



It's true! Bob Dylan was right! The times are changing, and not in a good way.

I've been lucky me. I had a good life and I got to see many a great band on their rise to the top. Sadly (and at this point I will blame the Government, as I'm a hippy at heart) I am being forced into early retirement. Unlike you, I won't be getting a pension. I won't be moving to Spain and living in a sunny retirement village. No! I will be disposed of and most likely 'destroyed' or possibly 'recycled'.

To get an idea of what I am on about let me take you back to the summer of 2000, when I was born. Well, made actually, in a massive factory in Huddersfield. Me and thousands of others. Clean, clear, glistening glass. Ready and waiting to be sent to various drinking establishments across the UK.

My first memory was coming off the conveyer belt and being picked up by a human who wrapped me in some rather odd paper before placing me into a box with 29 other Trays.

We were all excited, whilst basking in the light of the factory we were coming up with thoughts of where we would be sent. It was the sky lights that gave us our first view of the outside world, the blue sky and a warm sun. I was on a high. My mind was racing with anticipation and I was desperately yearning to get out there and start working.

Suddenly there was darkness. The lid of the box was closed. I could hear the parcel tape being placed around the box and shortly after the journey began. I had been told the horrors of relocation and I was glad to be placed in the middle of the box. Often Trays placed at the bottom and sides would not survive the rough delivery treatment and were found S.O.A. – smashed on arrival.

Days went by. It seemed like forever until I arrived at my new home on Friday 15 June 2000. No sooner had I arrived than I was taken out of the box and placed on a scratched-up table in the corner of what I thought was a dirty looking pub. Not much happened until the evening and then I realised where I was.



I had been sent to the legendary Freebutt music venue in Brighton and there I stayed until mid 2006. I got to watch 1000's of bands play including some of what are now the biggest bands in the world. The venue was small, dirty, loud and full of smoke. I collected the ash from tens of thousands of punters cigarettes and watched bands for free. Nothing could have been better. I loved it!

Now, don't get me wrong, I had a few near-smash experiences in my time and there were quite a few awful sounding bands, but I was looked after. I was cleaned every night and there were many other Trays there to keep me company. Everything was as it should be. But this was not to last.

The dark times were coming. In the summer of 2006 the Freebutt was closed down due to excessive noise pollution complaints and it stayed shut until early 2007 when it was eventually sold to a developer to become a trendy gastro-pub.

In October 2006 during the annual Brighton Live I got moved to The Hope, another local music venue. I still got to watch bands but it just wasn't the same and nothing ever will be. Shortly after moving to The Hope things got even worse. I found out that The Government had passed a bill to ban smoking in all public premises effective as of July 2007. It would appear that the smoke was well and truly settling – for good.

No one knows for sure what will happen to us Trays. Pubs will no longer need us and there is talk that we will become extinct, things of history and folklore. Some of us will be preserved in museums to show future generations the way things once were.

As for me ... well, I have 6 months service left and then I fear I'll mostly likely be thrown out with the final pile of ash, no longer emptied, no longer used. This is my swansong, my final thought, a lasting document to my life. For the times they are a-changin.