

## **SOUTHERN SOFTIES**

*“Northern folk are hard as nails  
Fortified by Arctic gales  
They know what hard work entails  
Yes, they know what a cold and cough is -  
But do Southern Softies?”*  
John Shuttleworth

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**All press enquiries and requests for screeners should be made to:**

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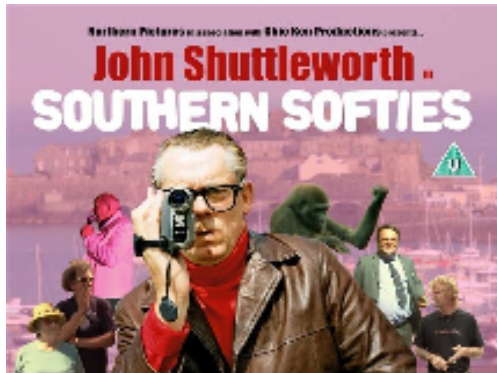
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**PRESS RELEASE – UK:  
Softies’ released on DVD March 1 2010**

**Spoofo comedy film ‘Southern**



**Starring Graham Fellows as John Shuttleworth**

**Written, Directed & Produced by Graham Fellows**

**A Chic Ken Production production,  
released & distributed by Voiceprint**

March 1 2010 sees the DVD release of SOUTHERN SOFTIES, the sequel to the critically-acclaimed spoof documentary IT'S NICE UP NORTH, in which John Shuttleworth, Sheffield's most versatile singer/organist, investigated whether the further north you go, the nicer the people get. In SOUTHERN SOFTIES we follow the intrepid Shuttleworth as he traverses the Channel Islands in an attempt to decipher whether the further South you go the softer people become.

Accompanied on camera by his incompetent agent Ken Worthington, and later (when Ken goes AWOL) by a leather-clad, roller-skating camera operator called Faye, a cash-strapped John spends his summer travelling thorough Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark, meeting a host of fascinating people, and one or two boring ones. But are they Southern Softies? And will John, running out of camera crew, film stock, and places to sleep, be able to get the help he needs to complete the film?

**Extras include:**

- Trailer for Southern Softies narrated by Joan Chitty (4 minutes)
- Pop Promo of "I Can't Go Back To Savoury Now" animated by Kevin Baldwin (3 minutes)
- Photo gallery of at least 100 stills from the movie with pleasant musical accompaniment
- A previously unheard Shuttleworth song - a plaintive ballad with rhythmic accompaniment courtesy of a clapping gorilla
- Deleted scenes including:
  1. *Strawberries*: John pulls up in his Austin Ambassador to survey a roadside "strawberries for sale" handcart. After much deliberation, John decides they are overpriced, and drives off
  2. *Jasper!*: John notes with amazement how a Jersey couple don't panic when a wasp buzzes around them, and contrasts their "non- Southern Softy" reaction with his own "Northern Jessy" hysterics
  3. *Come on, Flashing Floozy!*: In a desperate bid to raise funds for the movie, John and the film crew attend the annual Jersey races. After their horse loses, John spends their last pound gambling on a traditional Jersey game - "Crown and Castle", and loses it
  4. *"Terminator"*: John films Faye on his camcorder while driving (highly illegal, though the road was deserted!) as Faye films John while on her roller skates. She overtakes John, and he nearly collides with a fence.
  5. *Alderney Time* John meets more of Alderney's

charming and laid back residents, including a builder who looks like a tough pirate, although his "Southern Softy" credentials are exposed when he reveals his builders enjoy quiche during their lunch breaks

Release Date: 1 March 2010  
 RRP: £13.99  
 Running Time: 78 min  
 Extras: 15 min  
 Format: 1 Disc, PAL, All Regions  
 Cert: U  
 Cat No: Chic Ken DVD 012  
 Available at: [www.shuttleworths.co.uk](http://www.shuttleworths.co.uk); [www.voiceprint.co.uk](http://www.voiceprint.co.uk);  
[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) & all good DVD stores

**Press quotes for Southern Softies:**

"Hilarious... **Orkney Today** "Kept me smiling" **Sunday Times** "A sense of lyricism to rival McGonagall's" **Independent** "Very funny.....well worth seeking out" **Time Out** "Closer in spirit to Alan Bennett than to Sacha Baron-Cohen" **Total Film**

**Press quotes for John Shuttleworth:**

"Shining imagination...he makes me laugh until I cry" **Daily Telegraph** "A gloriously funny celebration of futility and frailty" \*\*\*\* **The Times** "The Cole Porter of the antimacassar set" **The Times** "Sheffield's funniest man" **The Independent** "The Godfather of character comedy" **The Evening Standard** "Character comedy in a class of it's own" **The Observer**

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Stills can be downloaded from [www.cloutcom.co.uk](http://www.cloutcom.co.uk) (picture gallery)

**LONG SYNOPSIS**

Versatile singer/organist (and Northerner) John Shuttleworth decides to film a documentary to test the theory "Are Southerners soft?"

Accompanied by his agent and next door neighbour Ken Worthington on camera, they arrive in Jersey. However, Ken soon gets restless, and missing his hotel pool, storms off, leaving John to buy his own camcorder and continue the documentary alone.

Help duly arrives in the form of a full-scale film crew, which - it seems - Ken has arranged. The quest for the Southern Softies becomes more ambitious though things don't always run smoothly - John's performance on his organ at a local nightclub is dogged by a less-than-enthusiastic audience.

All attempts to locate Ken prove fruitless so John and the crew decide to leave Jersey and continue their quest in Guernsey where John visits the pub where Oliver Reed used to drink, and the strangely named "Battle of Flowers" festival.

Dwindling funds force John and the crew to seek sponsorship from a local airline, who give them free passage to the island of Alderney. The search for Ken (not to mention the Southern Softies), is all but forgotten, as John blags freebies from various local businesses - though his attempt to secure free B&B accommodation on the island of Sark is given short shrift by the tourist board, and John prepares to spend the night under a hedge.

Lady Luck appears briefly when John finds an uncashed cheque for £80 in his pocket "it was for wallpapering two rooms in Ken's bungalow", but disappointment looms once again when John discovers the castle perched atop an island off Sark is not a branch of Barclays but the residence of the secretive Barclay Brothers.

Meanwhile, in a nearby rocky cove a small man with an afro is wrapping the cling film from his sandwich around the lens of his camcorder? Is he a Southern Softy perhaps? Do Southern Softies even exist?

By now John is beginning to doubt his own sanity and the purpose of his quest...

A sequel to the highly successful and critically acclaimed *It's Nice Up North, Southern Softies* stars John Shuttleworth and features a guest appearance by internationally renowned photographer, Martin Parr (creator of the anthology *Boring Postcards*)

## FILM CREDITS

Edited by Mervyn Cloud

Camera: Faye; Sound: Tim Humphries:

Special appearance by Martin Parr

Music: John Kirkpatrick, Kate Rusby, John Shuttleworth

Script editor: Dawn Ellis

Animation: Kevin Baldwin

Executive Producer: Richard Bucknall

## BIOGRAPHY – GRAHAM FELLOWS

Graham Fellows first came to prominence as "**Jilted John**", a character who had a hit single in 1978 that was named after his own alter ego. The punk-driven song was first played on national radio by John Peel, was picked up by EMI International and went on to reach number 4 in the UK singles chart.

In 1986 Fellows created the now infamous **John Shuttleworth**, an aspiring singer/songwriter from Sheffield. The character was inspired by some demo tapes sent in to Chappell Music where Graham worked as a songwriter in the 1980s, and takes some of his mannerisms from Graham's father and from several mouse breeders he knew as a young man in Sheffield. With a quietly quirky manner and slightly nerdish tendencies. Shuttleworth's rather limited musical talents are usually expressed through a Yamaha PSS portable keyboard. Fellows has also created many supporting characters, including John's wife Mary Shuttleworth, and next-door neighbour and incompetent manager and sole agent Ken Worthington, who came last on the TV talent show *New Faces* in 1973.

Their various adventures have featured on several radio shows, including *The Shuttleworths* (BBC Radio 4), *Shuttleworth's Showtime* (BBC Radio 1) *John Shuttleworth's "Open Mind"* (BBC Radio 4) and *Radio Shuttleworth* (BBC Radio 4). He also made a four-part TV series, *500 Bus Stops*, followed by a TV mockumentary special, *Europigeon*, charting the success (or otherwise) of *Pigeons In Flight* – a song which Shuttleworth attempted to have selected for the Eurovision Song Contest.

Prior to creating Shuttleworth, Fellows appeared in *Coronation Street* as Les Charlton, a young biker chasing the affections of married Gail Platt (then Tilsley). In 2007 he appeared in an episode of ITV's *Heartbeat*.

Two more Fellows creations followed, firstly **Brian Appleton**, a rock musicologist and media studies lecturer from a college of further education. Brian is convinced that he has been instrumental in helping many rock acts to achieve megastardom and yet received no credit for his efforts. His newest character is **Dave Tordoff**, a builder from Goole specialising in concrete flooring. He has ambitions to become a popular after dinner speaker having seen how easy it was for Kevin Keegan.

In 2004, Fellows (as Shuttleworth) made a film with photographer Martin Parr entitled *It's Nice Up North*, in which Shuttleworth tests his theory that British people are nicer the further north one ventures by visiting the Shetland Islands, the most northerly part of the UK. It was screened on Sky TV

In 2007, Shuttleworth toured with a new stage show *With My Condiments*. It was inspired by Jamie Oliver's promotion of healthy food for school children. Fellows thought "what would happen if Shuttleworth did the same for a slightly older age group". In June, Shuttleworth's *4 Rather Tasty Tracks* was released as a download or CD. Having been recorded in a wardrobe, it reached number 29 in the Indie Charts in July 2007. He also presented a programme of his favourite poetry and prose on Radio 4's *With Great Pleasure*.

In 2008 Graham embarked on another national tour of the UK & Ireland with *Minor Tour and Other Mythological Creatures*.

Graham has recently recorded a series of commercials for Yorkshire Tea starring John Shuttleworth. They are directed by long time collaborator, Willy Smax.

[www.shuttleworths.co.uk](http://www.shuttleworths.co.uk)

## THE MAKING OF *SOUTHERN SOFTIES*

**By Graham Fellows**

In 2003 I visited the Shetland Isles on the final leg of a national John Shuttleworth tour. I instantly fell in love with these magical windswept islands and during my time there, couldn't help but notice how friendly and welcoming the islanders were. This fact, plus discovering a bus shelter on Unst (the most northerly island) containing a sofa, TV set and stuffed parrot in a cage, prompted me to begin work on the treatment for a movie which became "It's Nice Up North".

Filmed by a friend, Martin Parr (internationally renowned stills photographer); directed by myself (and edited by me on my laptop) the movie when released in

2005 created minor waves in the indie film world. With its unusual mix of fictitious characters interacting with real people, and at times the dividing line between "real" and "unreal" blurred, the movie was described by the Times as "A bit of a shambles frankly, and utterly inspired"

A sequel seemed a natural move, with the Channel Islands the obvious location for filming. "Southern Softies" follows John's quest to see if people are "softer" the further south you travel. Using the same skeleton film crew (minus Martin Parr but for one day of shooting) I - dressed up as my alter ego, John Shuttleworth - meandered for a week through Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and the mysterious Sark - talking to whoever I bumped into, and asking them the all-important question, "Is it soft down South?"

As in "It's Nice Up North", the high level of "unpreparedness" occasionally caused problems, but as often as not reaped dividends. For instance, a musical performance by John in a venue of samba-loving holidaymakers went down disastrously, with most of the audience not liking John's performance one bit. Better recceing and research might have led us to shoot in a more sympathetic venue, but the results on screen more than compensate for any awkwardness I felt at the time - and are perfectly in keeping with John Shuttleworth's status as a failed wannabe singer/organist.

The movie's miniscule budget of £12,000 forced us to appeal for favours and freebies from various Channel Island businesses. This "real life" dilemma informs the "fiction" of the plot, so that the cut price plane flights we actually enjoyed become in the movie free flights with full corporate sponsorship. This led to the gag that John and the crew are obliged to shoot and include footage of aircrafts' logos during much of the film, for which John apologizes to the viewer.

The editing process was dealt a serious blow when - six months into the edit - I carelessly inserted the wrong AC adaptor into a hard drive causing it to blow up and erase the drive's entire contents, setting back the project several weeks. However, this mishap led to the redigitizing and therefore reappraisal of the original footage, with the happy outcome that certain new scenes were "discovered", improving the movie.

For example, a shot of an empty road (caused when bad communication meant John's Austin Ambassador "Y Reg" didn't appear in shot) and originally dismissed as unusable, is now a special moment in "Southern Softies". John encourages the viewer to revel in the rareness and beauty of an empty, car-free road.

Working in this ad hoc, DIY fashion, I feel, I hope, leads to more unusual and interesting results. Without the normal restrictions of a scarily big budget and "real" deadlines, I was able to pick up and put down the movie at will over a period of many months; reflect, go back and unravel, then rebuild - not unlike knitting a sweater, or making a model out of clay.

This editing technique is a variation of a process I developed years ago when I began recording my own radio programmes for BBC Radio 4. The fly-on-the-wall sitcom, "The Shuttleworths" appears scripted, but in fact isn't. I simply speak and record a "made up" line into a microphone as one character, usually John, before recording a made up line as Ken or Mary on a separate track answering John. Then John will respond with a further ad lib, or instead I'll re-record Ken's line, with a different

response perhaps. And so on, until a whole scene of dialogue has been created. Really, working this way, although time-consuming, creatively the sky's your limit.

Not quite so with making a film, as you can only work with the footage you have shot. But using freeze framing, fast forwarding and reversing footage, adding John's freestyle voiceovers, the movie can develop in various directions - often well away from the mood suggested in the original footage.

And what is "Southern Softies" about? Well, to be honest, very little. The plot is reasonably complicated, but totally inconsequential, as is the search for the "Southern Softies". We realised this ourselves, one day into filming, having interviewed a few dozen puzzled Channel Islanders. "What is a Southern Softy anyway? Besides, who cares?" Even John Shuttleworth freely admits that it's a silly quest.

But this failing, I've decided helps to strengthen the film's core message: that this movie is a metaphor for Life - it has little meaning, it meanders and is essentially a silly quest, but hopefully a few laughs are to be had along the way.

A few years ago I met a filmmaker who after filming several shorts, was hopeful of beginning his first full-length feature film. He only had to wait for the 4 million pound budget to materialise. His life and creativity was on hold during this time. He waited for 3 years, and then gave up waiting, and moved on to another project.

Around the same time I landed a small speaking part in a major British movie, which must remain nameless. I arrived on set for my scene at 6 am, and was amazed by the sea of lorries, catering vans and technicians laying cables and shouting, all working flat out in artificial light (it was still dark). I felt utterly daunted by this uncreative atmosphere, but excited by the prospect that I was appearing in a big movie that would be seen by millions of people.

Well, the movie never got a nationwide release, and limped out on DVD only recently. The pressure, the disappointment of this would, I fear, be too much for me. I'm not saying I'd never wait around for a big budget. But I'd rather start making a movie tomorrow for next to nothing.

**ENDS**

**Jan 2010**