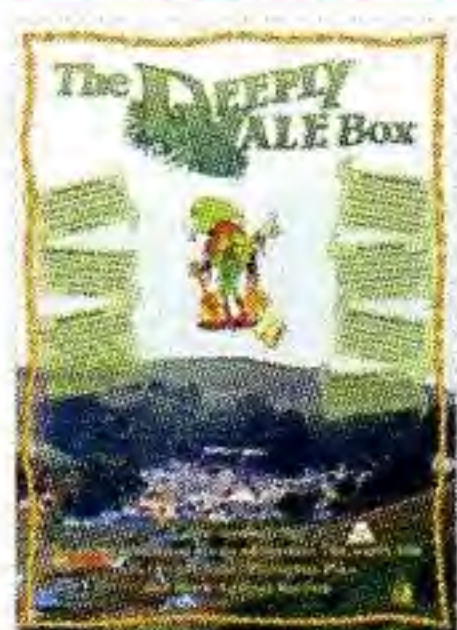


Various Artists

The Deeply Vale Box Set

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Iconic hippie/punk crossover festival all boxed up.



Retaining something of a near-mythical status in the pantheon of free festivals and

counterculture communities, Rochdale's Deeply Vale ran from 1976 to 1979, with assorted offshoots in Manchester and the North West. Painstakingly produced and assembled over the last 18 years by festival organiser Chris Hewitt, six CDs, a well-researched book and a pack of joss sticks await within.

With the festival's genesis in the fallout of the government-sanctioned Watchfield festival and Rochdale's fertile underground, the list of alumni, both performers and attendees, goes some way to explaining its singular appeal. Festival veterans Here & Now, Steve Hillage and Nik Turner rubbed shoulders with new-wavers The Fall, The Ruts and The Durutti Column, while a youthful Ian Brown, Andy Rourke (The Smiths) and Jimi Goodwin (Doves) all returned home with ideas of their own.

While 100-plus lo-fi delights are hard to take in one sitting, interview snippets and stage announcements – subjects including acid, toilet etiquette, a joint-rolling competition and a missing pencil sharpener, among other gems – more than leaven the experience. Though essentially spawning the crusty movement of the early 80s, the festival's true legacy is one of community spirit.



Tim Batcup