



PRESS RELEASE

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'One great long drunken rambling guitar solo of a novel!'

Tim Pears

'SB Sweeney writes with a clarity and wit that brings to life the less glossy side of the eighties: a world of squats, bedroom bands and cheap drugs...'

Deb Googe: My Bloody Valentine and The Thurston Moore Group

'It's La bohème meets Trainspotting, with the structure of a dream; a hole in the wall of the ordinary, an extraordinary landscape beyond.'

Roger Ashton-Griffiths: Actor and Writer

Facing the Strange

A rock musician on the brink, his drunken father and the grieving widow of a murder victim. *Facing the Strange* is a tale of three lives in free-fall at the end of the analogue age – the lives of three characters that hold the key to one another's redemption.

SB Sweeney

Educated at Glastonbury, Stonehenge and various schools of thought in Squatsville, east London, SB Sweeney became a committed member of the structurally unemployed throughout the 80s – specialising in three chord trash rock, all-night philosophy and breakfast appreciation. He toured the UK with musicians and artists, promoting political activism in the 90s and worked on various community media projects in the noughties. Currently living in the cold heart of England.

He is assembling a trilogy of novels under the working title of *The Last Days of Albion*, of which *Facing the Strange* is the first part. [For full bio, see overleaf.]

StreetBooks is an independent publisher based in west Oxfordshire: 'My interest is in artisan publishing: which involves high quality, regional fiction, marketed locally in person and globally via the Internet. An analogy I like is that of the micro-brewery: a combination of tradition, passion and the opportunities offered by new technology.' Frank Egerton, StreetBooks

SB Sweeney – full bio

SB Sweeney was born in Lagos, Nigeria, to restless parents. By the age of seven he had lived in three more continents. He left school at sixteen. After completing his final O-Level exam, he packed a haversack and set off for Glastonbury festival. A few months later, he wound up in London and lied about his age to get a bar job – at Tim Martin's first two pubs in Muswell Hill and Crouch End.

The rest of the eighties were spent squatting and couch dwelling across Hackney, playing in pub bands, going to demos and festivals, criss-crossing the country by thumbing it. By the early nineties, having quit his last band and having lost his job at an art-house cinema, he began voluntary work in order to claim the lunch expenses and get a decent meal.

Charter 88 were based in Clerkenwell where there were plenty of good cafes. Within six months of starting up with them, Sweeney was working, along with a small group of volunteers, on a youth campaign. Eighteen months later he had toured the country three times with a 'cyberpunk circus against the Criminal Justice Bill' called the Velvet Revolution and with pop band Dodgy.

He also worked with legendary film-maker and musician Melvin Van Peebles to produce a register-to-vote cinema advert. And he helped organise a Radio Caroline campaigning broadcast from the Thames at Canary Wharf. He is proud to say that during this period of work he once rescued a young woman volunteer from the clutches of Tony Blair at a party and, on a separate occasion, managed to refer to Blair as a wanker while standing in front of him.

By the late nineties, having watched Blair dismantle what little was left of the Labour movement post-Thatcher, Sweeney became disillusioned with politics. He was persuaded to embark on a project to bring virtual reality to the people of Hackney by an experimental film-maker who had just returned from the infamous Zippy Pronoia Tour of the United States. It failed to attract any finance. It seemed no one was interested in a fully immersive psycho-geographic reconstruction of ancient London.

Sweeney spent the noughties working on community media projects in Sheffield and Preston, after which he began his pursuits as a novelist and was accepted for the Oxford University Diploma in Creative Writing.

Facing the Strange is his first novel. It is one of three themed novels documenting the last days of twentieth century UK counter culture and the triumph of a media addicted consumer consensus. He currently lives in Oxford with his partner Miriam and their son Joe.

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