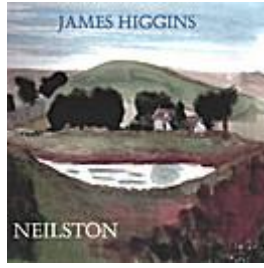


Mp3 James Higgins - Neilston



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Gnarled and rooty. Folk rock that shows there is more to Scotland than bagpipes, haggis, and kilts. You can feel the mud. 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Scottish Contemporary, FOLK: Folk-Rock Details: Neilston (around the 60s and 70s) That Wee Village on the Hill Neilston is the last outpost on the Glasgow railway line. The track ends abruptly about 9 miles south west of Glasgow. A signpost bluntly states, Neilston High. Whether this message alludes to the village mentality or the geography is open for interpretation. The Neilston area isnt exactly on the established tourist route. This is not a dramatic landscape. There are no craggy peaks or Niagara waterfalls, but every Neilstonian will gladly rant lyrical about places like Cowden Hall, The Killoch Glen, The Midgie Glen, The Pad, The Snypes, The Craigie, the Glanderson Dam and the Toad Wood. All these hidden corners stand as individual monuments of solitude. Neilstons countryside is bleak, tough, and lonely. I believe these qualities are what gives it its character.

Neilstonians are very proud of their roots. They even have their own anthem: The Farmers Boy. We would all sing it at Neilston Juniors football matches. Well, wed sing the first line anyway, till it faded into da da de da dum da cough cough. Ah, but we did put a lot of passion into that one line. When I was wee, the Neilston Main Street had the aura of a ghost town. Abandoned buildings with broken windows lined the main street. I can remember when my father was laying a foundation for a large kennel in our back yard, he casually collected bricks for the job from the piles that lay amongst the rubble and carted them home in a rusty wheelbarrow. Amidst these ruins crouched a dingy wee cobbler shop with walls of straw and plaster. Nearby stood Mrs. Mortons clothes shop with shelves piled precariously high with shoe boxes. On a crumbling corner stood John Fox's Sweet Shop. This establishment was little more than a cave. It was so black inside that I was never able to make out the far wall. The front door was always wide open and leather oilskin tarps carpeted the bumpy floor. In my head, I picture a stocky man leaning

to one side like he was propping up a bar. Hes pointing to his sweetie selection which was displayed in a spotlit glass vitrine. Hes discussing individual specimens like they are his rare insect collection: debating each ones merits even though the shop appears empty. I dont know who he was speaking with but the shop was black and featureless and there was something suspicious about Mr. Fox. Neilston has never been an exciting place. It had two churches, two schools, five bars, a handful of shops, and a main street that came in one end and went out the other. It doesnt seem much to be proud of, but I was born there and people are always proud of where they come from. I only hope that when I go back next time, I dont find housing schemes climbing up The Pad and high rises towering over the Midgie Glen. Obviously, Neilston has to be brought into the 21st century, but hopefully not at the expense of the surrounding countryside. This CD is symbolic for me in that after recording so many albums about traveling, this is an album about standing still. It brings me back in a circle to the Neilston I recall from my childhood. I was born in my parents upstairs front room. From the side window, the Ferenese Braes and the Killoch Glen were visible. Our house may have been damp and drafty, but at least I had a womb with a view. p.s. I have included the song, Lollipop Man even though it appeared on the album Verse, Chorus, Train. Lollipop Man was always a Neilston song, but at the time, I had only the vaguest concept of writing an album about Neilston, so I put it on the last album. To compensate for this repetition I have included two extra tracks. Bonus tracks as they call them.

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