they were recruited from the road crew (Riley, Friel) or from support bands, Smith told me how once, when the rhythm section was later a gig, a big fella, on players from the support band and was delighted when the errant pair walked in to see their replacements. In 2001 he drafted in the whole of Trigger Happy to be the Fall, giving them only eight hours’ notice before they had to play a gig. Brix Smith joined the band and became the first Mst – she met Smith in America. Remembered, for taking “two years, eight months” to go on stage, I didn’t expect it. You get used to it.”

**References**

- Brix Smith
- Tony Friel
- You’d get credited for being a fookn’ snake
- You’d never be asked to do anything
- You’d be really funny, absolutely hilarious

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**Adrian Flanagan**

Adrian Flanagan was one of the most important figures in the Fall. He became a school caretaker. He had raised two children, a son and a daughter, and was known for his wild and unpredictable behavior on stage. He was often seen wearing a hat and misfitting clothes, which made him popular among the Fall’s fans.

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**Charlotte Bil Olmo**

Charlotte Bil Olmo was a former member of the Fall and later became a successful solo artist. She has released several albums and has been active in the music industry since the 1980s. She is known for her powerful vocals and her ability to write thought-provoking lyrics.

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**Karl Burns**

Karl Burns was another key figure in the Fall. He was the band’s lead guitarist and was known for his lightning-fast playing style. He also played on numerous other records and was a highly respected musician in the rock scene.

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**Martin Bramah**

Martin Bramah was the band’s lead singer and was known for his distinctive and powerful voice. He was also a talented songwriter and was highly regarded by his peers for his work with the Fall.

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**Steve Evtia**

Steve Evtia was a member of the Fall in the late 1990s. He played guitar and contributed to the band’s sound with his unique style. He was also involved in the Fall Reunited website and is known for his dedication to keeping the band’s legacy alive.

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**Tom Head**

Tom Head was a member of the Fall in the late 1990s. He played bass and was known for his energetic and passionate live performances. He later went on to work as a sound engineer and is now involved in various projects related to the Fall.

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**Brian Fanning**

Brian Fanning was a member of the Fall in the early 1980s. He played bass and was known for his driving rhythm and his ability to contribute to the band’s sound with his unique style.

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**Swiss Cheese**

Swiss Cheese was a member of the Fall in the early 1980s. He played bass and contributed to the band’s sound with his distinctive playing style. He later went on to work in various other projects and is known for his dedication to the Fall’s legacy.

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**Kevin Banks**

Kevin Banks was a member of the Fall in the late 1990s. He played guitar and contributed to the band’s sound with his unique style. He is known for his dedication to keeping the band’s legacy alive.

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**Roger Turner**

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**Neville Wadding**

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