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Rich Deakin charts the history of the magically incandescent PINK FAIRIES and uncovers details of their new album...

It would be fair to say that the Pink Fairies started life as The Deviants, or Social Deviants, as they were originally called. Often regarded as progenitors of the punk movement, over the years the Deviants and Pink Fairies have been cited by the likes of John Lydon, Captain Sensible, Brian James, Tony James, Jello Biafra and Henry Rollins, as being among their formative musical influences.

The Pink Fairies metamorphosed from the Deviants in early 1970, following the meltdown and unceremonious departure of frontman Mick Farren in the autumn of 1969, during an ill-fated trip to their guitarist, Paul Rudolph's hometown of Vancouver, Canada. After Farren returned to England to repair his somewhat frazzled psyche, the rest of the band were left stranded there. Working their way down the West Coast from Canada and into the USA they ended up in San Francisco before working their way back up north to Montreal, by which time they had just about earned enough money from gigging to pay for their airfares home.

Whilst the remaining Deviants were stranded in the States, back in London Farren had started writing for the underground newspaper International Times again. Aided and abetted by Steve Peregrin Took, who had recently been booted out of Tyrannosaurus Rex, and John 'Twink' Alder, formerly of Pretty Things and Tomorrow amongst others, Farren made a solo album called 'Mona: The Carnivorous Circus'. The trio had also made loose plans to start a band called Pink Fairies with Twink's girlfriend, Silver, and even played one gig in Manchester, if it can really be described as that, as ramshackle as it was – allegedly. However, Twink and Jamie Mandelkau, the Deviants' manager of sorts, had apparently been in transatlantic communication with the other Deviants with a view to hooking them up with Twink upon their return and forming a new outfit called, you guessed it - The Pink Fairies! But Farren and Took didn't figure in these plans. Taking inspiration from the Grateful Dead, who they saw whilst in San Francisco, Twink was added to the line-up as the second drummer, and Paul Rudolph stepped up to the microphone for lead vocal duties for the main part.

Over the next few years the Pink Fairies proceeded to blaze their way through numerous festivals and benefit gigs, including the legendary Phun City, where the MCS played their debut UK gig. They often played for free, setting up on makeshift stages such as flat-bed lorries or inflatable tents outside the perimeters of main events, such as the Bath and Isle of Wight festivals in 1970. The impromptu Pink Fairies' Free Festival outside the main Bath Festival heralded an ongoing association with fellow Ladbroke Grove freaks Hawkwind, whereby members of both bands would join up on stage after their own sets. Frequently aided and abetted by an assortment of uppers, downers and other psychedelics, these sessions often developed into elongated jams that could last for hours. The legend of Pinkwind was born and has gone down in the annals of Pink Fairies and Hawkwind folklore.

The jams weren't just confined to a rural festival setting, and Pinkwind sessions were just as likely to materialise at a regular gig if the bands were sharing the same bill, or even outside in an urban setting such as the Ladbroke Grove locale. One of the most famous examples was when the Pinkwind alliance and other neighborhood bands set up their equipment under the arches of the recently constructed Westway motorway, near the site of what is now Portobello Green. The police were called and Russell Hunter allegedly had to be removed from his kit whilst still in full flight!

Towards the end of 1970 the Pink Fairies caught the eye of Polydor Records who released their first single 'The Snake' in January 1971. It was backed by a rabble rousing agit-rock call to arms call 'Do It!'. If any record deserves the accolade of the label 'proto-punk' then this must be a contender. Taking its title from American yippie Jerry Rubin's revolutionary tract of the same name it exhorts the listener to take matters into their own hands rather than sitting back apathetically and waiting for things to happen. A debut album called 'Never Never Land' followed later that year but struggled to impress either the music press critics or the



record buying public, despite featuring 'Do It!' and another live favourite, 'Uncle Harry's Last Freakout'. The production failed to capture the spirit, energy and raw live essence of the Fairies... at least that's what it's usually attributed to.

The band had a reputation for monumental drug consumption and it certainly wasn't unknown for them to take to the stage in various states of chemical enhancement or disrepair, depending on what they might have ingested. Glastonbury Fair 1971 is a case in point. Legend has it that the band's dropping of LSD, planned to kick in just as they were leaving the stage, was disrupted when the schedule over-ran, thus delaying their appearance. By the time they did take to the stage those who'd taken the acid were already in the throes of a full-blown psychedelic trip. No matter though, the performance was actually none the worse for it, and although a little ramshackle at times, a live recording of the occasion attests to a raw all-out assault on the senses. At the Weeley Festival in August 1971 Paul Rudolph



A FARRUVA LE ENDING



Photo by Paul Welch

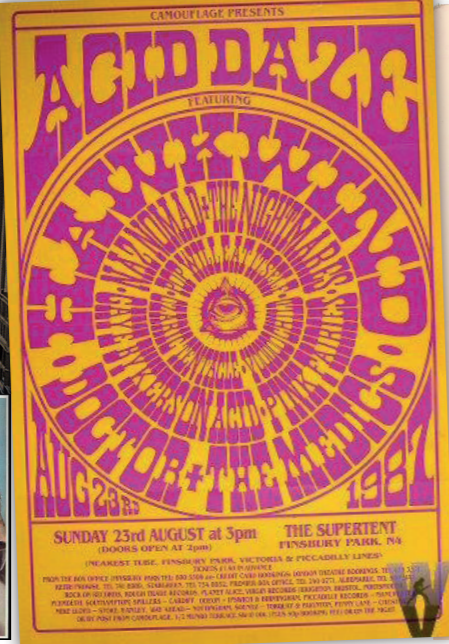


PHOTO LEWIS BEVAN

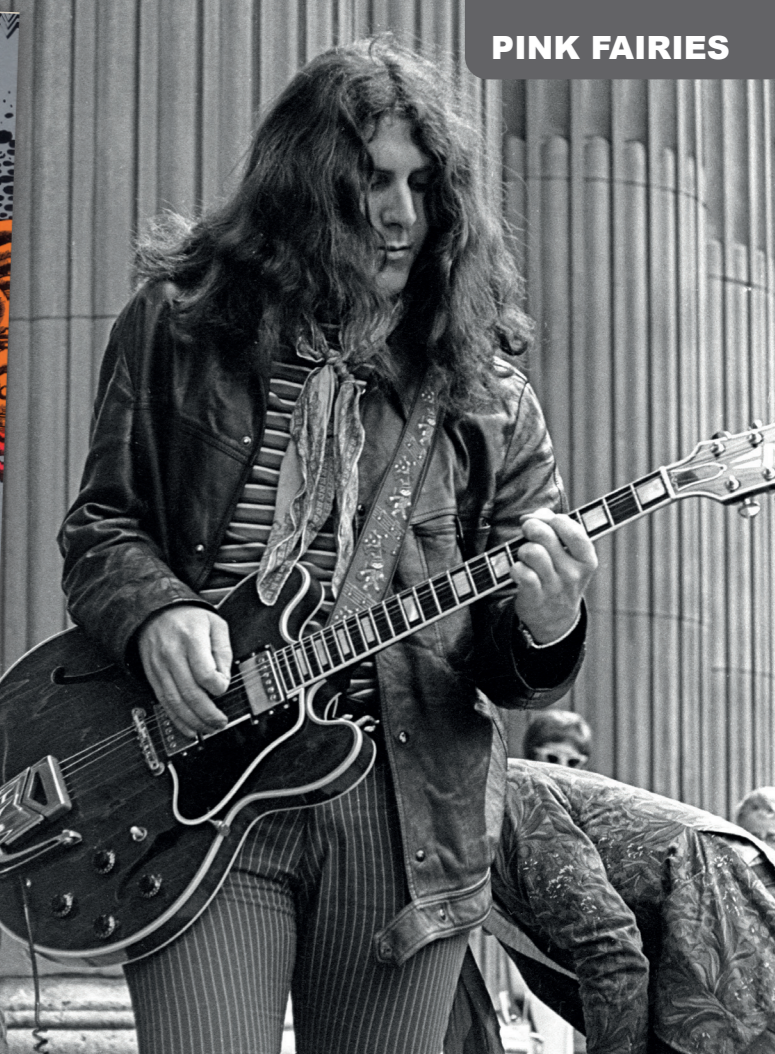


PHOTO: ROBIN MORRISON

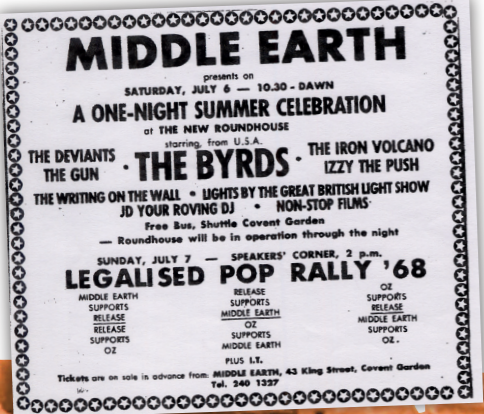
Above: Paul Rudolph in 1969
Below: Pinkwind playing under the Westway in July 1971

was apparently so zonked on the legendary liquid green LSD that he had to play most of the set flat on his back!

Soon after Glastonbury Fair Twink left the band for personal reasons and briefly relocated to Morocco. The remaining Pink Fairies carried on as a three-piece, seemingly to no obvious detrimental effect, and set about recording a follow-up album to 'Never Never Land'. They also drafted in former Move and Balls guitarist Trevor Burton to provide second guitar on a few numbers. Some say that 'What A Bunch Of Sweeties' is the album the Pink Fairies should have made as their debut, especially including as it does 'Walk Don't Run', a live favourite of the Pink Fairies initially made famous by The Ventures. Once again though, despite a placing in the lower regions of the UK charts, the album failed to make any major impression. And, around the same time of its release in the summer of 1972, Paul Rudolph called it a day and quit the band. Dissatisfaction with the band's increasing and sometimes debilitating drug intake is usually regarded as the reason for Rudolph's departure but, undeterred, Hunter and Sanderson decided to continue after enlisting guitarist and singer, Mick Wayne.

Wayne's musical credentials included stints in bands with the likes of Jimmy Page and Mick Ronson, whilst his late '60s band Junior's Eyes backed David Bowie on his 'Space Oddity' album, before Wayne spent time touring with Joe Cocker. However, it soon became apparent that despite Wayne's talent he just didn't fit in with the Fairies. After just one single, released at the end of 1972, and an autumn tour that was interspersed by a gig at Wembley Empire Pool sharing the bill with the New York Dolls and The Faces, it was obvious he had to go. His replacement was Larry Wallis. He'd done time with The Entire Sioux Nation, Steve Peregrin Took's Shagrat and, more latterly, UFO. From the moment he played his first gig augmenting Wayne on guitar it was apparent he was the only man for the job, and Hunter and Sanderson let Wayne go.

Despite his relative inexperience at songwriting, Wallis turned out to be a natural and the new line-up released its first album in June 1973. It was called 'Kings Of Oblivion' and was a marked departure from the previous two albums. Featuring blistering speedfreak anthems like 'Raceway' and 'City Kids', later covered by Motörhead, it also included more expansive band workouts like 'When's The Fun Begin?' and 'I Wish I Was A Girl'. Overall the album was a glam-tinged heavy metal classic, and should have been a sure-fire success. But for some reason, possibly lack of record label promotion, it still eluded them. In the meantime their old running-mates Hawkwind, who had scored a surprise top-10 hit with 'Silver Machine' the previous year, went on to even greater success with their 1973 live album, the space-rock opus 'Space Ritual'. Even if the two bands still played the occasional Pinkwind jam at a festival now and then, the times had changed. Whereas once they had been running-mates on an equal footing, Hawkwind's success and stature was growing exponentially to that of the Pink Fairies.



"Pinkwind alliance and other neighborhood bands set up their equipment under the arches of the recently constructed Westway motorway. The police were called and Russell Hunter allegedly had to be removed from his kit whilst still in full flight"

Once again, in 1974 the Pink Fairies called it a day – even after a brief return by the flamboyant Twink failed to revive their flagging fortunes. But you can't keep the Pink Fairies down for

long, and by early 1975 they were persuaded to do a 'one-off' farewell show at the Roundhouse supporting Hawkwind. Featuring both Paul Rudolph and Larry Wallis on guitars, the band was also treated to a brief appearance by their former Deviants' frontman Mick Farren.

The reunion was received well by the fans, but by now Hawkwind had some internal problems of their own. During a North American tour Lemmy was sacked after being arrested whilst crossing the border into Canada for possession of what was believed to be cocaine. It was actually amphetamine sulphate, which is only regarded as a misdemeanour in Canada. But by the time this was discovered it was too late, the damage had already been done, and Lemmy's replacement had been appointed with some haste. It turned out to be Paul Rudolph, the former Pink Fairies' guitarist. This obviously ruled out any immediate long term Pink Fairies reunion involving Rudolph, but when Lemmy announced plans for his own new band and asked Larry Wallis to join on guitar, one would have thought that really was the end of the Pink Fairies for good. However, encouraged by the success of the Roundhouse 'farewell' in February, Wallis, Hunter and Sanderson decided to play one more last 'farewell' – once again at the Roundhouse – where they were joined by Paul Rudolph and Twink. A week later Wallis would return to the Roundhouse to play guitar in what would be Motorhead's first ever gig.

Somewhat amazingly, Wallis decided to resurrect the Pink Fairies on a more long-term basis too. Juggling his commitments with both bands, he headed down to Rockfield Studios in South Wales to record what was intended to be the first Motorhead album, whilst undertaking live duties with the Pink Fairies. Wallis then decided to leave Motorhead and concentrate on what was possibly seen as the more viable option at the time, and was replaced by Fast Eddie Clarke. Inevitably though, the Pink Fairies reunion eventually ground to a halt yet again, but not before they had enlisted the services of former, Action, Mighty Baby and Chilli Willi guitarist Martin Stone.

They also released 'Between The Lines' – one of the first singles on the nascent Stiff label – and were present at Mont de Marsan, the very first French punk festival, in September 1976. It was on the return coach journey from the festival that The Damned's then bassist, Ray Burns, received his more well-known name of Captain Sensible from Larry Wallis – following some on-board



The Flying Colours in 1989

PHOTO STEFAN WALGREN



The Pink Fairies play The Sir George Robey in 1988. Photo Neil Pettigrew



PHOTO IOE SBONBO

BELIEF IN FAIRIES

Vive Le Rock speaks to Russell Hunter.



How did the latest Pink Fairies reunion come about?

"In truth, we'd been turning over the idea of some PF gigs even before that grim night at the Borderline in 2013, because it was clear that Mick's failing health wasn't going to allow him to continue much longer, although obviously not clear enough, as it turned out. The Deviants and the Pink Fairies are very different bands even though historically there has been considerable personnel overlap at times. But The Deviants were unarguably Mick's band and that story ended with his death. We will never perform again as The Deviants; the songs we bashed through at Mick's memorial were the last outing."

Pink Fairies are sometimes cited as being a big influence on the UK punk explosion in the 1970s. How do you feel about being graced with this 'Godfather of punk' tag?

"How do I feel about it? What people say about you is largely beyond your control, and people have called us many things over the years. I guess I can see where it comes from, although surely the term is more often than not applied to Iggy? I don't mind, although I suspect its origins lie in an allusion to our musical competence, or lack of it, back then – which incidentally I always thought was particularly unfair to both Paul and Larry, who could more-than hold their own with most bands of the time."

What many people were asking on social network sites is 'Why is there no Paul Rudolph, Larry Wallis or Twink?'

"The nucleus of the band was always going to be Andy. He's an immense guitarist who's been part of it all before. But we asked Paul to hook up with us as well, initially just for a three-to-four week tour, but he declined. He had just wrapped up his bicycle business in Vancouver and moved house, and he too has health issues that get no better with age. So he said, 'no thanks', but wished us all the very best. Larry has his own health problems and issues that meant his taking part would not have been feasible in our judgement. You must ask him if he thinks we were wrong. Regardless, he's still one of my oldest friends, someone whom I'll always be concerned about."

"Twink was never going to be asked and even if he had been, it would have fallen apart in forty eight hours. There's been a lot of bad blood between Twink and all the rest of us over the years, and although he and I have made our peace concerning past issues, neither of us are dumb enough to believe we could ever be in the same band again. And I don't think he'd want to either."

You've reverted to a two drummer set-up, albeit without Twink. His replacement, George Butler, has a significant Deviants / Pink Fairies pedigree of his own anyway, but how has his inclusion gone down with the fans?

"It was my idea to enlist George: I like the two-drummer format, and the fact is I need the help these days, as my own health and stamina in my seventieth year is not what it was when I was (much) younger. George's musical pedigree is immense and goes far beyond his long-time association with us. Audiences aren't stupid, they can hear that and have been duly appreciative; it's a pleasure and a privilege for me to have him sitting next to me."

Having been a member of the last Deviants line-up, Jaki Miles-Windmill is now also in the latest Pink Fairies line-up. The inclusion of a female in the Pink Fairies seems to have polarised opinion amongst some die-hard Fairy fans on social media sites. What are your views on this?

"My views are that this question does not merit an answer. It's 2015 for fuck's sake - a woman in the band? This cannot seriously be an issue worth debating!"

There have been numerous Pink Fairies reunions over the years. How does this one compare to the Kill Em And Eat Em reunion in the late 1980s (not just in terms of the line-up, but in terms of going on out the road, audiences etc.)?

"All the various incarnations of the band have had their moments, and I've enjoyed them all for the most part, but there's no doubt that the 1980s run out was in some ways a return to past mistakes. Perhaps because this is obviously the last time, there's no pressure at all this time around – we do a few gigs here and there and try to savour every moment. It's very touching that there are still a few people around who want to hear us, and some of them are (at least) half our age. Those who turn up seem to enjoy it, although there are always going to be those who prefer earlier incarnations – that of course is their right, and the fact is that it's natural to look back sometimes with a certain wistful nostalgia. Most of us do it to some degree."

You referred to last year's reunion dates, perhaps not so ironically in hindsight, as the 'Pension Credit Tour', yet here you are a year later still going strong. How long do you envisage this reunion continuing for?

"Going strong eh? Well, going anyway. I don't know is the honest answer. I'm aware that I have only a finite number of gigs left in me, but I'm replaceable. You'll have to wait and see."

It's just been announced that there are plans to record a new album. Can you tell us a bit more about this and the new songs?

"The album's nearly half- finished, we're doing it in small pieces, not rushing at it. We're all trying to do our bit, contributing to it, and we have some lyrics that Micky left us – stuff he wrote that wasn't specifically Deviants' material. Obviously the detail of the content will be different from forty years ago, it would be kind of weird, as well as slightly ludicrous, if it weren't. But I can hear overall Pink Fairyess in it all so far! It feels right."

What can people expect at a Pink Fairies gig on this latest reunion?

"The only way to know that is to come along and hear for yourself."

place at all. For many old fans they would get to see the band perform some of the old classics again; for others it would be the first, and possibly last, chance they would get to do so. Of course there were the detractors who denigrated the new line-up for its lack of Rudolph, Wallis or Twink. And then there were those that balked at the idea of a female member of the band – not only is Jaki Miles-Windmill playing percussion she is also sharing lead and backing vocal duties with Sandy, Andy and Russell. Then there was the thorny issue of the second drummer, George Butler, who was, in effect, taking Twink's role. George had Deviants and Pink Fairies pedigree though, having played with Russell, Sandy and Andy many times before, going back as far as the Ladbroke Grove days. When the first dates were completed within a few days of each other in Bilston and London's 100 Club in May 2014, it was apparent this was going to be more than a flash in the pan. The band performed at a number of further gigs throughout the year, including the Hawtoker Fest in Manchester, sharing a bill with Hawkwind and Senser, among others.

With more gigs under their belt this year, the Pink Fairies seem to have proved their detractors wrong, and have gone from strength to strength. On the back of all the well-received gigs throughout the last 18 months they've written a number of new songs, three of whose lyrics were penned by the late Mick Farren. These twelve new tracks have now been recorded and are currently being mixed for a new Pink Fairies CD tentatively titled 'Emergency Frequency'. The songs include an old, but reworked Flying Colours number called 'Runnin' Outa Road'. Who says there's no such thing as a fairytale ending? **VLR**

Images supplied by Hank Acid Rider

STOP PRESS!

At The Robin 2 Club in Bilston on the 27th of October, Russell Hunter didn't make an appearance due to health reasons. Near the end of the set, just after a searing version of 'Uncle Harry's Last Freakout', Andy Colquhoun announced from the stage that the Pink Fairies "may only be doing one more gig after this", at The Borderline in London. Whether it really does go down in history as the last ever Pink Fairies gig remains to be seen - tomorrow never knows! Whatever happens though it's been a long, strange trip and VLR salutes the Pink Fairies.

"It's very touching that there are still a few people around who want to hear us, and some of them are (at least) half our age"

In the intervening years both Mick Farren and Andy Colquhoun relocated to the United States where they continued to collaborate musically, and often recorded and performed as The Deviants. As with the previous lengthy hiatus throughout the late '70s and '80s, other members of the Pink Fairies were involved in occasional musical forays. But it wasn't really until 2009 when the classic 'What A Bunch Of Sweeties' line-up of Hunter, Sanderson and Rudolph reunited. They re-recorded the old Pink Fairies' standard 'Do It!' for a testimonial CD, 'Portobello Shuffle', in honour of their old friend and stalwart road manager Boss Goodman who had recently suffered a stroke. It also doubled up as tribute to both The Deviants and Pink Fairies, and such was the affection they were all held in, songs were contributed by the likes of Captain Sensible, Jello Biafra, Brian James and Rat Scabies, Wreckless Eric, John Sinclair, and Wilko Johnson, to name a few.

This 2009 reunion was never meant to be permanent though – Rudolph had only really used the opportunity to hook up with his old friends and to record the track for Boss Goodman whilst he was on an extended holiday from Canada. But tentative steps towards a proper Deviants reunion, featuring Hunter and Sanderson, were made when Mick Farren returned from Los Angeles in 2010. When Andy Colquhoun followed back home the next year, it was ever more tangible.

Calling themselves The Last Men Standing, the band played Glastonbury in 2011, augmented by Slim Tim Slide (AKA Tim Rundall), and a member of Nik Turner's Space Ritual, Jaki Miles-Windmill. After that they continued to gig as The Deviants, recording a single called 'The Fury Of The Mob' after Rundall's departure from the band.

But with Farren's health ailing, any long term plans presumably had to be taken one day at a time. And when he collapsed on stage and died in July 2013 whilst The Deviants were performing at London's Borderline Club, it seemed that would be it as far as the Deviants reunion went. Farren is said to have hated the idea of becoming 70, and he died just over a month short of that landmark birthday. In doing so he bowed out in true rock 'n' roll style – "on stage with his boots on" as the obituaries had it. ... He probably wouldn't have wanted it any other way!

Farren had always been the glue which kept everything together, but if the other Deviants had managed to continue when things came unstuck in Canada at the end of the 1960s, perhaps they could now? Of course they couldn't really continue as The Deviants – that was Mick Farren's baby, and his alone really. But the band already consisted of three former Pink Fairies. Andy Colquhoun had been a key member of the 1987 reunion, and with Hunter and Sanderson being present almost from the beginning, it made sense to continue as the Pink Fairies. Certainly, initial enquiries were made to see if Paul Rudolph would be willing to take part, but the logistics of him being in Canada didn't make it a viable option, and he declined, but wished the others well. Ill-health ruled Larry Wallis out of the equation, and although there were some overtures to reconciliation, Twink was never really an option given the bad blood between him and the other members over the years.

So, when it was initially announced in February 2014 that the Pink Fairies were reforming, most followers of the band were pleased it was even taking



The Pink Fairies play Dingwalls in 2014, with Jaki Miles-Windmill on vocals



TONY HENDERSON

Sandy and Russell in 2014

hi-jinx concerning the said member of the Damned and eggs being broken into his hair. Twink also embraced punk and joined Cambridge punk band The Rings, who later changed their name to The Maniacs after falling out with him. Both bands appeared at the 2nd Mont de Marsan festival a year later.

Things then went relatively quiet for a number of years as far as actual Pink Fairies activity was concerned, but various ex-members kept their hand in with musical activities. Larry Wallis became one of Stiff Records' house producers, working with acts like Wreckless Eric and The Adverts. He was also one of the mainstays on the Live Stiffs tour in 1977, along with the likes of Elvis Costello, Ian Dury and The Blockheads, Nick Lowe, and Wreckless Eric.

After he was ejected from Hawkwind himself, Paul Rudolph contributed to a Mick Farren and the Deviants E.P. called 'Screwed Up', and played in a couple of other short-lived outfits before returning to Canada and avoiding the musical limelight for some years. Sandy joined acid-punkers Lightning Raiders, who went on to have associations with Paul Cook and Steve Jones after the Sex Pistols split up in 1978. Meanwhile, Mick Farren had written a few songs for Ladbroke Grove punky R&B combo Warsaw Pakt, and then made a solo album, 'Vampires Stole My Lunch Money', with a core band of Larry Wallis, Warsaw Pakt's Andy Colquhoun and ex-Hawkwind drummer Alan Powell. It also included guest contributions from Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde, Sonja Kristina from Curved Air and Wilko Johnson.

Farren was also instrumental in organising a series of fundraising benefits for MCS guitarist Wayne Kramer, imprisoned in April 1976 for dealing cocaine to undercover DEA officers. Kramer was flown over to London upon his release in 1978 and joined Farren, Wallis, Sandy and various other guests onstage at Dingwalls in London. It wouldn't be the last time Kramer would come over to join Farren and the Fairy fraternity, or 'Cosmic Family' as they have come to be known over the years. In 1984 one of these shows was recorded as The Deviants and later released as 'Human Garbage'.

Then, during the spring of 1987, after the longest hiatus since forming in 1970, it was announced that the Pink Fairies were returning. Their first show, at the Town & Country Club in London supported by Crazyhead, was very well received, and they subsequently embarked on The Kill 'Em And Eat 'Em tour. The line-up consisted of the 1973 Kings Of Oblivion line-up of Larry Wallis, Sandy and Russell Hunter, augmented by Andy Colquhoun and Twink. Having recorded an album of the same name as the tour, Twink left after relations between him and other members of the band became strained. The reunion eventually fizzled out in late 1988 after a tour of Germany.

Wallis subsequently appeared to lose interest and was increasingly becoming involved with other projects. Colquhoun, Hunter and Sanderson briefly continued as a three-piece outfit called Flying Colours, but by the end of 1989 they called it a day, and for the best part of another twenty years, that was it in effect for the Pink Fairies. Twink and Paul Rudolph made a couple of albums using the Pink Fairies moniker but it wasn't really the Pink Fairies without either Hunter or Sanderson.

