

No.14

50p.

SCENE AND OVERHEARD

CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S ROCK MAGAZINE

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1988

THE WEATHER PROPHETS

THE CORN DOLLIES

THE CHARLOTTEs

BHAGWAN FRESH

BOYSDREAM

BLIND MICE



Summertime Special Issue
4 extra pages



EDITORIAL

Yet another action-packed issue for you, with nine, yes NINE, band interviews, plus the usual records/tapes/gigs reviews. Now that the Corn Exchange appears to be attracting the sort of groups we want to see there, we'll try to get a few more big-name interviews. However, we won't lose sight of our main objective - to promote and publicise local music: the local content within this magazine still remains our no. 1 priority.

Thanks go from Paul and myself to all those who have contributed to this issue. We're always happy to consider any submissions, so don't be afraid to have a go: local gig reviews are particularly welcome, especially if they're accompanied by a photo. Our next issue should be out around late October/early November - see you then! PJ

CONTENTS

Bhagwan Fresh	7	Cambridge	
Blind Mice	12	Folk Festival	14
Bloodgood	4	Gigs	23
Boysdream	16	Letters	26
The Charlottes	8	Listings	27
Corn Dollies	9	Records & Tapes	19
Infernal Death	5	Scene	17
The Three Johns	10	A State Of Decay	28
The Weather Prophets	13		

CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Curtis, Phil Johnson, Steve Hartwell, Paul Attwood, Graham Gargiulo, Steph McNicholas, Paul Christoforou, Rose Payne, Tom White, Luke Warm, Andy Clifton, Steve Gillett, Chris Williams, Jordan, Neil Wilson, Effe C, Kevin Connor, Shani Chalk.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Tony Lovell, Paul Christoforou, Steve Gillett, Chris Chalk, Backs Records, Medium Cool Records, Abstract Records, and a few unknowns.

FRONT COVER DESIGN

Malcolm Ayers

COVER PICTURE

Infernal Death: picture by Steve Gillett

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Flightpath Studios, QualiSound Studios, Minstrel Court Studios, The Music Room, Alma Brewery, Burleigh Arms.

LASER PRINTING FROM MY APPLEMAC DISK

Blue Print, 20 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT

MAGAZINE PRINTED BY

Target Litho, Unit A, 299 High Street, Cottenham, Cambridge CB4 4TX

EDITORS

Paul Christoforou, 53 Kingston Street, Cambridge CB1 2NU tel. 358044

Phil Johnson, 6 Albemarle Way, Cambridge CB4 2SP tel. 314738

AN INSIGHT INTO A
CHRISTIAN HEAVY
METAL BAND

heaven.....

BLOODGOOD



"Tell me, is something eluding you, sunshine? Is this not what you expected to see?"

The Romsey Mill, Cambridge, an unlikely venue for a heavy metal gig, let alone an American Heavy Metal band, with two charting albums, BBC TV appearances, numerous magazine articles, European tours... the Romsey Mill does not really seem the best of places for a warm up gig; they certainly didn't fill it (hardly surprising at four quid a ticket). The first impression (which does indeed last) came from their dressing room, which was filled with low-alcohol lager, fruit juices - notably devoid of ash trays, groupies and empty bottles of Jim Bean! Firm instructions were given to the support band that there was to be no onstage swearing. Bloodgood, consisting of Dave Zaffrino (gee-tar), Les Carlsen (vox), Mark Welling (drums) and Mike Bloodgood (bass), provided a competent set, brimming over with energy, yet maligned with a disgusting sound mix. However, Les Carlsen's humour and professionalism saw them through. The songs were well arranged, and the solos were extremely impressive. We were entertained with such songs as 'Alone in Suicide', 'Killing the Beast', 'The Messiah' and 'Demon on the Run'. Les proved to be a screamer of some note. I talked before and after the gig to Mark, who became a Christian after joining the band, and founder member Mike:

What do you think of England?
Mark: "We haven't had a chance to look round Cambridge yet. I love the whole Europe thing, England especially: yesterday, we went to Eastbourne and saw the cliff that all those people commit suicide off.... In the States we've got the Golden Gate Bridge....."

The English have been in a lot of trouble lately, hooligans, etc. With your ideas, don't you occasionally come into criticism, or even aggression?

Mark: "Everyone's been really nice, but in Northampton there were some guys outside this hall who asked me to kiss this Bible they had. I said 'Sure, okay' and as I kissed it, they beat up on me." You've been likened to a lot of heavy bands like Judas Priest and Dio (Ardshock - American magazine); what do you look on as being your influences?

Mark: "I like Led Zep, Heart and stuff. The other guys like Deep Purple, Kiss. Yeah (points to my 'Rush' T-shirt), 2112 is one of my favourite albums. I like all kinds of music. I got a scholarship at a music college and studied jazz drumming."

Mike, I noticed that during your set, you made a reference to Bonn Scott and the song 'Highway to Hell':

Mike: "Yeah, what I said was Bonn Scott was singing 'Highway to Hell' and drank himself to death: it's ironic him singing it and perhaps ending up on it. I wrote a song about it called 'Self Destruction': it's from our album 'Detonation'." We've got Ozzie Osbourne playing in Cambridge soon. He, I know, has been in a lot of trouble in the States over the supposed effect that he's had on his audience and listeners. He and a lot of heavy metal acts have been accused of Satanism: how do you read all this - do you see other bands working against you?

Mike: "I think that anyone in the public eye has responsibility, be he a rock'n'roll star, a soccer player or a baseball star. Kids believe in what they see. It may be all part of an act, but you know when you and I were young, we couldn't tell all these things were an act. Don't get

me wrong, I think Ozzie is a great musician; I just question his... well, the damage he might be doing. The 'sex, drugs and rock'n'roll' ethos, it's all so false."

Visually, though, you do appear like



Les Carlsen

these bands, the way you dress... it purveys an eerie 'glammy' image, like Motley Crue. Don't you then find yourself being associated with these bands who have a different outlook on life?

Mike: "If you play heavy metal, you've got to dress to fit the part. We don't dress provocatively, we don't do wierd stuff with microphone stands, pretend to drink Jack Daniels from a bottle... I've never met Motley Crue: I don't think we dress like them. They come from a different part of the States; I'm from Seattle - the guys I hang around with are Heart and Barren Cross. The dress is important. Billy Graham gives his sermon in a suit, we give ours like this... it's kinda the same thing." When a lot of bands leave the stage, they are really hyped up; they

finish their set and go out and get bombed. It's difficult for you to do that - how do you find yourselves winding down?

Mike: "I've nothing against going out and having a beer. Getting drunk is out. There's nothing wrong in having a glass of wine with a meal. I don't smoke because I don't like what it does to you. Last year we were on tour for nine months, so, it's not like kids who do one-off gigs where you've had all week to get psyched up on and are only playing for a brief period of time, and have all that energy left. The way we calm down is by standing in the lobby of the hall after the gig, talking to the people who come and see us. Most of us have our families with us on the road, wife and kids, so we can go back to them."

Say the word 'American Christianity' to people and it conjures up images of vast conglomerates out to make money, TV Evangelists:

Mike: "We totally disassociate ourselves from all that. We've been publicly ridiculed by one famous TV Evangelist. Their idea of Christianity is wrong: the idea that 'I don't like it, so God doesn't like it, so you're a sinner and will burn in Hell' is all wrong."

I noticed there was a lot of talking in between songs, a lot of talkovers in the quiet parts of songs: don't you feel that a more (for the want of a better word) 'subtle' approach may be more effective?

Mike: "The thing about heavy metal is (laughs) you don't have to be subtle. Every band's got a message, be it love or whatever: ours is Jesus Christ. I like heavy metal because you can be direct, although we do take a subtle line on our new album that will be out in September. Every audience is different; we judge the audience as we go. They're all different."

Do you feel you've converted someone tonight?

Mike: "I think so, but it's hard to tell for definite. We played at Greenbelt in front of 20,000 people - it's hard to tell, sometimes. This place is smaller, it makes it easier. If I can make just one person think, I'll have succeeded."

So then, I was surprised and impressed. Mike Bloodgood is extremely charismatic, articulate and genuine. They are destined for greater things, if the message stays in the song and not the bits in between. I wish them every success. Oh, in case you were wondering, the next two lines in the song I used for the title certainly does not apply to these boys!!!!

MARK CURTIS

..... and hell?

INFERNAL DEATH



Mark (Wretham, vox): "Do you want to hear my review of Bloodgood?"

Dan aka Wally (Waldman, rhythm gtr): "Satanism in songs is quite funny up to a point. Stuff like King Diamond is quite amusing, and Slayer is fairly amusing, though they may have gone a bit too far with songs like 'Angel of Death', which is about concentration camps. Stuff like Metallica's 'Seek and Destroy' - going out on a Saturday night, beating people up and getting drunk - I can see why people don't like it. I don't mind, I can see they don't actually believe in what they're singing. It's bands like Stryper (Christian metal) who are nice, disgustingly squeaky clean, that I hate. I don't mind bands like that singing about religion and God, but I don't see why they should shove it down people's throats."

Mark: "They (Bloodgood) actually preached it between each song. The music was very tight and very good, but when it gets to preaching

between songs, it gets too much, 'cos I'm not interested."

Dan: "If people want to know about stuff like that, they'll take the trouble to find out."

Steve (Asbridge, drums): "Stryper are like plastic nativity toy sets that you can buy in W.H. Smith's, the ultimate in tacky consumer religion. I think the reason why people are so cynical about Stryper is that they're caught up with this whole TV Evangelism thing, which has just been chucked down the toilet after Jimmy Lee Swaggart was discovered in bed with a prostitute. It's just become a real joke."

The origins of Infernal Death go back to early 1987, when James Lord and a couple of his friends were asked to do a support gig at the Melbourn Rock Club. James asked Steve to play drums, and Dan, who had just started learning to play guitar, was also drafted in. The other two never turned up for

rehearsals, so James, Dan and Steve "mucked about for ages" as a three piece, under the name of Rack Of Torture. An advert went out for a bassist and singer. Chris Cutting, at that time bassist with thrash band Arcana, responded to the advert, and took Mark, singer with Arcana, along to the first rehearsal. This takes us up to last August. A demo tape was made at Flightpath in October, and the band's first gig took place at the Burleigh on 14th December. Since then, Infernal Death have gone from strength to strength: a memorable performance in the Rock Group Competition at the Corn Exchange; a slot in a prestigious all-thrash gig in Birmingham; and a highly impressive follow-up demo tape. On the other hand, they've managed to get up the noses of the local music establishment, the City Council, various P.A. persons and bouncers, Peter Mitchell, Nutmeg, etc. (see the inlay card of their latest tape for a full list): they've also just lost lead guitarist James Lord.

Steve: "We had so many bookings cancelled at the Melbourn Rock Club, we didn't think there'd be much interest, thrash being a minority interest. As it happened, we had one gig at Melbourn. It was cancelled at the last minute, but about 70 people turned up to see it, just on the strength of two posters in town."

Dan: "We spent ages ringing up the Burleigh for a gig. They said 'you're heavy metal, aren't you?', and I said 'sort of' - 'sorry, can't have you, then!'. I knew Paul Garner (Geneva Convention) at school, rang him up and asked if we could have a support sometime. About 70 people turned up at the Burleigh, mainly to

see us. Reg (landlord) moaned and complained about the noise level, then looked how much money he'd taken that night and invited us back. He's banned us twice, and then rang us to book us again!"

Dan: "Jim has quit and joined War Dance, apparently: it's not a very amicable split. What happened was about a couple of weeks ago, Jim said he'd been asked to join War Dance and said 'no chance, I won't do it'. A week later, he said he'd quit but 'I'm not going to join War Dance - I don't like thrash metal'. Last night someone said that apparently he'd joined War Dance."

Steve: "The worst thing was when he announced at rehearsals that he was going to think about it for a couple of weeks. In the end we said he'd got to make up his mind, 'cos we weren't prepared to keep hanging around for weeks and weeks, so he ended up just quitting. We've slagged him off, but he was a good guitarist, and it was going to be difficult to find someone, but because we're fairly well known around the area now, a lot of people have been interested, and it wasn't too difficult finding a replacement."

Dan: "I knew Andy (Saich, last band - Toytown) before. We brought him along to try out: the first rehearsal was pretty disastrous, but..."

Steve: "The second where we started to get things together was pretty decent. He had only about a week to learn the stuff, and he was

more or less playing it. In some ways, although it was really worrying at first, we're actually going to benefit from moving on and not having James around, simply because we'll be able to do what we want, in terms of writing: we won't be hindered in any way."

Steve: "After the Birmingham gig, Dave Bennett (Bradford promoter looking after Slammer, a Bradford band who've had a Friday Rock Show session) rang me up. He asked if we'd got a record deal, and when I said no, he gave me a load of phone numbers - he knows everyone in the independent sector. Andrew Ward at Noise Records, I sent him a tape. He's just the middle man... Noise are a German company, so he sent it off to Berlin to see what they think. Earache (Extreme Noise Terror, Napalm Death) are also interested: they're merging with Steamhammer, who handle Destruction and Sodom in Germany. It should be quite a good label, with good distribution. I've sent a tape to Metalworks in London, as well. It's been quite good, considering..."

Mark: "we're crap!"

Steve: "I hate heavy metal, I can't stand it. I used to be mad on it, but it's so boring now. Everyone used to think Iron Maiden were really evil, wicked and nasty, and Ozzie Osbourne was a real mean dude - they just look like Katrina and the Waves, compared with Slayer and

Possessed, and people like that."

Dan: "Steve's into complete death metal, and Chris is still into Iron Maiden..."

Chris: "Oh yeah, bloody good band..."

Mark: "But that's just to do with his mental age."

Chris: "Nothing wrong with them. Fuck off."

Dan: "...and I'm into the doomed side - Celtic Frost, Black Sabbath."

Mark: "I'm into Duran Duran, and Bros. I went to a party last night and they didn't play any bloody Bros!"

Andy: "I like hardcore a lot, but nobody else in the band likes it."

Steve: "D.R.I. and Cryptic Slaughter are the only two I like."

Dan: "The problem we've had in Cambridge is, it's not so much the music the people mind, it's like the Council hate us because of our fans, because they go mental, and you get people slam-diving, which looks violent, and it can be dangerous, but people who are slamming know there's a risk of getting hurt and wouldn't do it if they didn't mind that. We've had someone dislocate their shoulder, we've had a broken arm and a broken leg..."

Steve: "A broken nose in Birmingham..."

Dan: "Minor injuries, but it doesn't help when you have a big bouncer on stage actually pushing people into the audience."

Dan: "You've got to be a reasonably competent musician to play thrash metal. I can't play the lead stuff, but some of the rhythm stuff's fairly intricate."

Mark: "He's being modest, really. He makes Eric Clapton look like a prat."

Steve: "I don't think Eric Clapton's particularly wonderful, actually..."

Andy: "Nor do I!"

Steve: "The problem is that people can't see through the basic appearance: this is something we'll have to live with."

Mark: "We've tried enough times to make people realise that we're not serious Anti Christs, even though Wally doesn't like churches!"

Chris: "We're entering the Rock Competition again next year, just to be obscene and nasty..."

Mark: "And go totally wild."

Dan: "We're not actually nasty - we just say things that people take wrongly!"

Steve: "People can take us as a joke band, rather than a fun band. What we are doing is not a joke - not to us, anyway, not to people who like us - but we want to have fun at the same time. We don't want to get so serious that we'll disappear up our own arseholes - that's pointless."

Dan: "We're so controversial, people either like us or hate us: you can't ignore us."

PHIL JOHNSON



Minstrel Court

24 TRACK STUDIO

STUDER A80/AHB SIGMA

FULLY DIGITAL, TOTAL RECALL MIXDOWN

FULL RANGE OF OUTBOARD EQUIPMENT

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

ALL FOR ONLY £18 P/H plus V.A.T.

CALL US FOR A BROCHURE (0223) 207979

BHAGWAN FRESH AND THE GURUS OF JIVE



Tim (Lee, keys & vox): "A friend of ours is nicknamed Bhagwan, and we were all down Jesus Green pool one summer, making up silly names for no apparent reason, and I said 'Bhagwan Fresh and the Gurus of Jive', taking the piss out of hip hop bands and all that, and the name stuck. Before that we were 'Blues and Breakfast' and before that we were 'Hep Daddy Xmas and the Funky Jazz Chickens'. We're all 18, except John who's nearly 18."

Chris (Swales, bass & vox): "It all started seriously in November 1986, when one band member left, and I took up the bass."

Tim: "We had a drum machine at the time. Then we managed to get hold of this abnormal person, Roderick, who plays drums for us now."

By the time they appeared at the Rock Group Competition, they had gained some percussion (for the comp. only) and two vocalists.

Tim: "They're still hanging about, but they can't actually sing. We're not too keen on them, we've found a new singer, he's our saxophone player. We've now got a horn section which we didn't have then. There's a basic core of ME..."

Chris: "and a couple of people who turn up occasionally."

Tim: "It's us four, bass, guitar, drums and keyboards. As soon as I can find somebody who can play the saxophone..."

Chris: "they're in."

Tim: "They're not songwriting members, they don't do much of the arguing, it's all us. I write the songs and then rip them to bits. They're my songs and they blaspheme upon them."

Chris: "Change them into something musical, as opposed to

fast '70's mad drug-crazed fits on the clavinet."

Tim: "I'll be starting work in a recording studio around September, either in London or Bury St. Edmunds. I'm going to carry on with my keyboard playing and songwriting to an extent. I'll be starting off as assistant engineer, so I won't have much time for other things. What I really want is to be the Caucasian equivalent of Prince."

The band breaks up in September, because as well as Tim leaving Cambridge, John is off to Art College, and Chris is taking a year off before going to Oxford University. Rod has already found another band, The Cherry Orchard.

John (Haselham, gtr. & pink striped shorts): "I think it's good to play with other bands. I played with DYI for three weeks when Ben left."

Tim: "And then they split up."

John: "I can't understand why. It's good fun to get around a little. You learn a lot."

Tim: "I've played with In Flight and The Floorshow, and it's just brilliant experience because I hate the music."

John: "It's more of a challenge."

Tim: "Chris has played with Post Coital Cigarette and Chocolate Misbehaviour. We all listen to '70's funk a huge amount. The first song I ever wrote, Funk Attack, was originally a drug crazed '70's clavinet fit, but it's now a little better. It's not a complete ripoff of '70's funk."

John: "I think it's a cross between Trouble Funk and '70's music."

Chris: "We're all go go influenced, but the thing is we say to Rod 'play a go go beat'; that's how the song starts, and then over the top comes something different, so in the end it doesn't sound like go go."

Tim: "We can't really sound like a go go band because we haven't got 300 black percussionists."

John: "We play marvellously even if we do wear funny clothes occasionally."

Tim: "Our posters are one of the high points, I think: it's the bit we spend most time preparing. We played a gig at the Burleigh and a load of the LSD turned up. The LSD are the Live, Spray, Die posse, they're about 12 years old and they weren't allowed in, and they said can we have a poster and our doorman, Sorba the Fat, said you can buy one and so he sold them some."

Tim: "I'm glad you said we sound like Parliament; I feel much better for that."

Chris: "We don't claim to be any sort of original up to the minute band: we're basically a group of people with a lot of friends who are very polite and who come to our gigs. It's something we like doing, it's not something we take seriously."

Tim: "It's a dance band only."

John: "We fill out the Burleigh Arms every time we play there: over 150 people - that can't be bad, and everyone dances. What more can you want?"

Chris: "A lot of them don't even like funk."

Tim: "Live I think it's excellent; we have a brilliant time and everybody else does. On tape at least half our audience wouldn't like it anymore."

Chris: "No one is really interested in the lyrics, everyone's more interested in jamming and playing the music. So we come up with lyrics that are silly."

Tim: "We come up with lyrics we can write that morning. I say 'yeah, I promise I'll write this song

properly tomorrow, but for the moment these lyrics will do' and then they stick, which is the problem. Only Funk Can Save Us Now is a newish one - the lyrics for that are quite good, they only mention 'funk' every second word. I think we're the funkiest band in Cambridge. It's not difficult. The venue situation in Cambridge is terrible; there are hundreds of bands and they've got nowhere to play. We certainly won't have anybody supporting us because we want all the money. I've singlehandedly brought back the amazing popularity of the clavinet in the Cambridge music scene. I'm going to try to get a Hammond organ as well. I had a sampler but I got rid of it, because it wasn't funky enough, basically. I can't think of anybody who's ever said anything nice about us apart from the fact that we're young and talented."

Everybody say 'Ahh!'

John: "Then again, no one's said we're really bad, have they?"

Tim: "We can take criticism, but we know where your children go to school!"

They've already recorded a four track demo at Qualisound:

Tim: "That was the first time in the studio, so we weren't going to come up with brilliant results. It took us 16 hours to do it all. We've got some money in the Bhagwan bank account, which we'll be spending on the next demo tape, which will be A1 superbly brill. We're recording it in July and it'll be released in September."

Sex, drugs and Rock'n'Roll?

Tim: "No, Sweet Love Mary Jane and Funky Music."

STEVE HARTWELL



THE CHARLOTTEs



Quite a few people were surprised at the break-up of Huntingdon band The Giant Polar Bears earlier this year. Three members of the band, Graham Garglulo (gtr), David Fletcher (bass) and Simon Scott (drums), decided to continue working together under the name of The Charlottes, and recruited fanzine writer Petra as their vocalist. Despite a dodgy debut gig at CCAT, supporting Leeds indie band The Snapdragons, The Charlottes have improved in leaps and bounds. Although unfairly labelled in some quarters as Primitives copyists, influences are more streamlined than before, and live performances are now extremely energetic and exciting.

I caught up with the band recently for their first interview, hoping to determine the reasons behind the formation of the band, as well as (more importantly) discovering The Charlottes' ambitions for 1988 and beyond.

First, I gave Graham the opportunity to dispel any myths about the demise of The Giant Polar Bears once and for all.

Graham: *The Giant Polar Bears went as far as they could go under that line-up. It just disintegrated,*

rather than throwing anybody out. We had reached our level supporting The Weather Prophets; there was no way forward from there. The Giant Polar Bears were quite fragmented - different influences and so on - but under The Charlottes, the influences have been honed down. This is a completely new band. The problem is that some people regard it as the same band, which is a mistake. There are new songs, new presentation; everything is different!

How exactly did The Charlottes form?

Graham: *Initially, I was going to leave The Giant Polar Bears because I was so disillusioned with it. Then I thought as we three (Graham, Simon and David) got on well together musically, it would be a shame not to take advantage of it. It provoked us to form The Charlottes.*

Petra: *The reason I first got involved with the band was because a gig was coming up and I knew all the lyrics. They didn't want to lose track of gigs, so I just helped them out; but they decided to keep me on.*

Graham: *We could have hung around for three or four months, not doing anything, but we thought we'd get back into it immediately. What about the prickly subject of being so-called Primitives copyists?*

Graham: *The problem is that as soon as a new band comes along, people are desperate to try to put a label on that band; it's astonishing really. The Giant Polar Bears were called Mighty Lemon Drops clones just because we did one cover! As soon as The Charlottes came along, people said 'The Primitives'.*

Whether it's because of a blonde female vocalist or not, I don't know. I'd admit we have got a sound that is slightly like The Primitives, but that's only one colour of the rainbow. We've got a lot of songs that are completely different. People who have seen The Charlottes live will have witnessed an extremely powerful and energetic performance. The band transmit their enthusiasm to the audience whose response, generally speaking, has been extremely favourable. Live performance is something many local bands cannot seem to master. The bands who are interesting and invigorating live are normally the most popular, ie. The Pleasure Heads, Nutmeg and, dare I say it, Stormed. The Charlottes have their style of performance off to a tee.

Simon: *We are really a 'live' band. The atmosphere at our gigs is really good. Our energy comes out in a live situation, and we look good! What is the point in playing powerful music when you stand about like corpses. You might as well be playing in your bedroom. Putting everything into it live*

really helps it along!

Graham: *When we play live, we aim for a real intensity, in terms of sound, and we find that people get moved by it. We find that people really like it.*

Who writes the songs?

Simon: *Graham will often come up with the melody, and Petra writes down the vocals. We all then build up the song together.* **Graham:** *The guitarist does, to a certain extent, play a bigger part in songwriting. But we all make contributions - it's pretty democratic.*

What about inspiration?

Graham: *There is no band influence as such. Obviously there are individual influences...*

Petra: *Definitely not The Primitives...*

Graham: *We've all got different influences. As a guitarist I prefer to listen to Johnny Marr than all these hundreds of Eddie Van Halen types. In terms of pop, mid-sixties Bob Dylan: not things that are easily identifiable.*

Simon: *Well, musically, My Bloody Valentine, and some other independent pop bands. But as a drummer, I am influenced by Keith Moon; the way he presented himself on stage, and his style. He looked quite neurotic. From a drummer's point of view, there is nothing worse than going to a gig and just seeing the drummer, tapping away. I try to put what I can into a song!*

Petra: *I like people like Liz Frazer (Cocteau Twins) and the singer from Throwing Muses. I wouldn't try to imitate her, because it would sound stupid.*

David: *I don't think I'm influenced by any bass player. Musically speaking, a wide spectrum, from Primal Scream to the Cocteau Twins.*

Graham: *The only description of the band I'd be happy with is Sandie Shaw with The Smiths... something like that.*

The Charlottes are an intelligent down to earth sort of band. They realise that the main problem with the Cambridge scene is a lack of motivation, and they are far detached from that incestuous circle of local bands. They are refreshingly optimistic about their future, and seem determined to try to make a success out of the band.

Simon: *We're quite serious in what we do, and we all want to get as far as possible, musically. There are too many bands around here who just play to their friends.*

Graham: *If you are too desperate for success, then you've got problems. You play the sort of music you like, and if you make a success out of it, all well and good. There are too many bands out for financial success, rather than musicians doing what they feel what they have to do!*

Simon: *We are trying to push ourselves to get as wide an audience as possible. We certainly don't want to stay in Cambridge, because it's too restrictive. We must wish them well.*

PAUL ATTWOOD

THE CORN DOLLIES

"Is this going to be an in-depth philosophical discussion, or is it going to be Smash Hits?"

So asked **Steve Musham**, cheeky apple-chomping long-fringed vocalist/frontman/acoustic guitarist with London's Corn Dollies, in the cramped dressing room, immediately after their appearance at Peterborough's Glasshouse lunchtime music club. An odd venue for bands nurtured on dark, shadowy evening gigs: the sunlight floods in across the Cathedral city, looming across the park and creating an uneasy air of lightness. The children scamper across the carpeted floor, giving an air of mischievousness, and a few lunchtime beers add a final touch of dreamy surreality.

Sounding initially like a quick-blending of Lloyd Cole and the Go-Betweens, plus electric violin, the band's trademark is their 'folk rock meets New Model Army' sound, with Steve's gargling, drawn out vocal style adding the distinctive final touches to their refreshing and jaunty music. Few devotees of the weekly music papers will be unfamiliar with the name of The Corn Dollies, their media profile being surprisingly high after only one self-financed 7" and two 12" releases on the admittedly ever so hip Medium Cool independent record label.

Following a recent trip to Spain with the Darling Buds, The Man From Delmonte, and what seemed like 70% of British music journalists, a number of articles appeared which seemed to dwell more on the social/drunken side of the excursion, rather than the actual music.

So how did the trip go?

Steve: "Extremely unconsciously."

So I gathered!

Steve: "I think that the journalists that did come with us had such a good time that they couldn't be bothered to write about the bands, but just about actually getting pissed."

Much hype was made of a football match featuring a team fielded by the bands and journalists against a Spanish team, some of it perhaps backfiring when the Melody Maker review of 'Shake', the new 12", dwelt more on the drummer's passing ability and lack of a wank for three days. Did this worry the band at all?

Tall, imposing electric violinist, **Johnno**, roared in a strong Liverpudlian accent: "Well, they didn't even get that right, it was four days."

So...err...who actually won this

football match, then?

Johnno: "Ah, those foreign bastards, after I was substituted by this fucking long haired useless wanker." He motioned towards Steve, who responded, "we lost 3-1."

Much has been heard of a forthcoming debut album: when is it due?

Steve: "Oh, possibly October, or after Christmas, it depends. We've started working with a management agency, the album was originally due out in May, but the agency decided they wanted to push the band some more. Some record companies were interested... so we're putting out two singles and the the L.P. We'll be mixing the L.P. through August, and we'll release the next single in September, to keep the band name alive as we shan't be touring at all."

Compared to the first appearance by the Corn Dollies in Peterborough, at the now-defunct South Seas China Restaurant (with The Rain, another Medium Cool band), how did Steve rate the reaction today?

Steve: "Well, it's a wierd lunchtime venue, faced with a hundred or so people sitting there in broad daylight, and the thing with indie audiences is that they tend to be restrained, anyway. Sometimes we get some feedback... you know, throwing bottles, but they were very polite, whereas last time we played here, everyone went mental, people slamdancing."

Initially, perhaps the biggest band on Medium Cool were the Raw Herbs, who've recently moved on...

Steve: "Well, yeah, but there's The Waitones from Manchester; I don't know if you've heard of them, a really good band, getting better all the time. The Man From Delmonte (who recently played the Sea Cadets Hall in Cambridge, terribly mismatched with local goths The Freedom Faction) and also the Darling Buds."

What do you think of the Darling Buds (who recently signed a distribution deal with CBS, no less)?

Steve: "Nice people. shame about the songs."

Johnno: "Just leave it at nice people... even though they are Welsh, a great handicap to anyone in this life!"



As opposed to bands of the Darling Buds' ilk, one of the interesting things about the Corn Dollies is their rejection of standard indie-style lyrics, in favour of a stream of consciousness-type babble, the wonderful titles giving just about the only indication of what Steve might be singing about.

Steve: "You've got to write some words that make sense, you know, put something across, especially in a band like ours, where the vocals are pretty important, more upfront instead of 'Sha la la'!"

So would you say you're an indie-pop band?

Steve: "No!"

You've expressed distaste for the term a number of times.

Steve: "Yeah, it's music journalists' fault: they've got this 'indie' thing, where the word becomes sort of a musical category, an expected sound, and that isn't what it's about. It's about being independent on an independent label, that's what 'indie' is. Kylie Minogue's an independent record, S-Express, New Order, it's all independent music. The music press are

so blinkered, and, like, basically indie-pop becomes twee electric nursery rhymes, with a fuzzbox or jangly guitars... the Talulah Gosh school of music."

Suddenly, all heads turn as the sound of young female voices echo in the corridor, and a knock sounds on the door. Johnno turns and shrieks "Eh, there's a mattress in the back of the van!"

The door opens and in come two young girls. "How much longer are you gonna be; we need this room now."

"Sorry" grin the Corn Dollies, as they shuffle out, apologetic, articulate, humble and likeable - one of the better band choices from The Glasshouse's Ann Johnson, methinks.

Graham Gargiulo

(The Corn Dollies' 'Mary Hopkin Song' is one of 19 tracks included on the locally-produced Indie compilation tape 'Uncle Arthur's Pop Parlour' - other featured bands include The Raw Herbs, The Waitones, The Poppyheads, This Poison - and is available from Tony Jenkins, 5 Stourbridge Grove, Cambridge CB1 3HZ, price £2 plus s.a.e.)

THE THREE JOHNS

The first time The Three Johns took my world by storm was at a sweaty miners' benefit gig in Newport's Docks Club, in war-torn South Wales. Bodies got hot and toilets overflowed to the sound of the Johns. As usual, the threesome let their political hearts rule their collective heads. Not only was it a brilliant gig, but it raised loadsadash for the 'cause'.

At this year's Kings College June Event, the only 'cause' was to have a good time. Fast food flew at the speed of light, comedians tried hard to be heard above the pissed rabble, and reggae raked through your body as you queued for a squashy, warm pint of lager: surely no place for The Three Johns?

I was wrong. They were right on form. Singer John Hiatt a treat in his ridiculous striped treads; bassist John Brennan getting sexier with age; and Jon Langford, stand up comic/guitarist, as cute as a teddy bear and sharp as a lemon. I was happily bombarded with stuff from the new album, as well as old faves like, pop pickers, 'Engineer' and 'Lucy'. Between songs, I ask Jon Langford for an interview, and hearing my Welsh accent, he announces over the mike that Shirley Bassey has arrived. Horror of horrors! Ah, well, it could have been Nerys Hughes.....

We make the trip through the sea of bodies to a college study bedroom. So here we are, surrounded by

Garfield cuddly toys and trendy posters...

O.K., so what made you play a gig in grand Kings College, Johns? Was it to see how the other half lived? The (ahem) crazy Hooray Henry shirt scene, perhaps?

Brennan: We were really disappointed... we wanted to see Porterhouse Blue...

Langford: Did you see Porterhouse Blue on the telly? We thought we were going to get a slice of that. It's not true... because we've been here before (Jesus), and we were shocked how normal it is.

My brother went to Oxford, and I used to go up and stay with him for weekends, and I couldn't believe what the people were like. Things have really changed at Universities - for the worst. They should be like walled-in lunatic asylums for the rich and thick.

I thought they were.

Langford: They're not - they're full of fairly intelligent, nice people. I'd have been quite happy if it was full of Hooray Henrys throbbing about. But what about that plonker who told you the gig was embarrassing?

Langford: I couldn't work out if we were embarrassing, or if the scenario was embarrassing....

He was an asshole.

Hiatt: A guilty Hooray Henry... Something happened tonight - the gig was going well, when suddenly everybody cleared



from the front...

Hiatt: It was because I started talking about education. It was the worst lecture I ever gave.

The tables are turned, and Jon Langford asks how a Taffy like me ends up working as a journalist in Cambridge. The truth hurts - I couldn't get a job on the Newport Argus.

It turns out that Langford's mother had a big barney with the Editor of said paper, when his brother landed up in court.

Langford: My brother did some really stupid thing at Oxford. He planted a small bomb around the same time as the Birmingham bombing, and blew up an empty room at the college ball. They locked him up under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We couldn't even get to speak to him. A year later, he was let off...

The story made the front page of the Argus, and Jon's mum was distraught, to say the least.

Langford: The headline was "Newport Bomber Arrested". I nearly got beaten up at school. (I often worry when I do court stories, and their effect on families.)

Langford: My family had their noses rubbed in it, insinuating we were connected with the IRA. I

don't think my mother has ever recovered....

I ask Jon Langford about his involvement with the Darling Buds, whom he supposedly helped on the road to budding stardom. Big Jon is full of praise for Newport's darlings, especially guitarist Harley.

Langford: When Harley plays the guitar, he plays the fucking guitar! Harley and Andrea write really good songs. They're miles better than The Primitives. The Primitives have got two songs - the Darling Buds have got loads of songs. They should be like The Ramones, or something...

Jon L. mentions the fact that just about the only question I've asked is about his involvement with the Buds.

O.K., O.K., is it true that Doktor Avalanche (The Sisters Of Mercy's drum machine) was once a member of The Three Johns?

Langford: No, I was once a member of The Sisters Of Mercy...

Jon also reckons he was a member of Chickory Tip:

Langford: I was the Tip. I put the Led in Zeppelin, I was the Heep in Uriah...

But back to the Leeds Sisters...

Langford: They were always ahead

CAUSING
A
CAMMOTION
A Cambridge compilation vol. 6
Available from:
ANDYS (CAMBRIDGE, £3)
OR
PEEVED RECORDS
46 KIMBERLEY ROAD
CAMBRIDGE
CB4 1HH
£2 inc p+p

of us in technology,. They are well ahead of us in technology now.

I think they're crap.

Brennan: They're really funny because they're so serious. I listened to The Mission's singles for the first time last week, and I couldn't believe how bad they were...

Langford: I think all the Sisters' stuff is great. The video for 'Corrosion' was one of the most stupid things I've seen in all my life - for that reason I like it.

The Johns admit that they have been listening to Leonard Cohen's (yawn) recent album, and reckon the Sisters took their name from one of his songs.

Isn't Cohen a bit depressing?

Brennan: Have you heard it yet? It's absolutely brilliant.

I can't afford records - I get paid in peanuts

Langford: My girlfriend sings for the Mekons and gets paid in bananas. Maybe you should get together - you could have a shop. Ask more questions: all we've talked about is other people.

O.K., it's two years since 'World By Storm' - what are

you up to?

Langford: It'll be two and a half years by the time the new album is released - 'Death To Everything'. Abstract (their record company) have done a really good job. 'World By Storm' sold 20,000; one single 'Never And Always' came out in a complete vacuum. This album sounds like what we want to sound like.

Brennan: We thought 'World By Storm' was too soft... but it was a progression from 'Atom Drum Bop'. The same leap has happened in this album: it's harder.

Langford: We've never done a really good album.

I'd disagree there...

Langford: Both sound like they came out of a compressor.

Brennan: This one is wicked!

Langford: You could review the last album just by listening to the drum sound. 'Atom Drum Bop' went "chug...haven't they got some quite good songs?"... but it doesn't really deliver. 'World By Storm' is like "don't these lads want to be big in America?"

How do you feel when you hear a newly recorded song

for the first time? Is it still a thrill?

Langford: Yes, of course, it'd be pretty shitty if it were no.

In fact, they're almost thrilled to bits over the new one 'Death To Everything'.

But is money important, too?

Langford: Of course! An album is a year's work. We'll get £11,000 - £3,000 each. You can't live for a year on that! (Jon explains a new European licensing deal they've landed, for more bish-bash-bosh)

John Hiatt sticks a tape of the new album in a nearby deck and I get a sneak preview. He starts to explain the album's lyrics, which is when my tape of the interview starts sounding like it was recorded under water. Ah well....

All I can say is that the new Johns' effort captures perfect slices of their wit and wisdom. But there's loads more in this cornucopia, and I'm already saving my peanuts. Education, John, education.

STEPH McNICHOLAS

>> Sixteen Tracks · Pressings · Compact Discs

79 MAYORS WALK · PETERBOROUGH · TEL (0733) 46901 · or 74725 ·

It was some two years ago that I had the good fortune to hear Blind Mice, courtesy of their first four track tape. Since then, I've seen them play a couple of cracking gigs at the Burleigh (the second being something akin to a private performance), plus a slightly more prestigious support slot to Tom Robinson, inside a large marquee in Saffron Walden, the place Blind Mice call home (or thereabouts). Although originally a four piece comprising Mark Willson (vox), Guy Hunt (gtr), Gary Bennett (bass) and Craig Quainton (drums), they have recently been joined on a more permanent basis by Dave Alexander, a second guitarist who often plays warm-up spots with Mark. The band brought a spokesperson with them for their most recent Cambridge gig - none other than Gareth Stevens (who?), the man behind that alternative music fanzine 'Fly Fishing by J.R. Hartley'. The gig in question was at the Corn Exchange, where this interview was done.

Mark: Fabulous (place), magnificent architecture. It's the largest we've played; it's about the only place you get treated with any decency.

FIVE BLIND MICE



Craig: Cosy dressing room, I forgot the make-up. We got free alcohol.

Mark: There's loads of it there; it's meant to be free, but nobody's seen it yet - Stavros nicked it!

At this point, I enquired as to whether the band's musical style was worth mentioning:

Mark: I always call it rock'n'roll, **Guy:** It's rock'n'roll of the

nineties. The aim is to entertain, but never in a banal sort of way.

It's not just assorted fanzine editors that have picked up on Blind Mice; they've also had a fair amount of coverage in the NME:

Craig: They came and saw us, Gareth asked them to come and see us.

Gareth: They've been watching Blind Mice for the last two years. They picked up on the music first, coz I played one of them some tapes. I used to work on a local newspaper with him. He was really into it.

Craig: And he was dancing! He went mad at the Hype Club.

The Hype Club?

Guy: Next to the Town & Country.

Mark: it's a place where lots of talent scouts go.

Gareth: Voice of the Beehive, The Primitives, That Petrol Emotion have all started there.

Guy: We don't play holes anymore, we used to play holes all the time.

Gary: We're concentrating on better gigs, supporting name indie bands, like Brilliant Corners and The Flatmates.

Craig: Blew them right off stage.

Guy: They were pretty awful that night, though.

Mark: We got asked back for a headline; no-one spoke to them.

Craig: We got an encore, they didn't.

How do you do for money?

Mark: We make sure that we get at least fifty quid a gig.

What about the problem of pulling in a crowd away from home?

Gary: There was over 200 people at the Hype Club, and only about 70 had heard the band before.

Craig: We got about after that. With groups round here, they're great only locally: you put them in Retford (Notts) or the Fulham Greyhound, they'd probably get nothing.

Mark: I think we're commercial enough now.

Gary: The test is at the early gigs. There was 20 people there - you wouldn't have been able to fill a coach.

Craig: I bet you if one of the

Cambridge bands came to Walden and played Newport Village Hall or Walden, about ten people would turn up, simply because you're not heard of. That's what you've got to do -

you've got to sacrifice it. You haven't got to go out and think you're gonna pack places out. We did Retford: we didn't expect masses of people - we just went to spread the name a little bit further.

Guy: It's very nice playing in front of about 200 friends, but that doesn't get you anywhere.

Tell me about the Essex Battle of the Bands Competition:

Mark: Don't like the idea of rock contests at all. I read in the Cambridge paper the other week (that) the last three winners are nothing now. Nutmeg seem to be the only ones who've attracted any interest over the last five years.

Gareth: There's a big one held in Harlow every year, and it's tradition for the winners to split up soon afterwards. It's not "oh yeah, we've won it - let's split up", it's always like... the pressure, because it's such a small area, like a goldfish bowl, then all of a sudden, they've won the rock competition, they've got £1,000, then there's nothing - no people down from record companies, no agents, nothing. They build up their egos so much, then they really get let down.

Mark: For an area as large as Cambridge, the local music scene hasn't provided anything in ages, it's quite surprising. The last one was probably Pink Floyd. It's about time somebody broke round here. I think that speaks volumes about the way the record industry runs, as opposed to the quality of the bands.

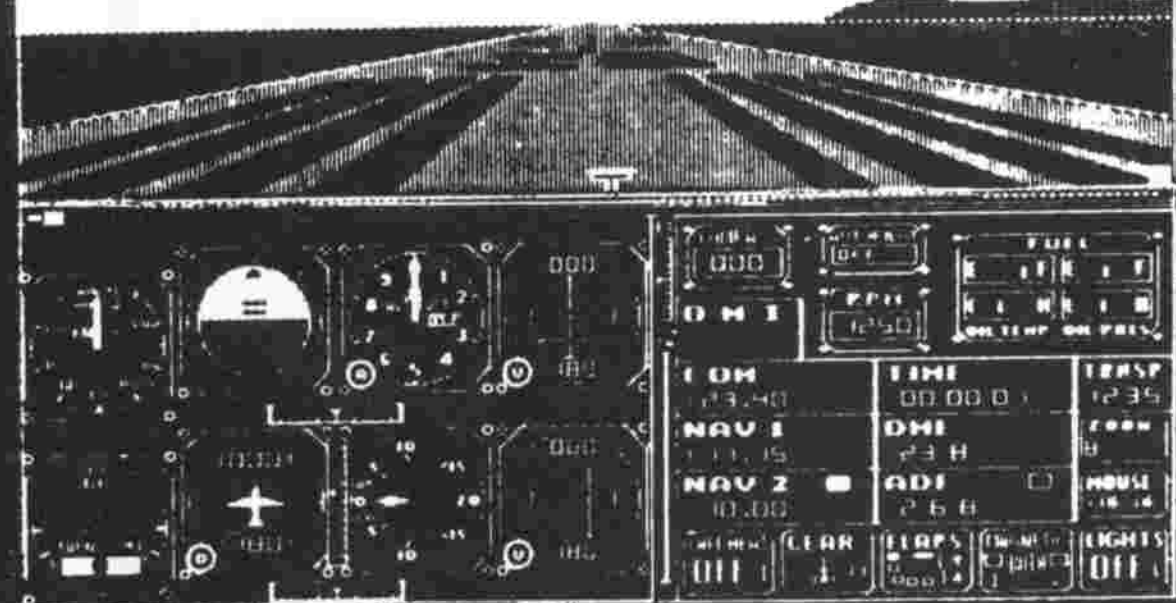
Since this interview, Blind Mice have recorded a session for Liz Kershaw's radio programme, which should be broadcast sometime during September. The band also have their second single, 'Nothing' c/w 'Just like we do', due for release on 6th September.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

PHASE 2
£85 per day
inclusive

FLIGHTPATH
STUDIOS

Phone for more details..



16 TRACK RECORDING
AND REHEARSAL ROOMS

WITH DIGITAL
MASTERING

2 Quay Cottages, Teversham, Cambridge
Telephone: Teversham (022 05) 5213
Answering Service (Daytime): Cambridge (0223) 246958

THE WEATHER PROPHETS



As Phil Johnson put it, getting The Weather Prophets to play the Burleigh was like getting U2 to play the Corn Exchange, and in the event, the queue stretched round the venue. For The Weather Prophets, this gig was a warm-up for a British club tour to promote their new single and their soon to be released second album. The album is due out at the beginning of June, and is called,

Pete (Astor, guitar/vox): "Judges, Juries and Horsemen" - I don't know why, it was a visitation. It just is. After about August, we stopped playing and just rehearsed a hell of a lot, sort of took everything apart and put it back together again. We started recording just before Christmas and it was finished at the beginning of February. We did the main bulk in about eleven days, then just bits and pieces afterwards." **So what are the songs about?** "Different things to what I used to write them about. Maybe it goes in cycles but now they're getting a bit more worldly. The last year has been quite different. Seeing different things, you get a greater sense of your place in the world. Before, there was a lot of love songs and there's a limit to how many love songs you can write. It's a different sound (to the first one), it's closer to how we sound live. The first album I was not particularly happy with, and I don't think anyone in the band was particularly happy with it either. It was a little flat; it wasn't very well produced. It didn't really play to our strengths and it was a little

bit underdeveloped: this one hopefully isn't. I think we were a bit eager to please when we made 'Mayflower' rather than eager to please ourselves. We did something like not exactly selling out, but like trying to do what we, in an ideal world, thought we should have done rather than doing what we wanted. This one is what it is, to its full extent, whatever that might be: good or bad, it is what it is. There's still loads of things I'm not happy with, but what I'm basically happy with is that the mistakes on it are our mistakes, rather than someone else's mistakes, or us not even letting ourselves risk making a mistake. One of the ideas in our heads when we did it was like let's try to do things we'll almost regret, let's do exactly what we feel we want to do, let's be wilful, because that's what makes us enjoy it. I think, coincidentally, that's what people value us, or indeed any band for, a band being themselves. I think 'Mayflower' wasn't really us. So on this one we've tried to be much truer to ourselves."

This new album is released on Alan McGhee's Creation label, whilst 'Mayflower', their first album (which sold about 30,000) was on the Warners subsidiary, but Alan McGhee run, Elevation label. The label also featured Primal Scream and Edwin Collins, as well as The Weather Prophets. What happened to it?

Pete: "Elevation got dropped, basically, along with us. Put out of its misery. It didn't do spectacularly well, it didn't do spectacularly badly. I think they

wanted instant success out of it, because they got instant success out of the Mary Chain, for example. I think they just thought, this guy, this Alan McGhee character, he found the Mary Chain, he's got this special place where he finds these Scottish teenagers who make pop records. We're not Scottish teenagers that make pop records, obviously; neither are the Mary Chain, come to that. They expected us to be Scottish - they were actually quite surprised when they found out we weren't, for example. Things like that, it got a bit ridiculous. I think they just thought it's worth a shot. They thought the Mary Chain would completely bomb, but it actually sold very well. They thought this guy's obviously got the Midas touch, what can he offer us now. We miss the money, it's about the only thing we do miss. We had total control at Warner Bros., it wasn't like we had anybody trying to force us. All the mistakes we made at Warner Bros. were our own. You feel slightly more responsible for yourself on Creation, so that's better in a way. Apart from that, it's not much different, apart from the money, or lack of it."

Dave (Greenwood, bass): "I'd like to be richer, but I don't want to be rich. I've known Pete for years and years, we go back. We've all been doing this sort of thing for a long time, nearly 20 years."

Pete: "We're an old band, but I don't think age comes into it. We've done two German tours, played in Italy, Switzerland, Spain. We've not been to America. We never made it; we were meant to, but they wouldn't let us in the country. I don't know what it was; there

were lots of different reasons, and I don't know if I've heard the true one. At the time I was quite relieved because we were a bit overworked. To be honest, I prefer it (Europe) to Britain. I kind of feel that the audiences there understand us a bit better than they do here. The Italians and the Spanish, the one's we play for, are really kind of 'whoopie' rock'n'roll; it's good, they're kind of ultra enthusiastic, rather than the average British audience, which is like a bit reserved. It's just the way people appreciate it. I think we're quite dour, so our audience is a bit dour, but I suppose it's fair enough. We seem a bit uncommunicative, a bit stropky, not stropky but remote, maybe that makes them a little remote.

I did little live reviews in the NME to supplement my meagre income four or five years ago. I was awful, I was really terrible. I'm not embarrassed by my opinions, but I'm kind of embarrassed about the way I put them, so I wrote under a pseudonym. The way I wrote was awful, most of it was really pompous, really NME-esque, which I dislike intensely. They don't like you to write plain English, they like you to write things like you're trying to out-double guess yourself all the time, making cleverer and cleverer sentences. If you actually say 'I like this band' or 'I didn't like this band' or 'the bass player had red shoes on', that's like 'I'm sorry, that's not clever, not clever enough.'

We kind of lost our way a bit with 'Mayflower', and now I think we're back on course."

STEVE HARTWELL

The Alma Brewery

Russell Court

**CAMBRIDGE'S PREMIERE
MUSIC VENUE**

ADMISSION FREE

**SEE THE BEST BANDS IN TOWN
EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT**

Nick and Maggie Welcome You

The weather was relatively kind to the 24th Cambridge Folk Festival, in the wettest July since 1941. The rain held off mostly till Sunday when the statutory downpour took place. Some came prepared with picnic baskets groaning with chilled Liebraumilch, salmon and cucumber sandwiches; others were just as happy with their liquidly laden carrier bags of tinnies and roll ups. Two lads behind me on Sunday were finishing off their flagon of Greene King when one asked "Who's this lot then?". His mate considered the question deeply before answering "Oh, this is the last band before the bar opens". The band in question was The Blues Band! The food stalls did a roaring trade, most of them a rip-off; one vegetarian curry was described to me as 'utterly disgusting' - it certainly looked it! One of the most endearing things about the Cambridge Folk Festival is the crowd; there can be few events where such a wide variety of people mingle in such a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Indeed some characters are so relaxed they don't move at all! It is nice to see the same characters returning year after year. One such person who has been attending folk festivals since they were invented, had written a song about keeping tinnies cold, entitled "If you want to chill your beer, just place it next to my ex-wife's heart!"

FRIDAY EVENING

The music provided many surprises and some disappointments. On Friday evening **The Dinner Ladies** sounded interesting but served up a collection of songs as palatable as the Beef Sukiaki from the Tenko tent; both sounded interesting, but ultimately left an unpleasant taste in your mouth. They desperately tried to be eccentric and different; the lead singer Mick Jackson dished out a great deal of verbal abuse to the audience, which was not amusing and did nothing to enhance their turgid and flat songs. **Steve Phillips** was a much better proposition, playing some fine blues guitar and singing powerfully and with passion.

One of my favourite parts of the folk festival is the often neglected Club tent. On Friday the club was run by members of the Cambridge and Mayflower Folk Clubs. Here everyone gets about fifteen minutes to perform and so most performers do edited highlights of their acts. The standard of performance is usually very high, with a few squirmers thrown in to keep the balance. On Friday night we spent a great deal of time watching varied acts. A guest blues singer called **Octavia** (from America) proved popular, singing blues numbers and playing mean harp. Another

fourteen

favourite was **Alistair Anderson** playing Northumbrian-style music, accompanied by Joer Hutton, Will Atkinson and Kathryn Tickell. Back on Mainstage One, **10,000 Maniacs** seemed a bit out of place at a folk festival, being mainstream rock. The lead singer Natalie Merchant has a rich and sensuous voice, the songs were interesting and thoughtful. There was an almost sixties feel about them, with Doors-sounding organ, pounding bass and searing guitar work. They were well recieved and they certainly livened up proceedings.

SATURDAY

Saturday afternoon began, as many have before at Cambridge Folk Festivals, a rather subdued affair with most of the audience in a comatose state. I arrived just in time for another abusing set from the Dinner Ladies, so I went to the bar where the people are more friendly! **Steve Phillips** did another good set, but it somehow lacked the feel of the night before.

Patrick Street played some superb traditional Irish folk music with true virtuosity. This new line-up of ex-Planxty, De Dannan and Bothy Band members certainly lived up to expectations, with Andy Irving singing with great authority. The crowd did at least react with abit more enthusiasm, and now that the bar was shut, some of them started to sober up! The final act of the session was **10,000 Maniacs**; again, I p. referred their Friday set, but at least they finally roused the crowd to their feet for the first time in the day. **Tanita Tikaram** was the first artist I saw on stage on Saturday evening, a nineteen year old, with a mature singing voice and some pleasant songs. She was accompanied on the last number by members from Five O'Clock Shadows for her current chart single 'Good tradition', easily her strongest song. She showed a great deal of talent and performed her material very competently, but she lacked any real stage presence; but she is only nineteen, I suppose! **Guy Clark**, a country style singer/songwriter was excellently recieved, with his easy, laid-back style and polished performance. Guy probably has the wryest wit of the entire festival and he made the audience smile.

Brendan Croker & The 5 O'Clock Shadows had the audience on its feet with a collection of blues and funk. Great fun good-time music, well performed with some superb guitar work from Mark Cresswell. Great festival music.

Nick Lowe's set included such classics as 'Cruel to be kind', 'Heart', 'I knew the bride', but was otherwise uninspiring. He performed solo with just acoustic guitar



Pluck This!



Tanita Tikaram



The Blues Band

pluck this for
Text by Shani Chalk, photo



Pluck This!



Christy Moore



Tanita Tikaram



Kathryn Tickell



The Blues Band



Nick Lowe

pluck this for a festival !

Text by Shani Chalk, photography Chris Chalk

FESTIVAL 29TH - 31ST JULY 1988



Christy Moore



Kathryn Tickell



Nick Lowe

and sang well, but the performance lacked vitality, particularly after the excitement of Brendan Croker. He was fairly verbose at one point, launching into a long speech which was poorly recieved by the audience.

The Blues Band were the closing act on Saturday and the audience loved 'em. They had everyone on their feet and getting down to the bloos. Some great vocals from Paul Jones were ably backed by the rest of the band; Dave Kelly served up a mean riff or two, much to the audiences' delight (however, blues guitarist of the festival for me was Pete Towers from the Light Blues Band). The organiser is to be congratulated for great scheduling as everyone staggered back to try and find their tents, very happy.

SUNDAY

Having gone home for some brakfast, I missed most of **David Rudder & Charlie's Roots**; this was a shame as they performed some great calypso music. I have never seen the audience on their feet for the first act on Sunday afternoon before, but this band certainly got them going, in spite of the hangovers!

Having been slung out of the enclosure by an over zealous Council Jobsworth, the acts for the rest of the afternoon were heard (not seen) from the back of the field. **The Oyster Band** were well recieved but seemed a bit flat after Charlie's Roots, so I mooched to the Club Tent to see if anything was happening. I'm glad I did!

Pluck This! appeared at 3pm: I really did not know what to expect and they turned out to be one of the most intriguing acts of the whole weekend. A very original band with an interesting combination of instruments - Clive Lawson on violin, Davy Graham on guitar, Andy Ross on bohran, Nick Winnington on jews harp, Paul Dorking on congas and last but certainly not least Demi on vocals. The music is an eccentric combination of traditional folk tunes and bizarre vocals. I couldn't take my eyes of Demi - a cross between Lon Chaney and Shane from the Pogues. This is a hugely entertaining band, playing jigs and reels with enormous energy in the most unique way. Watch out for them!!!

After the break and rainstorm, **John Hammond** was the first act I caught of the final session. John turned out to be a blues singer, who was disappointing, after all the hype. He commented that the picture they used in the festival brochure was 22 years old; no wonder it was a shock when he walked on stage - no-one recognised him. He seemed to me to be the blues equivalent of Motorhead's Lemmy - an insensitive operformance, with little to recommend it.

Kathryn Tickell played Northumbrian pipes and fiddle very skilfully - and with sensitivity, unlike John Hammond! She was accompanied on the last few numbers by Jim Couza and family. It was nice to see some traditional music being so well recieved after all the pop, blues and calypso we'd heard so far throughout the festival.

Folk's final triumph was **Christy Moore**, one of the highspots of the festival, for me. He gave a marvellous performance of song. His first number, 'The lakes of Pochatrain', was passionately sung, and there were some moist eyes in evidence afterwards. The songs were moving, the performance magnetic. Many of his songs are political; one such song he performed concerned Ronald Reagan, and it seemed a lighthearted stab, but contained a vehement message. A great performer - worthy of this reputation.

I finished the night watching **The Light Blues Band** in the club tent. They are an excellent local combo with wonderful slide guitar played by Pete Towers. They performed geat versions of 'Willin' ' and 'Top of the world' - very well recieved. They played to a very enthusiastic audience, with everyone on their feet for the last number, a raucous version of 'Roll over Beethoven'. I discovered afterwards that they had to cut their set short for the final 'act' - a total fiasco, with about a hundred artists on stage, none of whom you could hear. Where do they think they are - Live Aid? I don't know whose idea that last act was, but there was a lot of booing going on, most of it coming from me. Bring back the Light Blues Band!

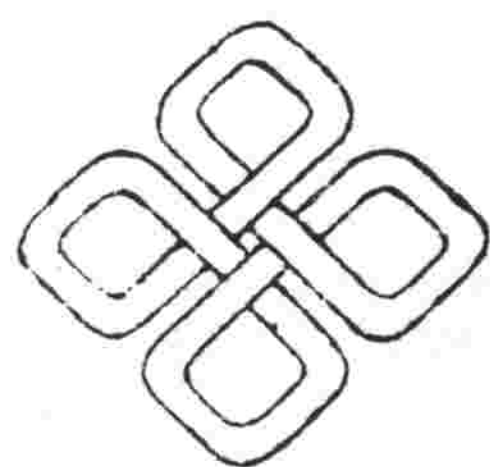
I think a word should be said about the toilets at this point. Those of you who have spent hours at rock festivals in great pain because one stomach-churning look at the toilets was enough, will know how important this is. The toilets at the folk festival are excellent - cleaned regularly, hot water and toilet paper always available. This flippant observation actually has a serious side, in that the organisation of the festival is, in many respects, very good, a fact rarely mentioned.

The final performance of Sunday night is performed by the audience: this is the annual Olympic pole-vaulting event. This is where tables are stacked up and numerous lemmings attempt to pole-vault over them with a tent pole. This event attracted a large audience this year, so much so I couldn't see a thing. It was benevolently supervised by three policemen and no-one sustained injuries, a remarkable feat in itself.

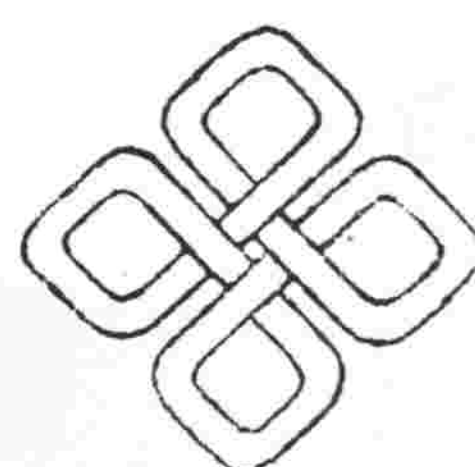
A great weekend, see you slumped in the Guinness tent next year.

or a festival !

, photography Chris Chalk



boysdream



Accusations are flung round in various circles, but not one of any value has yet to be heard: for me, at least, Boysdream defy categorisation. Back on the scene following an unavoidable but much-needed break, Chris Lovell (vox) and Mark Hawkins (gtr) return with a new drummer, Dave Sole, and have reunited with their original bassist, David Cooke.

Over the past year, Boysdream have changed the line-up and the sound; are you now completely happy with the way things have changed?

Chris: Yes, things are a lot better now, I much prefer the new material: it's more varied and harder to label - I hope.

David: Yeah, I'm happy with the line-up and sound, but it's still early days yet: we are progressing all the time.

With the name 'Boysdream' and looking at the lyrics, you seem to be into escapism - is this due to the fact that you're not happy with the real world; do you like to fantasise?

Mark: The real world for me seems to be filled with violence, anger and frustration, and sometimes the music may portray these emotions, but the lyrics generally show the better side of things.

Chris: I enjoy certain aspects of reality, but I have so many fantasies... I'd love to live out all of them, but I suppose I can't because of reality (I do to a certain extent,



behind closed doors!), so I suppose it comes out in my writing.

How have audiences taken to the change in sound? Do you still have the same following that you had before?

Chris: A lot of people who used to come and see us are still coming, so I suppose they must like it.

How important do you feel the image of the band is? You have been described as a 'hippy goth' band in the past - do you agree with that categorisation? Do you feel the band image attracts the audience as much as the music?

David: I feel the image is an important part of any band. At present, we don't really have a very strong image - we're a bit of a mix, I suppose, but I leave it up to the people outside the band to label us if they wish. If we end up being called 'hippy goths', so be it. Personally, I concentrate more on the music.

How would you answer the critics that say you are trying to be too arty and pretentious, and too weird?

Chris: That's up to them, we don't force anything. It's just us, I think they've misunderstood us, basically.

Dave: I personally would consider myself too pretentious if I were to conform to other people's ideas of what they want me to play. As a band, we're looking for different ways of playing things and exploring new avenues in our music. You've got to give everything a try before you settle down to a typecast role... if that's what these people want.

David: Bollocks, anyone who says that is a churler - make no mistake, we're not arty, we don't pretend - we're ourselves, and if that's weird, it's tough!

You have been accused of lacking stage presence when you perform. How do you react to such criticism?

Dave: At the moment, we're concentrating on keeping everything tight when we play. The 'stage show' bit will come, in time, but at the moment we feel the music is the most important thing. So when we're 100% confident in ourselves and each other, then the fun will start!

Who writes the songs and lyrics? Do you all get involved with the construction of the songs?

Chris: I write all the lyrics, but everyone gets involved with the writing: we all do our own bit.

David: Chris writes all the lyrics... doesn't it show!

Do you feel as a band you are changing and moving on, all the time?

Dave: you've got to, haven't you? Chris: Yes, I'd like to think we are. It'd be very boring to think we were playing the same set in a year's time.

David: Recently, we've been straying into different styles of music, mainly due to Dave's talent, almost jazz! Personally, I'm learning new things all the time, so we can't help but progress.

How optimistic are you about the future? What plans do you have in the pipeline?

Chris: The main thing coming up in the not too distant future is the

release of our debut single, and we'll take it from there.

David: Plans for the single are nearly cut and dried. There's gonna be a groove on it, man!

Chris: We've just finished the recording, and it's going to be cut within the next couple of weeks. The tracks we're using are 'In your eyes', 'The wind' and 'Betrayal' (a firm live favourite). It should be released in September. We're very pleased with the results we've achieved, but obviously it's different to playing live.

Do you feel more a live band, rather than a studio band?

Dave: We've got to be both, really.

Live shows are good fun, very exhilarating, but in the studio, you get more time to reflect and study what you've played.

David: I personally prefer playing live, although the studio's a real laugh sometimes; but it can be a real bastard when you're as talentless as I am!

Dave, how difficult was it for you to fit into the band, considering the others had been playing together for quite some time before you joined?

Dave: It wasn't too difficult - there were a few areas that took some time to get right, but I think it helped that there wasn't any drums already. It would have been difficult to follow on from somebody else, and have to imitate their style, rather than play my own thing.

Chris: Dave's like a breath of fresh air to Boysdream. He's a skilled craftsman of the skins. He's also really easy to get on with.

David: I think it's worked out really well. It helps having someone who knows what he's doing in the band. He also plays bass better than me!

If you were to overhear someone discussing the band, what, ideally, would you like them to be saying?

Chris: That the singer is really beautiful! (much laughter) No, I'd like to think they'd enjoyed the whole thing, but everyone has criticisms, so we'd never come across that. Sometimes I think they want blood: we try to give everything, but....

David: I'd like to hear them say they liked what we're doing, and that they'd come to the next gig. If it were girlies, I'd like them to be saying that the band were fucking ace, especially the bass player.

Mark: "Inspiring, atmospheric folk music." Rock'n'roll died years ago!

Do you really believe in yourselves as a band?

Mark: YES, from the first day Chris and I started writing together.

Chris: Yeah, we've got something special.

David: The new line-up feels complete now. If I wasn't in Boysdream, I don't think I could find a band that get on so well: it's just natural.

ROSE PAYNE

**BENEFIT NIGHT IN AID OF
PAPWORTH LUNG UNIT
AND
THE PAUL WILLIAMS ASTHMA FUND**

**SATURDAY 24th SEPTEMBER
at
The Cambridge Sea Cadet Hall,
Riverside**

FEATURING

**HOUSE GRINDER SPIRIT WALK
'WONKA'S ALL-STARS'
WOOLLY MAMMOTH**

7.45-11pm.

£3.00

**THIS GIG IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF 'POP' McCOMB AND
PAUL 'WONKA' WILLIAMS.**

This advert space was kindly donated by Scene and Heard

SCENE

COMPILED BY ANDREW CLIFTON,
GRAHAM GARGIULO & PHIL JOHNSON

PETERBOROUGH

SUDDEN SWAY have released new album on Rough Trade. Called '76 Kids Forever', it claims to be "the soap opera musical adapted exclusively from the original stage production '1,2,3,4, Sunday'." The band's name is hardly prominent on the cover, and the members are never identified. Instead, the sleeve features pictures and details of an apparently fictitious cast.

The songs seem to consciously lack the directness and repetition of rock musicals. The lyrics contain much irony, wordplay and witty references to other songs. Only after several hearings, and re-readings of the long plot summary on the inner sleeve, does it begin to cohere as a concept album: that's about the only '70's thing about it (well, perhaps the gatefold sleeve, too) - instruments and arrangements are firmly in the '80's, as is the perspective.

I enjoyed WAR DANCE's second tape 'Short sharp shock'. Opening deceptively with Graham Butt performing a mid-period King Crimson solo, it progresses through six tracks, ranging from the loud brevity of 'Shock (Omicos Noseflute)', a Napalm Death / E.N.T. pastiche, to 'Hours of Sunday', which chugs along at varying speeds, like the train in 'Night Mail'. Very sudden changes in tempi and volume within songs are perhaps becoming the trademark War Dance require. Their tape is better than most speed metal available on vinyl, but it does sound like a 'various artistes' sampler. War Dance are a band of talent and imagination, though; they are capable of making a considerable impact on this area of rock. Rumours are circulating around Cambridge that James Lord, former lead guitarist with Infernal Death, has now joined War Dance, but at the time of going to press, a spokesperson for War Dance was unable to confirm this.

Some former sidemen of Graham Butt are now in DEFAULT, who have released a 7" E.P. on Wigan's First Strike label. Called 'Inspiration', it contains four songs of basic, bassy and buzzing punk. Lyrics are all of the 'united we stand, divided we fall' and 'don't let the bastards grind you down' variety, particularly prevalent among young U.S. own-label bands over the past few years. Actually, Default's words are clearer and

more articulate than the norm. I must admit I know little about this band, but the credits suggest Default have been playing around the country. Phone Col on Peterborough 266576, or write to 2 Park Farm, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8AA.

The revamped BRIDES (formerly the Jilted Brides) are now gigging regularly in the area. Newcomers Jem



Squires (bass) and Jamie Daley (vox) have joined the original Bride, Steve Crosby (gtr) and Joe Beef, their ever-faithful drum machine. A four song tape, 'It's no picnic' (recorded on four track and mixed with the help of Crash's Steve Clements), is now on sale at their gigs.

BOYSDREAM plan to release their debut single in September. It's a three track 7", featuring 'In your eyes' c/w 'The



Chris Lovell (Boysdream)

wind' and 'Betrayal', and will be available in a special 8" x 12" wallet. The A side will play at 45 rpm, and side B at 33

rpm.

At a recent Peterborough Town Hall record fair, I came across ex-Pleasure Head Mark Randall, selling off his record collection to buy equipment for his duo FAT TULIPS. He sold me a copy of local fanzine 'Two pint take home', containing a flexidisc featuring Fat Tulips' 'You opened up my eyes'. It's a well crafted piece of pop, sung in a breathy, wistful style by his partner, Sarah C.: Mark plays all the instruments. Their own comparisons to Shop Assistants and Velvet Underground (third album, I'd say) sound right. Also on the flexi are Stoke band The Rosehips, performing 'Ask Johnny Dee', the recent Chesterfields indie hit.

As well as pieces on these two, the fanzine contains a Pleasure Heads interview. It is indicative that the writer tired of transcribing this - much more effort has gone into the collage-type layout of the magazine than the content of most articles. No price is indicated, but I should think that 50 pence or so, plus an A5 s.a.e. to 12 Chatsworth Place, Longthorpe, Peterborough PE3 6Np would suffice. Further Fat Tulips sounds on cassette can be obtained by sending £1 to Mark at 4 Downgate, Longthorpe, Peterborough.

Mark's replacement in The Pleasure Heads, Kev Murphy, originally fronted a blues trio with the Hockridge brothers, Stephen and Murray, on bass and drums. When Kev left, they went on to power funk bands Force 4, Future Shock and Khiss Khatsu. They bordered on success, but were drowned in counterproductive hype by local promoters and disappeared. It was a pleasant surprise, then, to see them as the very competent rhythm section of the CHRIS WATSON QUARTET, supporting Andy Sheppard at a packed-full Great Northern. They accompanied Watson through a set starting with an acoustic Charlie Parker number, to a sequence of electric fusion numbers by Miles Davis' guitarist, John Scofield. Watson is a formidable talent, breathtakingly fluent in all styles, and it is no wonder that EMI have shown enough interest in him to send him to play and record in New York for six months.

HUNTINGDON

Huntingdon's music followers will be a little less informed of THE PRINCIPLE's activities now that their guitarist Steve Buttercase has decided to

resign from writing his weekly Hunts. Post Rockspeak column (sob). Steve tragically highlighted the pitfalls of attempting to comment on an area where he has an active interest in promoting his own band. Although rumours would suggest that my S & H predecessor and ex-Flowershop and Children of Some Tradition manager, Jeremy Day, is intending to take over the reins, nothing definite has been announced as yet.

What I can announce, however, is the arrival of Dougie Stokes on the local P.A. scene, in the guise of SOUND ADVICE P.A. HIRE. Providing a good quality and a reasonably priced service, he is a rare gem in the music world, a P.A. man who actually listens to what the bands want. Responsible for the sound at the recent series of Waterloo Thursday night Scanner Appeal gigs, he can be booked on Huntingdonm 56642.

Although new bands seem to be fairly thin on the ground at the moment, UNDER THE GLASS made their first appearance at the Waterloo recently. Featuring ex-members of Red Over White and The Giant Polar Bears, they ran through a set of new songs as well as old Giant Polar Bears songs, the evening culminating with an appearance by ex-Polar Bears vocalist John Lindsell, guesting on 'Towards the fire'.

Old Waterloo favourites FLOWERSHOP have been turning to London for their more recent concerts, including the Mean Fiddler, and the Tunnel Club in Greenwich. Meanwhile THE CHILDREN OF SOME TRADITION played a rare gig at the Waterloo recently, supporting The Principle and featuring a changed line-up, with ex-Double Yellow Line Simon Bishop on drums, and Bassist Reece McKay, formerly with The Principle.

ST IVES CORN EXCHANGE, one of the area's better though underused venues, hosts an important charity gig on Friday, 28th September, when (starting at 8pm) Rhythm Method, Abraxas, Stinkhorn and The Freedom Faction will be playing to help the S.O.S. Society to raise funds for renovating Winston House in Cambridge (a rehabilitation hostel which provides care for young people recovering from mental illness). Tickets, price £3.75 - or £4.75, which includes return coach trip from Cambridge - are available from Andy's Records in Fitzroy Street in Cambridge. There'll also be a sponsored drum solo performance during the evening - you have been warned!

CAMBRIDGE

Two of Cambridge's major music events - Strawberry Fair and the Folk festival - have been and gone since the

last issue of Scene & Heard. Once again, the weather was unkind to STRAWBERRY FAIR, where Nutmeg, Infernal Death and House Grinder were the pick of the bands on display in the marquee (though this opinion would be hotly contested by all those hippies who were getting off/high on Hondo's laid back reggae rhythms), but for my



money, The Bicycle Thieves' performance in the rain, on the outdoor stage, was the highlight of the day.

Unfortunately, we're still waiting for THE BIBLE to break through into the big time. We all got a little excited when their 'Eureka' L.P. charted in its first



The Bible sign copies of their latest LP at the HMV Shop in London's Oxford Street.

week of release (incidentally, did you see that issue of the NME which contained reviews of both The Bible's and The Pleasure Heads' L.P.s, complete with photos?), but it failed to maintain that momentum, and sank without trace. Hopes are now pinned on the next Bible single, 'Honey be good' - pure pop magic, with a classic hook line.

One of the more pleasing aspects of this year's Cambridge scene is the amount of vinyl release we've seen. Most has already been reviewed in earlier issues of S & H, and in our next issue, we'll be reviewing the new Bible single, The Sardines' maxi E.P./mini L.P., the next House Grinder single, and the long-awaited Cambridge Compilation L.P., released by Raven Records (Pete Ingram & Jay Taylor) - in fact, this L.P.'s been so long in getting released, that it will sound like a local golden

oldies! All (or should I say 'any') profits from the sale of this L.P. will go to Cambridge's new venue project.

Still on the theme of records, and recording, SPACEWARD STUDIOS, one of our faithful advertising sponsors, has now closed down "for the time being".

Elsewhere in this issue, you can read of the problems experienced by Cambridge's major pub venue, The Burleigh Arms, following the enforced installation of a sound limiter. One way to overcome the constant power cuts experienced by most bands who play there is to lean over the bar and surreptitiously cover up the microphone which picks up the amplified sounds - but don't let Reg see you! This ploy was used to good effect at the recent WISHING STONES gig, for the London-based band had had a disastrous soundcheck and were on the verge of returning home. In the end, it turned out to be a hugely enjoyable night, with,



once again, John Niven (of The Wishing Stones) proving that he is up there with the best of the current crop of contemporary rock guitarists.

Local heroes, NUTMEG, seem to be encountering problems with Polydor Records, who appear to be blowing cool on the lads, after their initial (over the top?) interest. If the rumours are true, then Polydor are putting pressure on them to drop Matthew Hobbs from the band. Now, we all know that Hobbsey isn't the world's best guitarist, and the fact that he won the Rock Group Competition award for Best Guitarist was a bit of a joke (eh, Rowan?), but nevertheless, Matthew Hobbs is an integral and valuable member of Nutmeg, and has played his part in what success the band have achieved so far. Nutmeg would be well advised to tell Polydor just what they can do with their suggestion!

RECORDS and TAPES

Reviewed by Andrew Clifton, Mark Curtis, Luke Warm,
Tom White and Chris Williams

(Tapes can normally be purchased from the bands - see Listings for telephone numbers. The Standpoint tape can be obtained by writing to Zak Justin, 79 Victoria Road, Cambridge)

BHAGWAN FRESH AND THE GURUS OF JIVE

It Came From The Skies

And I thought 'bad' was supposed to be the most overused and misunderstood expression in rock'n'roll. But that was before I'd heard Bhagwan Fresh say 'funk'. They say it, play it, and by the hairs of Stevie Wonder's chin, they DO it! No question as to the underlying 'theme' here. With titles like 'Funk Attack', 'Make It Funky', and 'Only Funk Can Save Us Now', you could say its meaning was great, to the Gurus at any rate. Funk is the saviour and Funk is the enemy. Funk is life and Funk is death, they'd spray it under their armpits if they could. It's cosmological and it's immortal. It's as simple as that.

The sparse guitar and solid bass revolve around soulful drums and comical keyboard sounds/effects. Their weakness is the (missing) all important frontal voice, but they get over this problem by not bothering. Instead, with authentic amateurism they (dare I say it?) funk their way through, with unabated references to space invaders, superheroes, joints, and yes, funk.

Many bands have you laughing AT them, but precious few can have you laughing WITH them. Bhagwan Fresh must be doing something funky! CW

BLACK CANDY

4 track demo

...It was just going to be another one of those bands, just a touch too much of nothing, when suddenly ..."Whip Jinx High!" And the singer (from the opening track) has

abruptly changed his tone. Or more likely, Melanie Smith has taken



over. She saves the song, and ultimately makes this tape what it is. Hers is a voice of remarkable maturity, not to say individuality. Yes, all the cliches I'm afraid, but it is true.

The musical backdrop belongs to the sound in as much as barnacles belong to a boat (I'd forgotten what was happening as soon as it had stopped happening). But at least it doesn't encroach upon the songs which are, for the best part, good ones.

With the thought of a debut single in August, (two tracks from this demo), Black Candy ends, leaving us with the plaintive echoes of that enchanting voice, of which we will surely hear more. CW

LES CARGO

3 track demo

"Thank you for your submission... have listened to it with careful consideration...regrettably...not suitable...we are sorry to inform you...feel free to send any future material..."

Might as well rehearse it, it's going to happen sooner or later. Let's face it, Les Cargo are about as

interesting as the footnotes to a pension plan, but more than that, who needs them? And then they have the nerve to say that Dave Greenfield played keyboards on their tape, prudently adding, "courtesy of the Stranglers". (Another one who should have been carted off to join Midge Ure's All-out of work-Star Band). You see, like Midge Ure and his...band, Les Cargo probably feel free to subject people to any future material. And that means anything, including Phil Collins. CW

THE CRAWTHUMPERS

3 track demo

'I don't need no guardian angel', profess The Crawthumpers, and this in fact may well be the case. What they definitely DO need is a bit of a prod, and a hefty dose of good old fashioned enthusiasm. The Crawthumpers (now I wonder who thought that one up!) are yet another Surfin' Druids/Blind Lemons hybrid, in this instance heavily reliant on Jez Quayle's six string virtuosity to inject some life into what is this time round a strangely lacklustre tape. Having said that, the aforementioned '...angel' is by far the most immediate of the three tracks. A very basic rhythm section, linked to Jez's bright choppy riffing and sporadic lead guitar showers - put them all together and you get a catchy little number which still manages to fall well short of the majority of the Druids' latest material. Disappointing. LW

FLOWERSHOP

Ten Foot Tall/Faraway

Molesworth Records HUNTS 4

Living in the shadow of The Children for several years has obviously been a blessing in disguise for Flowershop. While Jon Haynes' ever-changing crew flounder on the edge of disintegration, Flowershop have had sufficient time to develop away from the public eye, and have of late turned out some consistently good material. Far from being Cambridge's most popular band, this single is by far the best local release of the year, capturing perfectly Flowershop's breezy muscular indie-pop and their ear for a subtle melody.

So, after spending months re-recording, mixing and editing, what are we left with? 'Ten Foot Tall' is pinned around Ben Jordan's very precise trebly bassline and urgent, almost breathless vocals. Dave Jordan, still a vastly underrated guitarist, provides a very intense jangle which breathes potential but which unfortunately suffers once again from being mixed too far down. At five minutes, it's far too long to hold attention as a single, and you just can't help feeling that the tempo change two-thirds of the way through should have marked the end of the song, and provided the basis for the whole of the B side. 'Faraway' has a chorus you'll be humming for days. Similar in vein and pumped along by another gem of a bass riff, it's again overlong and lacking structure. Having held up pressing for so long, and having deployed some questionable marketing and distribution techniques (How much have you got? 50p? Oh, that'll do, here's your record), it would seem from both promotional and commercial points of view to be a wasted opportunity. But, as Flowershop themselves say, "we've come much too far, just to fade away." Two quality tracks from one of the area's most amiable and hardworking bands - buy it.

Well, white elephant or not, I think it's time we paid a small tribute to Andy Clifton, the impresario behind New Leaf/Molesworth Records. His tireless interest and devotion to the local music scene over the years led him to put out self-financed records for several bands, including The Pleasure Heads, but most notably Nutmeg's debut 'And In England They're Going Mental'. Since Flowershop's single, Andy has announced that due to financial pressure, it's doubtful that there will be any more releases on his label. Let us take this opportunity to put our hands together for a man who's done more than most to put local music on the map and into record shops across the country. LW

THE FRUIT BATS

Seven Sisters L.P.

Backs Records

You already know how, once upon a time, there was a band in Cambridge called The Great Divide, who were better than The Beatles, who split up and whose members have regularly been popping up in other bands ever since - most noticeably The Bible and Jack The Bear.

The Fruit Bats were the last of the survivors to come crawling from the wreckage, and they've emerged with the most overtly chartworthy sound the city has spawned since The Waves walked on sunshine. Now, The Bats have an L.P., Seven Sisters, recorded with help from two members of Jack The Bear, and three of The Bible, among others. Side One opens with "This boy's in blue", a simple story of unrequited lust that Wet Wet Wet would give their milk teeth to have written. Next is "Back in Festive Road", with Jane Edwards' multi-layered voice building on the infectious hook line.

My live favourite follows next - 'Orange and pink and you' sounds the way The Dolly Mixtures might, had they ever grown up. Then there's a somewhat pastoral 'Saving it for Sunday', and 'Money falls out of the sky'.

The second side opens as strongly as the first, with 'Seven sisters' and 'Hand on heart', though after that, it falters under the dead hand of pub funk. Still, this is a fine debut, containing a clutch of strong songs played with effective simplicity. And that's refreshing news at a time when every other record seems to be manufactured by Stock, Aitken and their Accountant.

It will be interesting to see how Backs Records choose to market the Fruit Bats package. No doubt some seedy A & R man will try to



persuade Jane to shorten her skirt and pout into the camera. I hope that she and the band will resist such pressures; the last thing we need now is another Transvision Vamp, and the material on the album deserves more serious consideration. Meanwhile, if you want an L.P. of ten bright and brash pop songs, buy this one. TW

GENEVA CONVENTION

4 track demo

Listening to Geneva Convention is a bit like breathing. You don't really WANT to do it, but when you do, you'll soon forget you're doing it(?) It's hard to comment on this, because I'm not really sure what they're trying to do. The only way you could, like, dance to this would be to impersonate Muffin the Mule on springs. Some worthy guitaring doesn't change matters much. It's just about listenable. CW

INFERNAL DEATH

Clinic 1A

Quite a neat, tight package, this. Infernal Death are good at what they do (the more cynical may argue that they don't do very much), but the tape IS a great improvement on their first effort. To really make an impression, they need to become a little bit more versatile, especially lyrically. There seems to be little else but death, pain, mutilation and general discomfort to provide ideas for songs. Or is that the whole point? I dunno. They would do well to listen to the Dead Kennedys' use of fast music in conjunction with great lyrical presence, eg. California Uber Alles; Moral Majority; etc., etc.

The steel strung acoustic intro to 'Walk of the Undead' smacks of 'Fade to Black' or 'Battery' by Kirk Hammett et al. 'Am I Evil', a cover of a cover originally written by Diamond Head (they've played at the Sea Cadets Hall), later taken up by Metallica: not a lot of people know that. 'Hey , hey, Peter Mitchell' (?) is a perfect end of session number, and works really nicely - they really do sound quite angry!

A more musical friend tells me that "when they play their faster stuff, they have a very limited repertoire of chord shapes (eg. two in both 'The Plains of Golgotha' and 'Walk of the Undead'), which are moved up and down the neck from time to time." Thanx William. However, if

you like thrash, you'll love this; if you don't, it ain't gonna convert ya. MC

LYPBOX

My House/This

Town/Wasteland

IRS Records IRMT 157

Lypbox seem to be hooked on geography, judging by their debut 12" single. Fortunately, both 'This Town' and 'Wasteland' on the B side did not turn out to be the extended remix and instrumental versions respectively, but completely different songs. 'My House' is a surprisingly catchy modern pop song, 'an assured debut', as the cliché has it. "My house is better than your house; my car is better than your car; I guess my life is better than yours", sings the protagonist, apparently to console himself at the loss of his lover. Surprisingly, the B side songs - one rocking out a bit, the other reflective but amateurishly produced - are both attacks on greed and selfishness. They go some way to bringing vocalist/songwriter David Ivatt's arch-conservative yuppie reputation into question. Full face photos of Ivatt adorn front and back covers. 'The Lypbox Band', as they are credited, get just name checks. I wouldn't be surprised if any future releases are under Ivatt's name, and the rest of the band soon find themselves back on the local circuit. AC

MANTIS

The Journey Begins

When I think of Mantis I think of 'Eye Of The Tiger'. I think of boys trying to be men, and I also think of turning my tape player off. Here we have the worst fusion of early 80's American rock, written by hippies and played by prats. It's turgid Californian cock-rock, masquerading as something a lot more credible.

The choice and treatments of the cover versions for example, (Van Halen's 'Jump', and Bryan Adams' 'Heaven') are prosaic, and quite

pathetic. If you're going to cover a song, why not try an unusual track, or at least do something interesting to it. Mantis do neither, so what do they do?

Well, the singer wails awkwardly, telling us that he "will survive", and goes on to philosophise about how "summer sunshine turns into autumn rain". I don't believe him, and I'm sure I've heard it somewhere before anyhow.

A laughable fake, and a vacuous imitator. His voice echoes in a vast 'dustbin of errors'. The fizzled guitar sounds like an electric shaver that got dropped into the mix somehow, it's tuneless and inept. The keyboard is like the uncontrollable bleeping of an electric alarm clock, poxy and immensely irritating.

Mantis probably wish they'd written 'I Want To Know What Love Is' or 'The Final Countdown', or something equally moving. I sincerely hope they don't try to do anything about it. CW

THE PRINCIPLE

Three track demo

And here we have it. A trio of tunes from the group 'most likely to be invited to play at the Prince's Trust'. First off is 'White', a song which addresses the issue of apartheid in South Africa, condemning it, naturally. It's a vigorous workout with passion and style. The usually reliable voice of Clare Brooker however, lacks any of the commitment and colour so prevalent in live situations and on the debut single. In the wake of the Nelson Mandela Birthday celebrations, and all the controversy surrounding it, 'White' has an important message to give, but it's a touch too hopeful. 'Kimberley' displays a melodic exchange of ideas between guitar and keys. I last heard it some time ago, and can say it's quite unforgettable. The next single? 'Call Your Name' completes the collection. Subtle bass and piano shift and lift the music effortlessly into the air, real 'fast car' stuff! Like the single, this tape is good, but far from great. The Principle seem to have made all the right

moves so far, but may have fallen into an old trap, and are too tired to fight back. They should stand on their own feet, and not be afraid to do what they want. CW

THE PRETTY JOLLIES

Potatoland/Terrorist Alert
Howling Dead Records MRC
010

The arrival of this limited edition record unexpectedly precluded the search for Britain's ugliest band - The Pretty Jollies. Transgressing



the cultural gap across the A1(M), The Pretty Jollies maintain a local connection by recording at Peterborough's Music Room under the watchful eye and nimble fingers of Baz. According to Music Room folklore, the session financially crippled the band to the extent that they spent the night in sleeping bags on the studio floor.

Legend, fable or fact, this young band have a warped sense of humour, playing their largely redundant brand of trash garage psychobilly, with real Rumanian riffs (as the runoff groove reads). All very likeable, but naive to the point of blurring seriousness with parody. 'Potatoland', for example, features a verse lifted straight out of 'White Riot', and a heavy bass chorus, coupling the unforgettable lyrics 'where the graves are deep' with 'bop shoo wop'. The flipside unwittingly employs a Mary Chain out-take for an intro, but quickly becomes disposably whimsical. Agreeable to the ears, but nothing that hasn't been done (or said) before. LW

REAL TIME

14 track demo

Well if there's anyone who doesn't yet believe that quality and quantity can go hand in hand, just lend your ears to the sweet meanderings of Real Time. Trying to condense and describe what exactly goes on inside Real Time is like trying to put a fence around a cloud. There is so much here, it's difficult to know how to start and where to finish.

What we've got, (or rather they), is over an hour's worth of thoughtful and imaginative tunes, fourteen in all. The rhythms and drum programming are carefully laid down. Guitar and keyboards throughout manage to embrace the songs in a way which inspires texture and atmosphere to every note...avoiding any temptation to have to 'prove themselves'. The extra touches and ideas are never displayed as such, instead they lie in wait within the songs, for the listener to discover.

So often we get to this stage, only to be turned away by an ineffective lead voice. Familiar? There is no such inconvenience here. Derry Murphy's truly charismatic vocal fits, and from then on everything just falls into place.

And influences? It's hard to say. There's a lingering 'Cornwalesque' tone to the melodies (Voodoo Eyes), like that found in later Stranglers work. Make My Spirit Go Again has a definite Aha feel about it, but these are negligible details.

For me, only President stoops, an accidental trip into 'Naf-Land', with lyrics encroaching on absurdity, and a fitting musical wallpaper decoration. But this is not typical, so we can brush it under the carpet. Personal favourites include Ticket To The Fun and Dreams On The Leather. Just two of many fabulous tracks! This is starting to sound like a commercial. Good. CW

DAVID REID

Black Flowers

David Reid's tape makes me hope he'll be releasing material on a big label too, in the near future.

Vocally, he reminds me of David Sylvian, but his arrangements are deliberately much more spartan. He plays guitars and bass; drumming is by Nigel Lobley of 4,000,000 Telephones.

The lyrics are imaginative and expressively delivered. 'Mr. Silence' makes clever use of double-tracked vocals and a slightly plaintive keyboard-like effect on guitar. 'Lost Dreams' is probably the most commercial, but experiments with an unaccompanied first few lines and call-and-response interaction between jazzy bass and guitar. But the slow 'Murder Street' is my



favourite, with its little flurries of bass notes and treble slashes, vocals reminiscent of Bowie at his moodiest, and images demanding to soundtrack a film noir video. The tape is well-packaged, too, as David follows in the British-Rock-Musician-At-Art-School tradition. AC
Contact: David, 44 Bradwell Road, Netherton, Peterborough tel. P'boro 264156.

WAR DANCE

A Short Sharp Shock

Hardcore I'm told and so it is.

Anthrax meets The Ramones, and in places they are not unhappy bedfellows. Overall, the sound is tight, competent tempo changes, the bassist is quite useful, as is the drummer, but the guitarist seems to be working hard to both sing, play and overdub, and sadly it shows. Less of the rather predictable classical intro of 'O.P.D.', and more guitar-like the solo on 'Giveaway', in which Graham 'Gizz' Butt makes his guitar howl and scream 'comme' Steve Vai, would make the solos a little more inspiring, rather than cross-picking as fast as you can, which Mr. Butt has a tendency to do for most of the time. The vocals are potentially good, but the lyrics need a catch-line to help bring them out a bit: something like the 'which one of these words...' from 'Caught in a mosh' by Anthrax would help to bring that little extra to grab a listener's attention - they go a little way towards this on 'Hours of Sunday'.

The thing that spoiled this tape for me was that there was obviously little time spent on the production. In places, the whole sound seems a little empty; little, if any, use of stereo. Perhaps the addition of another guitarist would have saved time spent overdubbing. However, I hope the next tape will do them more justice. MC

STANDPOINT

The Fourth Demo

Standpoint are like the drunk at a very bad party. They wander aimlessly, in search of anyone who might care to listen to their gibberish, but any attempt to communicate is interrupted by the burps and garglings of the ensuing musical spew. Stand clear! This is nothing more than a wimpy workout of soft rock.

Standpoint 'kill off' their best ideas by treading all over them, with claustrophobic guitar fills, and

pointless drum rolls. Not since 'When Will I Be Famous?' has that tardy key change in the outro been so.....so utterly inappropriate. In the song 'EPA' Zak Justin sings about "taking it higher", and he may want to, but his voice has some difficulty in following him. Everybody makes mistakes, but there are more than a fair share here.

Rhyming "fire" with "desire", and "soho" with "oh no" just isn't on. If there's a message in this music, it's "Rock'n'Roll Is Dead". Standpoint won't be part of the memory. CW

GIG REVIEWS

THE POPPYHEADS

THE SPIRALS

Radcliffs Square Club,
Cardiff

The support band turned up at the door, and, cheekily, asked to play (there wasn't supposed to be a support band). THE SPIRALS played an interesting set, which owed an over-the-top amount to Loop, to whom they could give a hard time on the psychedelic thrash scene, if they get it together.

And so the familiar faces of THE POPPYHEADS took the stage for the very last time together. As expected, they played an outstanding set, including 'Cremation Town', 'The Pictures You Weave', 'Grit In My Eye', and 'Heaven', a very heart-touching slowish number, which, for me, was the highlight of the gig. Sadly, the gig ended and so were The Poppyheads. Now we have to sit back and wait for Rob and David to emerge from the darklands with their new experiment.

KEVIN CONNOR

THIS REPLICA

BLACK CANDY

CCAT Batman, Cambridge

BLACK CANDY came on (I won't say the stage, coz there wasn't one) with a heavy rock instrumental. I began to wonder why they were playing with This Replica when their singer came bounding along, and made her entrance with 'The girl'. Her voice nearly knocked me off my chair: it was instantly likeable - very powerful. It was great to actually HEAR her voice, as, so often, girly voices seem to drown amidst a sea of sound. The guitar playing was good, as was the drumming in 'Shadow on the wall', and every now and then, heavy rock broke through their almost-Sugarcube style. I'd love to know who their influences are: maybe Eddie & The Hot Rods are in there somewhere, since they did a cover of 'Do anything you wanna do' - it certainly didn't seem out of place. Their set was interesting to say the least, from 'Never come here no more', a slow, sixties-style song, to 'The groover', which got the minute crowd going - quite an achievement. Alright, I know I didn't dance, but I had an excuse: I was writing.

To be honest, I hadn't heard that much about THIS REPLICA, apart from certain people likening them to The Cure, so I thought I'd find out for myself. I'm bloody glad I did. Cure clones? No, not really (is that such a bad thing anyway?). OK, so they have a penchant for black, and lots of gel and frizzy bits, but who doesn't these days? The music was excellent; I couldn't find fault - I did try, honest, I really did. They started off with 'Sugar', a jolly number, followed by 'A night like this' (yeah, I know it's a Cure song!). The set that followed was varied - it was all there, including their single 'Tunnel Vision'. At first, I was a bit dubious about the guitar playing - a very strong finger is needed - but what he played was great.

This Replica are a promising band, and how well they sound together! I will admit to one thing; Bob Smith would be proud of the singer! JORDAN

HOUSE GRINDER SPIRITWALK

The Waterloo, Huntingdon

HOUSE GRINDER they call themselves, certainly living up to their name. They were loud and beatworthy. Once the hard hitting presence of the drums had nestled in the brain, other weird noises were produced, from here, there and everywhere, with the inclusion of the perpetual 'pump up the volume/turn it up' snippets. Then came the vocal chords: they had a tendency towards rapping, obviously showing a preference for short outbursts of words, rather than whole sentences. On some occasions, the background samples would have felt quite at home in the midst of a film soundtrack. Nevertheless, House Grinder seemed to liven the crowd (though at times I thought that they had supplied the crowd themselves). If you live for the Big Beat, then you will definitely find House Grinder a necessity.

Such a mesmeric performance by SPIRITWALK, they could do no wrong in my eyes. They sounded quite good, too, even when Ezio's guitar string decided it no longer wanted to be a part of the set. No need to despair; after a plea from vocalist Ian Docherty over the microphone, a member of the audience comes to the rescue. Yes, someone with enough courage to tackle that mean guitar string. Meanwhile, Ezio picks up another guitar, a little tuning, and then Spiritwalk play on. Their performance on the whole was thoroughly enthusiastic. Some new material (new to me, anyway) was performed, as well as the haunting 'Infected mind', and the powerful 'This town'. Spiritwalk seemed to appeal to the crowd, as cries for more could be heard: they responded and carried on playing, much to my delight. Ian Docherty carried the vocals well, teaming up in places with Ezio for a little duet (just kidding). Yes, a charismatic figure - so well suited to such an energetic and talented band. Need I say any more? Yes, one more thing, Spiritwalk also showed that they have some lyrical talent, for those of you who care to listen: the words could actually be heard. At the end of the set, Ezio expressed a

slight concern over the somewhat diminishing crowd. Don't worry, Ezio, they don't know what they missed.
EFFE C.

DEREK B COOKIE CREW

Corn Exchange, Cambridge

Nobody told me that this would be a night for the under 18's only. At least, it felt like one, as I stood among crowds of cool thirteen year olds in Def Jam T-shirts, uncomfortably clutching my pint. I soon forgot about feeling ancient when the COOKIE CREW took to the stage with their very own crew of dancing girls. With plaited hair and stripey T-shirts, the Cookies looked like your favourite sister. Their effortless cutie rap attack was guaranteed to get fingers a-poppin' and bodies a-rockin' (or was it the other way round?). Sweet and appealing as a chocolate cookie they may be, but I've a sneaking suspicion most girl rap groups are likely to be just a flash in the pan. At the moment, only the Real Roxanne stands loud, proud and brassy, head and shoulders above the rest. So the Cookies disappeared, leaving a sweet taste behind, and getting the crowd in a hungry mood for DEREK B.

After the sugary sisters, rap's self-proclaimed bad young brother was a disappointment. Flanked by his cool posses in Adidas gear, old Del boy didn't really seem to cut it tonight. He hasn't got the humour or charisma to make his own Brit rap any more than just a case of going through the motions. How long can you keep proclaiming you're the best? The topic has already worn thin. Rap/hip hop is admittedly this year's thing. But let's just hope it hasn't become a parody of itself by the time the next year comes around. Know what I'm saying?
STEPH McNICHOLAS

TOXIC REASONS KGB

**The Sanitarium,
Peterborough**

When I was twelve, I wrote a piece for the school magazine, all about that new craze, punk rock. I went into great detail, in my best

handwriting, to describe what punks wore, which bands they followed, what they believed in, and so on... as if The Sun hadn't filled everyone in, anyway.

At twelve, I must have been a bit shocked by all those dirty punks, after a staple diet of Abba and Boney M. A few years on, and my hair was cropped, and I was wearing hideous pink leopard skin T-shirts, string vests, and Vice Squad badges. That nasty punk bug had bitten.

Eight years on, here I am at The Sanitarium, as if time stood still, waiting for KGB and Toxic Reasons to take the stage. But this time, there's no excitement, no air of expectancy. Perhaps I'm just getting old.

German punkos KGB emerged, shirtless and sweaty, to get the scruffy crowd all worked up and ready for an action pact. There seems to be a lot of good stuff coming out of Germany, especially from Berlin, where the political climate creates a hot bed of musical activity. Sadly, KGB didn't seem to have two new ideas to rub together. Each song sounded like a tired old punk cabaret. As soon as the sweaty blond frontman bade us Auf Wiedersehen, I'd already forgotten what they sounded like.

Ah... a warm pint and next, time to discover Toxic Reasons, all the way from the US of A. Toxic Reasons, you may remember, brought us that little gem 'Kiss your ass goodbye'. Well, as it happened, guys'n'gals, it turned out to be the best song in their set. A cover of the Clash song 'Jah Wars' might as well have been The Clash. And an horrendous 'When the kids are united' brought back miserable memories of that embarrassing muso Pursey going through the motions. Toxic Reasons were a real disappointment to me, though Phil Johnson would not agree with me there (he bought both their T-shirt and album). That old 1-2-3-4 bash it out rubbish just didn't rub anymore.

Punk was like a stubborn kid, sticky fingered, dirty-nosed, always saying no, a spoilt, naughty brat. But bands like KGB and Toxic Reasons are going to make sure that grubby streetkid Punk will always be like some wayward Peter Pan: a damn shame, then, that all the

other kids are going to grow up.
STEPH McNICHOLAS

RUNRIG

Town & Country Club, London

The house is three-quarters full for Runrig's second visit to London's most popular venue, yet the audience is strangely subdued... that is until the Highland's most famous sons appear out of the shadows, as if having fallen from the sky (Isle of Skye, actually). Not ruffled or wrongfooted by the occasion, but heads held high and chests out, as they launch into their opening anthem. Albeit only seconds old, this sudden show of musical bravado has metamorphosed the front of the crowd into a sea of arms, linked in harmonious accord, with vocal support from their hearts to match. We're not talking drunken lads from the terraces; no, judging by the post-gig melee of sweaty faces and multitudinous accents, many of the punters were no doubt aware of Runrig's distinctive cocktail of heady English and Gaelic anthems years ago, and



have been following them ever since. Having achieved cult status before last year's phenomenal success of 'The Cutter and The Clan' (their last album), it's somewhat surprising to find them still in the minor league of public awareness south of the border. Far from being inaccessible, their sound, be it live or recorded, is typically undefinable: suffice to say

that their songs are, in the majority, rousing testimonies, accounts and protests of and against land ownership, exploitation and the human rights infringed in the process of such wrongdoings in the Highlands.

Make no mistake, Runrig are no Big Country clones, although comparisons have been inevitable. Incorporating accordion, electric bagpipes and a vast array of percussion, their sound is as rich as the peat bogs and as wide as the open spaces they so perfectly simulate. Each song paints a rich tapestry of the scene in hand: the smell of heather is only a breath away. Runrig have fused traditional and modern folk and rock with issues close to their roots, in not one but two languages that, when unleashed on stage, is something special. Tonight, the hairs on the back of my head stood upright to the tune of three encores. Catch them at a Corn Exchange near you (3rd September). Scotland's best kept secret, next to the loch ness monster, is out.

STEVE GILLET

10,000 MANIACS

Cherry Hinton Hall, Cambridge

Saturday afternoon at the Folk Festival brought the second and final appearance of 10,000 Maniacs from Jamestown, New York State, in what promised to be an imaginative billing by the organisers. Apparently, the band had made it clear to the audience on the previous evening that they were as surprised as anybody to be playing here, prior to two London dates. After a delay in setting up, they finally took the stage and launched into 'Hey Jack Kerouac'. Immediately striking was the quality of lead singer Natalie Merchant's distinctly accented voice, which was enhanced by an excellent outdoor sound system. The folk element in 10,000 Maniacs' music was evident, but their many influences made it impossible to categorise this band.

The appearance of the various members of the group was as varied as their influences: Robert Buck, guitar strapped high, could easily have fitted into any number of '50's rock'n'roll bands with his jacket, neck tie and laidback manner, while drummer Jerome Augustyniak exhibited a recently shaved head.

Natalie Merchant was the focus of



attention throughout the set: she spun across the stage, tossing her hair back and forth, during instrumental breaks of up-tempo songs, while the slower numbers were approached from a seated position. Most of the audience had taken to their feet after a little gentle persuasion from Ms Merchant: during one song, she called for the band to stop for re-tuning, explaining that "we tune because we care." The set was wound up with four songs from their excellent last album.

For me, they provided the highlight of a weekend which was by no means short of variety, reaching far beyond the limiting image conjured up by the words 'folk festival'. My only regret was that the tight time scheduling left no opportunity for an encore, but on the evidence of this appearance and the strength of their recent material, it can only be a matter of time before they are filling the larger venues on both sides of the Atlantic.

NEIL WILSON

LETTERS

Dear Scene & Heard,

This is just a quick note to set the record straight concerning Trevor Weedhi's 'review' of the War Dance demo in the last issue. We refer to the pathetic comments concerning Gizz Butt, guitarist with the above. It is blatantly obvious that the research was minimal, as borne out by his many petty, amateurish, and most importantly, INCORRECT assumptions. The following are the facts of the matter:

1. Gizz did NOT form either The Blanks or The Destructors: a certain Alan Adams can claim that honour.

2. The reviewer attempts to suggest that Gizz is past it somewhat, with his typically sneaky comment "the more senile amongst you will remember..". Gizz is in fact 21 years old. Hardly O.A.P. material, eh?

3. A large chunk of his career has been omitted, obviously deliberately, to further distort the facts. Weedhi conveniently did not mention the handful of LP's and EP's Gizz made with The English Dogs on Britain's premier metal label, Music For Nations, or his British and American tours. What have you ever achieved Weedhi, you pompous twat? The Dogs were disbanded as they felt they had gone as far as they could. It's a pity those local press darlings The Pleasure Heads, that Weedhi is so obviously in love with, don't see the light and do the same. NO amount of fawning from arseholes like him will up their sales to double figures (aggregate).

4. We resent being referred to as Gizz's latest cliché. Our demo was playlisted by SOUNDS, and received glowing reviews ALL OVER THE WORLD by far more knowledgeable people than you, Weedhi, you cretin. We have also aroused the interest of numerous labels and were offered a production deal on the strength of it. By the time you read this, we will have completed our first European tour. Not bad for a cliché, eh?

As we have mentioned, we are not bothered by the laughable Pleasure Heads phenomenon (read farce), or anything else that Weedhi cares to conjure up. What's up, Weedhi? Are you jealous of talent, or are you just a petty third rate hack? Both, we fear.

It is noticeable that he doesn't

write in his real name - no bottle. We say you are a wanker, and if you care to discuss this, look us up, you incompetent. In the meantime, wise up or fuck off!!!

Andy Frantic

PS. Scene & Heard should also be censured for allowing this oaf near a typewriter.

Trevor Weedhi was last seen making an undignified escape up his own rectum. We confidently predict that he will not again foul the pages of this impeccable organ. PJ

Dear Scene & Heard,

Having just received a copy of no. 13 of your magazine, I feel compelled to write and express my views on some of its contents.

Firstly, the reviews of both the Fire Dept. single and especially The Koronas were both spot on. I know all concerned will be pleased when I send them a copy.

I found the general content of the magazine good, especially The Moment interview, 'Three nights in Hackney without earplugs' and best of all 'Too much too young' - this should have been much longer, as many bands could learn from it.

Unfortunately, a couple of things marred an otherwise excellent issue:

1. Who is Steve Linford? Yes., I know, a singer/songwriter with The Way/This Side Up. Hardly Elvis Costello. Does he really warrant an interview in his own write (sic)? For me, he made a prat of himself by slagging Nutmeg (seems very hip at the moment, as they're doing OK), and then in the next paragraph or so, saying what's required is more constructive criticism. Hm, very strange!

2. By coincidence, another slagging of Nutmeg - don't get me wrong, I'm not very keen, either, but... Chris Williams in reviewing their single actually used TWO sentences to review it. The rest of the piece giving the band a fairly good slagging (could this be something to do with himself being a previous winner of

the C.R. Comp., achieving very little, whilst Nutmeg seem to be doing OK.... tut, tut). This sort of stuff should not be allowed to happen by you the editor



(shame on you!) in a page called 'Records - reviewed by...'. The power of the press and all that, pretty pathetic really. Slagging bands who've no chance of answering back (not that I would imagine they would want to argue with such silly statements!).

It's also sad to hear the Poppyheads are calling it a day. In my opinion, a breath of fresh air in an otherwise stale scene, with their edge of uncertainty coupled with good songs. After all, if it was bands plying as tight as ducks' arses we liked, we'd all be into Dire Straits, M. Jackson, etc. (still, many people are, I suppose). I look forward to the remaining members' next venture.

Anyway, look forward to the next issue; hope you sort out the very small blott (sic) on your landscape.

Lyle P. Crass
Kave-In Records

Many thanks for your letter,
Lyle.

Firstly, with regard to Steve Linford: unlike Elvis Costello, Steve has taken two different bands to the final of the Rock Group Competition in as many years. This makes him well worth an interview, in my book (sorry, magazine).

Secondly, we can hardly justify calling in an 'impartial observer' just to review one Nutmeg record - Chris Williams can slag them off as well as anyone else! And Nutmeg DO have every chance of answering back, if they so wish. PC

LISTINGS

Bands

Abraxas - Cambridge 64346
 As It Is - Market Deeping 342254
 Axis - Thetford 811801
 The Bicycle Thieves - Cam. 355053
 Black Candy - Newmkt. 664638
 Blind Ambition - St. Ives 494004
 Blind Mice - Saffron Walden 30645
 Bogus Renegades - Cam. 835527
 Boysdream - Peterborough 40950
 The Brides - Peterborough 71139
 Brotherhood - Histon 4253
 Camera Shy - Histon 3816
 Les Cargo - Cambridge 311356
 Catholic Boys - Cambridge 328992
 The Charlottes - Huntingdon 412390



Jason Smith
 (The Cherry Orchard)

The Cherry Orchard - Cam. 460068
 Children Of Some Trad'n - Cam. 352370
 Colonel Gomez - Ely 740900
 The Crawthumpers - Cam. 65757
 Cri De Coeur - Cambridge 833894
 Curious - Chatteris 3010
 Deja Vu - Newmarket 720090
 The Desmonds - Cambridge 334394
 The Fires In Arabia - Crafts Hill 80918
 Floorshow - Cambridge 211068
 Flowershop - Huntingdon 57306
 The Freedom Faction - Cambridge 60733
 The Frigidaires - Cambridge 312694
 The Fruit Bats - Fowlmere 578
 Gangster - Huntingdon 52951
 Geneva Convention - Cambridge 860470
 House Grinder - Cambridge 872348
 I Thought I Told You - Haverhill 704452
 In Flight - Cambridge 65048
 Indiscretion - Cambridge 246195
 Infernal Death - Cambridge 880377
 Jack The Bear - Royston 61295
 James Dean Quartet - Cambridge 322635
 Legend - Peterborough 61854
 Les Cargo - Cambridge 311356
 The Lonely - Cambridge 246670

Mad Hamster - Cambridge 62730
 Mel's Kitchen - Cottenham 51255
 The Melting Men - Histon 3450
 The Moment - Ely 740244
 Mr Meaner - Cambridge 834928
 The Mullahs - Royston 62272
 Nutmeg - Ely 721761
 On The Brink - Cambridge 263870
 The Outworkers - Ashwell 2607
 O-Zone - Cambridge 312482
 Paradise Street - Cambridge 244825
 The Pleasure Heads - Pboro 311376
 Pluck This - Cambridge 64965
 Possession - Haverhill 702345
 The Principle - Swavesey 80150
 Quiet Life - Royston 838448
 Real Time - Cambridge 352237
 Red Dilemma - Cambridge 835527
 Rhythm Method - Hitchin 37587
 Rhythm Touch - Cambridge 845283
 Sardines - Cambridge 240953
 Session 57 - Newmarket 750724
 Shades Of Indifference - St. Neots 72145
 Shine - Kings Lynn 673760
 Sound Advice - Crafts Hill 82330
 Spiritwalk - Cambridge 214852
 Stinkhorn - St. Ives 69301
 Stormed - Cambridge 65449
 Strike Force - Cambridge 246958
 The Sullivans - Harlow 37048
 Surfin' Druids - Cambridge 860665
 This Replica - Ely 721761
 Trux - Crafts Hill 31550
 The Voice - Haverhill 705371
 War Dance - Peterborough 314703
 Woolly Mammoth - Cambridge 843211
 909's - Cambridge 243144

Lighting Hire

D Lights Design - Cambridge 844500
 Fuzzy - Cambridge 876651
 Just Lites - Cottenham 50851
 Pearce Hire - Peterborough 54950
 Soft Spot - Cambridge 244639
 Star Hire - Huntingdon 411159

PA Hire

Chings - Cambridge 315909
 Flite Audio - Cambridge 316094
 Fuzzy - Cambridge 870651
 Music Village - Cambridge 316091
 NSD Sound Services - Cam. 245047
 Pearce Hire - Peterborough 54950
 Skysound - Cambridge 358644
 Sound Advice - Huntingdon 56642
 Star Hire - Huntingdon 411159

Photography

Richard Brown - Cambridge 860801
 Chris Hogge - Cambridge 350799
 Tim George - Ramsey 812376
 Steve Gillett - Cambridge 62560
 Rosanne Holt - Cambridge 249003
 Giles Hudson - Cottenham 51204

Recording Studios

Carlton - Bedford 211641
 Cheops - Cambridge 249889
 Flightpath - Teversham 5213
 Kite - Cambridge 313250
 Lizard - Cambridge 248877
 The Lodge - Clare 27811
 Minstrel Court - Cambridge 207979
 The Music Room - Peterborough 46901
 Quali Sound - Crafts Hill 82948
 The School House - Bury 810723
 Skysound - Cambridge 358644
 Stable - Ware 871090

Venues

Cambridge

The Alma - 64965 (Nick)
 Boat Race - 313445
 Burleigh Arms - 316881 (Reg)
 Corn Exchange - 357851
 Man On The Moon - 350610 (Stan)
 Midland Tavern - 311719
 The Rock - 247617
 Sea Cadets Hall - 352370 (Tim)

Huntingdon

Three Tuns - 53209
 Waterloo - 57199

Newmarket

Rising Sun - 661873 (Paul)

Peterborough

Crown - 41366
 Gaslight - 314378
 Gladstone Arms - 44388
 Glasshouse - Stamford 65776
 Norfolk Inn - 62950

Oxcart - 267414

Peacock - 66293

Sanitarium - 230383 (Gizz)

Wirrina - 64861

St. Ives

Floods Tavern - 67773 (Stan)

St. Neots

Cockney Pride - Hunt. 73551

Kings Head - Hunt. 74094

Sawston

University Arms - Camb 832165

Video Recording

Neil Roberts - Cambridge 210320

A STATE OF DECAY

Local music in Cambridge is under threat. It is fast becoming a target for punitive action, which, if not checked, will bring about the downfall of what is an art form - important, due to its inherent accessibility.

A gig on Tuesday 26th July saw the culmination of local music's attempts to fight against one particular destructive element within the Cambridge City Council. The Burleigh Arms has become the proverbial battleground. The Burleigh itself has been a live music venue for seven years: why, suddenly, has its live music licence been cut from six nights a week to two nights a week, and a limiter fitted (set at 98 db - average street traffic clocks in at 85 db). Reg, the landlord, was informed that the level would not be raised unless soundproofing was installed. The gig, held at the Corn Exchange, sought to raise money to provide this soundproofing, but in the words of one of the promoters, "it didn't raise as much as it should have done." Few, if any, bands playing at the Burleigh have managed to complete their sets without a power shut-off.

Reg understandably feels bitter over the whole situation: "the local music scene in Cambridge is suffering from a backlash from the Environmental Health Department of the City Council. There is a malicious group of four to six old fogeys who moan about the venue, and the Council feels an obligation to tune in with the demands of these few residents, rather than the hundreds of youngsters who attend

the venue. At closing time, no more noise is created by people leaving the pub, shutting car doors, etc., than is created outside a restaurant at closing time: the music's been here for years. Look at any town in East Anglia - there are loads of solely live music pubs in any large town, with no real problems. Why does this city have to be different?"

I spoke to Mr. Selwyn Anderson, the Principal Environmental Health Officer at the Guildhall. He would not comment on specific cases, but instead, he provided a few answers, explaining first how the system works. The Control Of The Pollution Act gives officers of the Council the right to investigate and act upon 'any unreasonable disturbance'. It is useful to note that this rather ambiguous term is decided in the courts, by legal precedent, NOT by any fixed guidelines. For licensed premises (pubs, clubs, etc.), the Licensing Committee, taking into account the opinions of the public and the Environmental Officers, do one of three things:

- approve the granting of the licence, without conditions;
- refuse the licence;
- place conditions on the licence by limiting the number of events occurring (eg. the Boat Race lost its Sunday night licence), or limit the hours of the event (eg. The Sea Cadet Hall's licence ends at 11pm), or by demanding sound insulation or the fitting of a limiter.

"But", said Mr. Anderson, "we're not in business to put people out of business." But surely that's what they ARE doing? What about the old



Benthamite ideal of 'the greatest happiness to the greatest number' - are you really 'working for the community'? "Definitely", he replied, "but the residents do come first. But anyone, including the venue's supporters, can put their case at the Licence hearing, an event which is advertised in the press, and by notices in the building."

One Council department that, on the face of it, is doing sterling work is the Amenities and Recreation Department, led by the highly respected Mick Grey. The venue itself (the Corn Exchange) is slowly but surely beginning to put Cambridge back on the national gig circuit. Tribute should be made to his department for getting the national bands, and not infrequently allowing local bands to play with the big names. Three groups that come to mind are Colonel Gomez (with Motorhead), The Frigidaires (with Pink Fairies) and The Mullahs (with Bronski Beat). However, the major problem of the Corn Exchange is the expense incurred, should local bands attempt to hire it: the hall costs, I am informed, £1,400 to hire (it holds 1,400). So a sizeable percentage of the door take is eaten up before the other expenses of putting on a gig are incurred.

There are other problems with the forces acting around and upon the local music scene. A cause for concern is under-age drinking: while people point their fingers accusingly at the pubs in Cambridge, it is the off-licenses where young gig-goers are attempting (and evidently succeeding) to purchase alcohol, and then try to bring it into local venues, only to be turned away. I talked to one off-license owner near a local venue. He told me how difficult it was to tell what age youths were, especially the female element, whose make-up and dress could put years on their real age. Make of that what you will. Something needs to be done, but are identity cards a pragmatic solution? The Police informed me that their Press Officer was

unavailable: if I wanted them to comment on any issue appertaining to under-age drinking, nuisance and flyposting, I would have to submit my questions in writing - such is life.

Flyposting itself has been an issue, culminating, you may remember, in Stormed being banned from playing in Cambridge for a while. The posters responsible advertised Stormed and Vigil's Aunty's gig at the Sea Cadet Hall. We were told that the venue itself would be penalised if a warning about flyposting was not included in the contract to hire the hall. The law apparently states that those putting up posters would be liable to a fine of up to £400, with each poster being treated as a separate offence. Written permission in advance has to be obtained from the owner of the building. It's funny how during local and national elections, the number of political posters that appear in odd places.... not always with written permission?

I had always thought that local radio (case in point - Trevor Dann's Rock Show) was supposed to reflect local interests. Trevor has a slot in which he devotes some of the airplay to local bands: why not all of it? The broadcast covers the whole of East Anglia - surely there is enough recorded material from bands in the region to facilitate an all-local show? Instead, we have the delights of Trevor's incessant name-dropping, and even worse his tendency to play new country music (my dawg has died/my mother has cancer/I had both legs shot off in 'Nam/et al) to cheer up the whole proceedings and provide a break from his self-indulgent witticisms.

Despite all this, the wheels of local music continue to turn, and though it's going through a rough patch, it's not all gloom, doom and despondency...promise! The creativity and tenacity of those involved is as strong as it's ever been, BUT it needs all the support it can be given, by ALL of us...eh. Mr. Anderson?

MARK CURTIS

BURLEIGH ARMS

MAIDS CAUSEWAY, CAMBRIDGE

THE HOME OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

BEST LIVE ATMOSPHERE IN TOWN

TWO*
BANDS ON ~~FIVE~~ NIGHTS A WEEK

CHECK PRESS FOR GIG GUIDE

* THANKS TO THE CITY COUNCIL!