

No. 20

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# SCENE AND HEARD

CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S ROCK MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1989/JANUARY 1990

THE BLACK SKY : THE NIGHT JARS

RORY GALLAGHER : NO DAKOTA

ROWAN ROBERTSON : CROSSLAND



TRIBE OF DAN : a voice in the wilderness? Page 15



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## CONTENTS

### 3 Editorial & Contents

### 4 Rowan Robertson

### 5 Rory Gallagher

### 6 Big Time

### 7 Cambridgeshire Gossip

### 8 Aria Sorbonne

### 9 Crossland

### 10 No Dakota

### 12 Cherrytree Festival

### 14 The Night Jars

### 15 Tribe Of Dan

### 16 Bill Wyfronts' Diaries

### 17 The Black Sky

### 18 Reviews

### 24 Listings

## EDITORIAL

In this issue, we take a look at two important vinyl releases from past winners of the Cambridge Rock Group Competition, Nutmeg's 'Electric Putty' LP, and The Cherry Orchard's 'Sing Sister Glory' debut 12" EP. We also catch up with Rowan Robertson in Los Angeles. Rowan started 1989 by playing with As You Like It in the Rock Comp., and finished it as an integral part of HM giants Dio - who says dreams don't come true? Finally, we live up to our name of being **Cambridgeshire's** Rock Music Magazine by featuring

bands from Peterborough, Cambridge, Ely, Ramsey and St. Neots. All this and, as they say, lots more - and still only 50 pence!

Our next issue will be out in February - hopefully, to coincide with the long awaited opening of The Junction - but we'll be bringing out a 1990 Rock Comp. Special which will be on sale only on the nights of the heats at the Corn Exchange, starting 18th January. Don't forget that S&H always welcome contributions on any aspect of the local rock music scene.

The S&H editorial team would like to take this opportunity to pass on seasonal greetings to all our readers, and thank The Cherry Orchard and Tribe Of Dan for helping to launch this issue, and David Bradwell of Aria Sorbonne for the flexidisc tie-in.

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# ROWAN ROBERTSON



FROM CAMBRIDGE TO LA

FACT: Rock musicians (along with Classical and Jazz), especially the guitarists, are the best in the world. Technically Rock music, which is often under-rated and even more often ignored, rises above all other pop / dance / indie music. There are the guitarists (Steve Vai, Eddie Van Halen, Yngwie Malmsteen), the bass players (Billy Sheehan, Geddy Lee, Steve Harris) and the drummers (Neil Peart, Tommy Aldridge, Lars Ulrich). This list of supremely talented musicians is endless so therefore the competition is incredible. To be noticed you have to be one of the best. Unfortunately nearly all of the real talent in the last decade has come from America, with Britain supplying very few big names. Therefore when an English guitarist joins one of the biggest metal/rock bands in the world is quite an achievement. When the guitarist is 17 and comes from Cambridge it is really quite staggering.

Rowan Robertson of Cambridge started playing guitar at a very early age, developing talents in jazz, classical and rock playing. I have known him since he was 14 and we have played in various Cambridge bands together, the best known being Indiscretion and more recently As You Like It. However Rowan is now a member of Dio, one of the biggest HM bands in the world. Dio boast the formidable vocal talents of Ronnie James Dio, who was formerly a member of Rainbow and Black Sabbath, and have achieved multi-platinum albums all over the world. The way Rowan achieved this is a true fairytale.

Having heard that Dio (also one of his favourite bands!) had lost their guitarist, Rowan went to work on a tape containing some of his guitar work. After a laborious effort to get the tape into the right hands it finally fell into the clutches of Ronnie James Dio. On hearing the tape Ronnie flew Rowan out to Los Angeles to audition for the band. The rest of course is history. Out of 5,000 possible guitarists, Rowan got the job. Rowan is now living in Los Angeles and is soon to enter the studio to record the long awaited fifth Dio studio album to be released in 1990.

Since joining Dio, Rowan has been featured in the New York Times, Billboard magazine and every major rock publication in America, Europe and Japan. However in the Cambridge 'press' he has been almost completely ignored. Dez Glennon's 'Rock Scene' has not even mentioned his name (where has he been for the last

year?). Also Rowan appeared in two consecutive Rock Competitions and both times failed to win best guitarist. As he is considered one of the best now, it leaves you wondering. No, the Cambridge music press has done no favours for Rowan. I'm sorry if this sounds like some petty recrimination but it IS the truth. The Cambridge press must start caring about up and coming musicians. OK!

## HOLLYWOOD OR BUST

During last August, I spent three weeks in Los Angeles with Rowan, auditioning and partying. It truly is an amazing place, home to almost every major rock band and the openings and opportunities for musicians is amazing; the club scene is vibrant and gives the opportunity for bands to showcase their stuff. Rock in America is massive; real big business, therefore there is quite a lot of attention to image. The bottom line is you must look good as well as play good.

Seeing Rowan again was great and I'm glad to say that success has not changed him. He is still the same guy who wore loud trousers and baseball boots in Cambridge. We joked about the old times and generally carried on like we did in Cambridge the only difference being that we were in Los Angeles.

Well there you have it. Possibly the worst structured piece of journalism ever. But who cares? - it's only Rock 'n' Roll! (?) Anyway I felt that if no-one was going to write this article I had better do it. I owe Rowan a lot and I have a great deal of respect for him. He showed that you don't need Cambridge to become successful. But when you're young, reading good things about your band gives your morale a hell of a boost. When will the Cambridge music press stop acting as though they are writing for Rolling Stone and really help Cambridge musicians? You have a duty to do it!

JANNE JARVIS



Janne and Rowan



# RORY GALLAGHER



J. JOYCE

## A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

I've long been an admirer of Irish-born Blues/Rocker Rory Gallagher, since seeing him in a sardine tin (as in packed to the gills) Corn Exchange in 1974. Then a gauche teenager still discovering the delights of Heavy Rock, the thought of interviewing the great man couldn't have been further from my mind. Now, as a well versed and committed rocker - and freelance journalist - the chance to meet and talk to Gallagher is one that I would not miss.

Which is why, at the tail end of a long, hot, music filled day at the 3rd Mildenhall Rock 'n' Blues festival I'm sitting in a cosy backstage caravan listening to Rory's quiet, but distinct, Irish accent.

During the mid '80's there was an ominous silence from the Gallagher camp, which was finally broken a couple of years ago. What was he doing during this absence?

"We spent a lot of time recording an album that never came out - that was one reason for the delay. We scraped that and started work on another album which was 'Defender', which took a certain amount of time. And we were still doing work abroad, on the Continent and in America - so we weren't entirely off the scene. A few years simply crept away quite fast, but we didn't plan it that way. If the album that was shelved had come out, we would have been back on the road sooner."

The 'Defender' album was released in 1988 on Demon Records. How did you actually come to sign to them?

"They were interested for a while and we were friendly enough with one or two people there for them to talk really straight forwardly with us. We nearly signed with one or two of the majors but they'd come up with some stipulation and everything would get really complicated and that would foul up the whole thing. Whereas with Demon, they believe in your integrity and you just give 'em the music and they don't try and step on you too much. We've nearly finished the next album. After doing 12 or 13 albums then having a gap of four or five years - it was ridiculous you know - people assumed you'd retired or lost your inspiration or whatever, but that wasn't the case."

During the 70's, Gallagher's music was considerably heavier than it is now - definitely Hard Rock with Blues connotations, rather than Blues with a heavy edge. Why did you decide to go in a less heavy, more Blues orientated direction?

"Well, we still play hard rock energy wise, but I just realised that on one or two albums we were beginning to steer away too much from the emotional side of the Blues. With 'Defender', even though it's not strictly a Blues album, the whole tone of it is based on Blues ideas and roots. I just decided to get right back to the centre of things - the source point. I don't mind rockin' and rollin' but there is a danger when you're pumping out albums and touring a lot that you can lose the subtlety and forget the bluesier things".

There is currently a move back towards the roots on Rock anyway, with a great many bands now turning towards a bluesy, rootsy form of metal. Also recently Jeff Healey and Michael Katon (two newly emerged Blues guitarists) are being feted as exponents of Blues for Heavy Metal fans. How do you relate to them?

"I think they're good. A lot of Heavy Metal fans are fed up with the trappings of Metal - the chains and the smoke bombs and everyone sounding like Van Halen - and I think with Jeff Healey they re-discover the simplicity. They just might be Blues fans underneath all the Heavy Metal stuff."

Yet these newer artists seem to be attracting young Rock fans whilst you - in the main - seem to have kept much the same audience rather than adding new fresh faces to your following. How do you feel about that?

"I feel quite good about it, it's nice to have fans that stick with you. Also, we take our music from the black roots. Jeff Healey tends to be influenced by the Cream, Jimi Hendrix - stuff like that. We try to dig a bit deeper and I go back into the country blues, acoustic blues. I'd hate to lose the old fans because they stick with you and you stick with them. But you do obviously pick up new fans along the way too, which is nice."

Do you still relate yourself to Heavy Rock in any way?

"I've avoided categories all the time. I still enjoy the manic side of hard rock, but I don't want to do 20 hard rock numbers and leave the stage. I'm just into the music - be it folk, classical, hard rock or blues."

All the same, I had heard a rumour that Rory did not want to follow the accomplished Heavy Rockin' strains of veteran Metallers Uriah Heep, special guest on the festival bill. Which is why their set was followed by the ubiquitous and highly revolting Dumpy's Rusty Nuts, not only taking the audience back down towards the Blues, but also giving Rory a far easier act to follow! So I have to ask - do you have any reason for not wanting to play straight after Heep?

"No reason at all. In fact we were trying to get on after them tonight because things are running late. There's no particular reason, just the promoters' idea to vary it up a bit you know."

As far as I'm concerned 20 minutes in the company of this unassuming Irish man is worth 100 DRN shows. Unlike many of the masses spread throughout West Row's speedway stadium, I'm a Rocker first - Blues fan second. So whether I believe the rumour mongers or accept Mr Gallagher's assertions, I'm glad the final running order - unfair or not - is structured in favour of the Blues.

LYN GUY



# BIG TIME

"The place where I come from is a small town - they think so small"

In any conversation on local music the topic brought up time and time again is "the bands never do anything do they?" They never make it big, no major record deals, no tasty headliners at big venues. There's a lot of bands, a reasonable number of venues in the region ... so why doesn't it happen very often? ... where is the common denominator?

This fair 'Shire has had its limited share of success ... Boo Hewerdine and the rest of the Bible! gigged in Cambridge - Boo came to prominence at The Great Northern/Sound Cellar (which for those who don't know is now City Limits/Zenon) - and signed to Chrysalis, but the local music scene's undoubted successes now seem to be on the ropes as the current re-releases smack of a band about to be dropped from the rosters. Going back still further, post punk 13th Chime came so close to really getting the big break when they and one other band were the two choices of one label. Unfortunately the other group (Lords Of The New Church) were picked and 13th Chime slowly disbanded. Andy Bell was a Peterborough musician who is currently one half of Erasure, so another point to local music. The Waves gigged consistently in Cambridge with guitarist Kimberley Rew doing the vocal duties until a positive decision was reached: Katrina took over, the rest of course is history. Nutmeg's session with Polydor proved to be little more than just that ... anyway (pause for breath) there's a few just off the top of my head ...

On the live side, two local bands spring to mind as having done quite well are The Moment, who do frequent and significant European tours, and Peterborough moshers War Dance (whose success is obviously down to the fact that they don't do it in "Dobly" [who's been watching Spinal Tap?]) who too pop off across the water.

Pink Floyd: although three members Roger (Syd) Barrett, Roger Waters and Barrett's "replacement" David Gilmour hail from Cambridge, the Floyd actually made it in London whilst at Poly etc. So enough of the usual load of old cobblers and half truths that is spoken about them ... in fact there are only two documented Cambridge gigs: February 17th 1967 at the Dorothy Ballroom and June 8th 1969 at The Rex. Syd appeared a few times, eg. King's Cellar and with his backing band The Stars at Corn Exchange etc. Hope that puts the record a little straighter.

So assuming just for one minute that for the size of Cambridgeshire its share of musical success is disproportionate to its population, what has gone wrong? Why are our local bands unattractive to record companies (if indeed they are)? Credibility could be one answer, the thought that as Cambridge is affluent, the popular "rebel" image of a rock and roll star is somewhat tarnished by his hometown's green spaces and dominant middle class population. Somewhat doubtful in some respects for David Bowie and Billy Idol (I'm told) both hail from small villages in Kent ... Take a Cambridge Indie band for example straight out of the "scene" and plonk it alongside some Mancunian ensemble, it is obvious that in the eyes of the music press at least one is definitely more credible than the other.

Another reasonable train of thought is that the area's "affluence" acts as a sedative, preventing band members who may have relatively well paid jobs perhaps from taking the plunge of dumping lucrative employment for misty eyed visions of being a full time musician. In areas of high unemployment, bands may be less encumbered by financial matters. Time to spend is another factor. If you don't work, rehearsing etc. become your most time

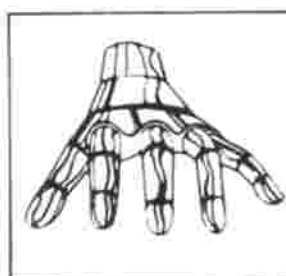
consuming occupation. I remember a telephone conversation with Mike Michael some time ago in which he told me that Stormed's lack of national wholesale success was as much down to their own disinterest/disbelief, call it what you will. This, he told me, played a part in Stiff losing interest with Cambridge's most popular...

Some bands may argue that the record companies don't travel and stay in London so out of town bands don't get the breaks - twaddle! If you're good enough and the demos impress, they will. We are, after all, only an hour down the M11. The lack of venues argument is cited but that whole situation is worthy of an article on its own ... look around, draw your own conclusions.

A rather peculiar argument I've heard is that "there are a lot of good local musicians but no good songwriters". Again rather dubious - can the region be responsible for a wholesale lack of inspiration? Even on a direct level, three major national artists are frequently credited (rightly or wrongly) with songs pertaining to Cambridge itself: The Specials' "Ghost Town" (written after a near riot at the Midsummer Common gig years ago), Marillion's "Garden Party" (Marillion appeared at the Sea Cadets Hall) and 'Floyds' "Arnold Layne" (written about a local "perv" of their youth who half inched underwear from washing lines). I don't think even just on the strength of these spurious examples the area is devoid of subject matter for an eager songwriter - if indeed inspiration springs from that.

Could it be that Cambridge is some English form of Joyce's Dublin, where the city itself stultifies this particular branch of the arts. A rather abstract thought; but there does seem to be a certain degree of self satisfaction in the music scene. Ambition is tempered by living in an environment which doesn't immediately create a desire to break out. Cambridge can, I think, supply some very good examples of individual success across the board. Perhaps it just doesn't breed team players.

MARK CURTIS



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# CAMBRIDGESHIRE GOSSIP



The shock of the year must be the break-up of WAR DANCE, on the eve of recording their debut LP 'Enemy Mine', which was scheduled to be the first release on Justice, a new metal label. Andy Frantic wants to retain the 'War Dance' name, recruit a new line-up and go ahead with the recording, but Gizz Butt, who has written most of the songs which were in War Dance's live set, has similar ideas, and he and Spike (drummer) are also thinking about recording the 'War Dance' LP, under the name 'Sun Dance'. More news in our next issue..... STATUS PROMOTIONS are now handling the bookings for The Rising Sun in Newmarket. They are operating an 'open' band policy, so interested bands should ring Mark on Cambridge 244825..... Another handful of bands say farewell to the local music scene: THE PRINCIPLE call it a day after 4 years of hard unfruitful labour (though they are rumoured to be re-forming with a new singer); AT 10 PACES surprisingly ceased trading just before their scheduled support slot with Under Neath What at Norwich's Jacquard Club. Frontman Jesse J., following an unsuccessful try-out with This Replica, is now scouring East Anglia to put a new band together; and THE MULLAHS, on the verge of releasing their debut single and with a European tour in the pipeline, blew it. Manager Doc Stewart described the band as "one of those rare bands who could pluck defeat from the jaws of victory".....S&H scribe STEPH McNICHOLAS is now fronting the re-vamped Flatmates (now known as The Sweet Young Things)..... THE CHARLOTTEs became the second county band to have a Peel Session broadcast this year (18th October)..... BIG BLUE WORLD followed up their 12" release by sacking their singer Stuart K., but are now set to start gigging again with a new singer, and if the song they played on Hereward's 'Jive Alive' is anything to go by, then they'll be worth watching out for. Their previous vocalist (in their Le Tricot Rouge days), Rob Connell, has put together a new band called WHITE ANGEL, which comprises himself, Marc Price and Dave Reid. They're loud'n'heavy, and are described as "Goth meets

Tin Machine". There will be an interview with Dave Reid in our next issue..... MISS PIGGY PROMOTIONS have now moved to their own business premises in Milton, on the outskirts of Cambridge. Their address is The Tower, Unit 2, Cambridge Road, Milton, Cambridge..... THE BIG BLUE have now found a drummer to replace Rod Norman. It's Crispin, of Shoot The Moon, and he'll be playing



for both bands. The Big Blue are planning to release a promotional single in January, and will be playing extensively in the London area..... The Corn Exchange bookings are now so successful that they had to turn down BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE because there was no suitable spare date: BAD news indeed..... Status Promotions have lined up some Xmas goodies at the SEA CADETS HALL: Dec. 21 - Slammer, Xentrix and Arcana (assuming Slammer and Xentrix are back to talking to each other); Dec. 22 - Mega City Four, The Color Factory + support; Dec. 23 - The Cherry Orchard, Crossland + support; Dec. 29 - Stormed, The Hoverchairs, This Replica and I Thought I Told You; Dec. 30 - Nutmeg, Thrilled Skinny, Screaming Custard and Well Wicked Warriors. Start saving up your pennies and listen to CNFM for further details..... Pen friend wanted for a Russian headbanger into Whitesnake, Ozzie Osbourne, King Diamond. Write to KESTAS SKLIAUSTYS, Druskupio 8/3, Birstonas, Lithuania, USSR..... Suddenly Peterborough is waking up to Indie music, with the return of gigs at The Posh Club and what must have been the most successful gig of the year, featuring The Hollow Men from Leeds and The Pleasure Heads. Steve Jason, the God-like promoter of this gig, was so pleased with the turnout that he intends to have bands playing there on a regular basis. Meanwhile, The Shamrock Club are also putting on the occasional live band: lined up for November were The Telescopes and The Snapdragons..... A new generation of Cambridge student bands are emerging: watch out for THE DEAR JOHNS, THE KING OF THAILAND, SKUNK and PAPERPAGE..... If you haven't yet entered the Cambridge Rock Comp., you're now too late. The first heat takes place on 18th January, and the Final's on 29th April..... The Two Roberts, whose previous contributions to the local rock scene include promoting The House Of Love at the Burleigh Arms a couple of years ago, have opened Cambridge's first record 'shop' which specialises in Indie and Dance music: it's in a room at the back of Tiger Lily clothes shop on Mill Road, and they trade under the name of PREMADONNA..... September, October and November have come and gone, but there's still no sign of Peterborough's favourite Sunday lunchtime venue THE GLASSHOUSE re-opening, though there are rumours that it may be back in the new year.....

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# ARIA SORBONNE

They started life as Excess X Deluxe, mutated to Flag Day and are about to fly away as Aria Sorbonne. The persistent element in all these groups has been keyboard player and journalist David Bradwell.

David: "I didn't want to be a journalist in the first place. I got into it by mistake, I wanted to be a keyboard player, but I needed money to buy keyboards and it made sense to write for Music Technology. I did stuff for them freelance and a full time job came up just as I was leaving college. I worked on MT for 9 months and then it went further downhill as I was made editor of Phase One, and they've just closed it down!"

Excess X Deluxe was formed for a one-off charity gig by assorted journalists at Music Technology. The gig was successful but only David and Chris Williams (ex-DYL) remained for the Rock Comp where they were augmented by John Hasleham (gtr) and Jane Graham (b. vox + trumpet).

David: "It seemed so much cleaner and easier to just use keyboards but Chris wanted to use a guitarist and we thought for 'credibility' at the comp we really ought to have a guitarist to cut down the glass count."

David: "I went into Qualisound originally to record two songs, but they said that if you record 4 songs it'll be much more marketable, so I said OK. Five days later I emerged seriously over budget and I had to sell a synthesizer to the engineer to pay for it. I phoned Chris and said 'you've got to hear this' and he said 'oh by the way I'm auditioning for Crossland tonight' and I thought oh all right I'm glad I went seriously over budget, it's been well worthwhile. I sold about 50."

After the Cambridge Competition they entered the Newmarket version, doing well in the heat but badly in the final, primarily because Chris was already in Crossland and was only appearing because he had been in the band in the heat. The new vocalist, Tony Pinkerton (from Crossland) only did one gig with them, at Pacino's Newmarket (who were talked into it by the band).

David: "All this time I could remember when I worked on MT I used to do demo reviews and in the back of my mind there was always this keyboard player in Cambridge who also had an ESQ1 and I wondered who he was because you don't hear of many keyboard players in Cambridge. I was in the office thinking how I could get hold of this John Lilley bloke, when Debbie on MT said 'how many ESQ voices have you got, someone in Cambridge wants to buy some', they'd put an ad in the magazine so I rang him up and lo and behold it was the man! We traded sounds and played things down the phone to each other for a couple of nights. Then John came in and became a star singer as well. John comes up with the songs and does the vocals and things and I'm more the programmer/producer. We had this mutual interest in dance music and writing songs. Kate's the organiser, she boosts our morale and steadies our direction."

At the time of the interview David and John had only been together for one month but already they're doing a flexi (if you're lucky it'll be on the front of this copy of S&H).

David: "The flexi's been on the cards for a while. From working on a music magazine I know the various ways you can get press, and the most important thing for a major record company is lots of press and a high independent chart placing. It's going to cost us quite a lot of cash to do it but it's a way of raising your profile without having glasses thrown at you."

David: "We both want to play live, there's no point sitting at home programming your sequencer if that is as far as it's going to get. You've got to go out and play it to people but it helps if you play to a receptive audience. People always assume it's

off backing tapes but we never have and never will use them."

Kate: "We're very hesitant about Cambridge, because of the sort of bands that usually play there. Newmarket is the exact opposite, keyboard bands are accepted whereas guitar bands are frowned upon."

David: "A 12" had a certain appeal but a CD single sounds really grand and over the top, really expensive and really pretentious but it's not, it's dead cheap. It's going to cost us about £1.50 per unit all inclusive, it's about the same as a 12". It should be out early next year. There was a feature in MT last year about how to make your own single which I wrote and that taught me a lot. I originally did that for the Daily Mirror, it was my first break into journalism. At the time I was trying to release a single but I couldn't afford to do it and I thought if I can write an article on how to release a single and make enough cash to pay for it, it would be brilliant. I was still a student and I had this centre spread in the Daily Mirror, it was really surreal."

David: "The most important thing to me is the melody, the feel the emotion behind it whether its done on guitars, keyboards or anything else. I don't use the technology for the sake of it, I just can't do it any other way."

Kate: "The worse thing is when people say it's not real music, I just want to deck them."

David: "It's a bit pretentious, Aria Sorbonne, but it begins with A so it's automatically top of the listings in Music Week which is the most important thing. Aria is an operatic song and Sorbonne is a French university which was mentioned in a Pet Shop Boys lyric - but we're not the new Pet Shop Boys." (But David's a journalist, comes from Newcastle, and has worked on Smash Hits just like Neil Tennant!)

David: "Me and Kate are promoting a band called North By Northwest, they used to be the Bicycle Thieves, no relation, and I reviewed them in the same issue as John. They then sent a tape into Phase One and the guy from Go! Discs who was doing the reviews was very enthusiastic. So we went to Leicester and met them and now were promoting them. The marketing of a band is crucial and I've got a lot of ideas on how to do that and I've got to try them out on somebody. As a journalist I know that if a record company sends you a press release for a single you ignore it. If they send you the record you play it, if they send you the CD you take it home and play it. If they send you some free gifts as well they get in the magazine. Record companies and the press have a very good relationship generally."

Steve Hartwell (can I have a freebie now David?)



JAMES CUMPSTY



# CROSSLAND

I didn't remember reviewing Crossland, but there was the evidence before me, where I compared them with Ultravox and Spandau Ballet. They've changed singer since then but they still sound like the early Midge Ure Ultravox. Psyche (bass) and Pat (guitar) are the archetypal punk rockers, starting their careers playing Sex Pistols and Stiff Little Fingers covers. They came to our attention when they formed Refugee and appeared in the 2nd Rock Comp using a drum machine.

Psyche: "We had many drummers but could never hold onto them, one dropped out just before the competition. We'd been going 4 or 5 months before the competition, which was our first gig. The band fell apart about 10 months later because the keyboard player left, the drummer was married and his wife wouldn't let him come any more. Me and Pat used to mess around with a drum machine for a few months and Richard would come down occasionally and finally we decided to get a new band together as we were bored. We tried one or two drummers. We heard that Lee had got a proper drum kit so he was in (although he'd never played before). We practised when we could but we were moved from one place to another so it was never a proper band. Then we got a cellar (under a joke shop and very tastefully decorated in old copies of Melody Maker) and got some music together which was half decent. We advertised for a singer and about 2 months afterwards this singer, Tony, who'd moved to Cambridge from Newcastle, saw the ad in an old paper and he gave us a call and we started working with him. Things picked up from there and we got a set together. We did a fair few gigs, we did a party in Manchester which came about after someone saw us at a college gig and liked us. It was a marquee on the lawn job and there was a 16 piece brass band and the local Tory MP there, it was that sort of party. Then we did the competition, we came second in our heat and were knocked out in the semi. We lost the vocalist, and we advertised again and got quite a few replies but none of them quite suited what we were doing. Then I mentioned it to Chris Williams (who works with Psyche for Music Maker publications) and he agreed to come to an audition. It's worked really well. It's more of a band now whereas it was a band and vocalist before. We would write music and arrange it as we played it and then he'd put vocals on top of it whereas now we'll write it together with Chris."

Chris: "I think it's changed a lot."

Psyche: "There's a lot more power and punch to the songs now."

Pat: "It's become much more rocky."

Psyche: "Us four live in Ely but Chris is based in Cambridge. There are no venues here but there are one or two places you can hire if you want to. It's a bit of a bind putting on the whole thing yourself, we have done it and we've made money out of it but the amount of work involved is excessive. We'd rather just turn up. There is a good crowd here that will turn up whenever there is anything on in Ely. The bands around here seem to get on very well together, we're all sort of mates, we all swap gigs."

Chris: "When I saw them in the competition they were very striking, very appealing. I had no intention of joining them but they came across very well and live they did a show. I think the most important thing is how you can play and how you come across live. We meant well with DYL but it became a bit too careerist for me. This group is more enjoyable from day to day, you just take it as it comes and it's good fun."

Psyche: "It is a progressive thing and I don't think it's good to plan too far ahead. We just grab each opportunity as it comes along."

Chris: "At one point I'd vowed never to get into a band ever again. This has been worthwhile enough and creative enough to



JAMES CUMBOCTV

warrant the time and effort. I enjoyed Flag Day a lot, it was good fun at the time, it was an experiment more than anything. Dave's a very persuasive bloke, it was him that talked me into getting back into the whole thing, he even bought me flowers." (Chris has got a girlfriend).

Psyche: "All the band stay sober before we play, we drink afterwards. If you're there and you're getting paid you've got to do a bit for the audience, you may as well let them get their money's worth and it's so embarrassing cocking up on stage."

Psyche: "At the moment we've got a company we're working with, they're a sort of promotion company called East Anglian Sound and Lighting, they've just got some Norwich gigs for us. They do all the work for you, you just turn up with your backline and drums and plug in."

Chris: "They came down to the cellar and had a fiddle with our PA, they adjusted just a few things and it sounded really good and I think they know what they're up to. They're looking for more local bands to work with."

Psyche: "The next issue of Home Studio Recording (one of the Music Maker stable) has a review in it of our first demo with Tony and none of us sent it in so we don't know how the hell they got it. It was a reasonable review, luckily, but it is curious."

Chris: "When Flag Day appeared in the final of the Newmarket Cabaret Competition for some reason Crossland appeared in the Melody Maker gig guide (as playing at the competition) and we'd love to know who did that."

Psyche: "It seems to happen quite a lot as someone sent in a tape to International Musician and we didn't know about it until a friend pointed it out. They just wanted to get rid of the tape I guess."

Chris: "We're a bit traditional aren't we. If a group can't get up on stage and do their songs live, I think it's a bit sad. But that's where it's been for a long time from Bobby Vee to Jason Donovan. You can't do anything better than play as much as you can live. It does wonders for a band, it's very healthy."

Psyche: "We're trying to stay a good sounding band in this interview but we could blow it at any moment ..."

And Chris blew it: "Basically I'm Jason Donovan."

Richie: "At recent gigs he has been likened to Jason Donovan, not talentwise ..."

Psyche: "Couldn't you make the photo bigger and just leave in the good bits?" No!

Steve Hartwell





CHRIS HOGGE

No Dakota is George Taylor.

## NO DAKOTA

"I went to school at Wymondham College (near Norwich). I didn't play at all at school. I had a bass guitar towards the end of my school career, but I never did anything. In my year out I did all this design work for a recording studio in Norwich - I had done my very first single cover for Backs Records when I was 16 - and he offered studio time. I demo'ed there in the summer of '85 with the intention, in the back of my mind, of getting into a band in Cambridge when I came up - I'd played in Norwich once as No Dakota.

I had prior knowledge of Cambridge: my brother had been up 6 years before. In fact, I came up when I was 13, and had a very paralytic weekend: all I can really remember is this night when we went to see 9 Below Zero at the Corn Exchange - a complete noise - and we ended up trying to sober each other up on the roof of the Cripps Building in St. Johns.

When I came up in October 1985 (Fitzwilliam College), I was in a band within a week - Mr Creosote: they were Fitz-based, I answered their advert for vocalist wanted. It was a really good year, the band were complete shite - limp funk rubbish dance music - but it was a storming success in the colleges. The competition we had was Red Army Choir and President Reagan Is Clever: PRIC had the odd-pop end of it, we had the dance end, and Red Army Choir had the social conscience end. We had the college circuit to ourselves, really. But at the end of the year, it started breaking up and I wanted to get back to the No Dakota thing. No Dakota had always been my idea, like Kirk Brandon's Spear Of Destiny, or Roddy Frame's Aztec Camera. The other thing was that I got really lazy fronting a band - I think I wrote about two verses in that whole year.

No Dakota, a hard bass-drums-guitar Jam-type trio, did three gigs which went down in quality, and it became more of a recording project. I did a demo at the beginning of '87 in Gary Eutcher's studio at the bottom of Mill Road, and then virtually shelved No Dakota until 1988, when I finished college, although we did apply (unsuccessfully) to enter the 1987 and 1988 Rock Group Competitions.

From July to December 1988, I was recording in London, initially with Mark (Setterfield, guitarist with No Dakota). We wasted a lot of time and money (£1800) because we went in, saying "this is

going to be an album": it was a completely different psychological ballgame, because the studio were saying, "right, this is not a demo, we're going to get it right", and it became over-tight and difficult to work. We wasted a lot of time doing three or four mixes, and in some of the final stuff, it really showed. We finished up with 9 over-produced songs. Looking back, it does sound very lush - there's some really nice things in there, but it doesn't hold together, and there's no soul to it. It's got that Tears For Fears feel about it: you can stand back and say "God, that's clever", but so what?

I'd met Boo at this stage because I wanted to ask him about the Backs album, how he'd done 'Walking The Ghost...', because that's what we were going for - an independent release. In fact, Boo did some stuff for us: he did guitar on 'Think Of England'. I wanted him to sing mainly. I think he did it because he was genuinely interested in the project. The second time he came down he did that (vocal) stuff on 'Colour At Night', which I think is brilliant. We really enjoyed working on that, and then I asked him to work through 'Colour At Night', because at that stage Mark had gone to Halifax (Nova Scotia) and I didn't have a guitarist to work with, so I couldn't really do anything with a lot of song ideas. It's quite strange, but all the No Dakota music has been based around who the guitarist was - my very first demo had a folk guitarist, then I had a classical guitarist, then Mark, who had a 12 string folk background but also liked the chopped David Byrne high funk style. After he left, I've worked with Boo and Calum (MacColl), and they're very similar but much more proficient as guitarists. I think that's why my songwriting's got a bit better, because I just write on the bass, I'm now writing more with the voice suspended over the bass line. I'm thinking much more in semi-chordal ways now, but everything is usually finished off by the guitarist. If there's no guitarist, there's No Dakota!

I hawked the album around from last December to March this year, and it created quite a lot of interest with record companies. Chrysalis were interested and said they liked it, but I made a cardinal mistake - to keep them interested, I thought it sensible to say I'd be doing some stuff with Boo quite soon - which we were - but it was a naive thing to say, because the next time I rang them up they said they weren't sure about the album, but they would like to hear what I'd been doing with Boo. We'd had one day working together, but the second day was a bit of a

## NO DAKOTA



disaster, because Boo had forgotten the chords of the song we'd worked on the previous day. Then in the last ten minutes of the session, he said he'd got his idea called 'Out Of This World' (current single), and in ten minutes we wrote that song. Things really didn't happen off the tape, and I got quite despondent. I was still ringing Chrysalis - because they'd been the most interested - and they still kept saying they'd like to hear some other stuff, and finally I thought I'm not really going to lose anything, so I said it was a question of money, we'd do the songs if they would pay for the recording. Mandy White of Chrysalis said we could use their demo studio, so we went in, and I took my engineer from the other studio, which was a very wise move because their engineer was out most of the time. We all went in there and worked our arses off for two days. We were pleased with the result.

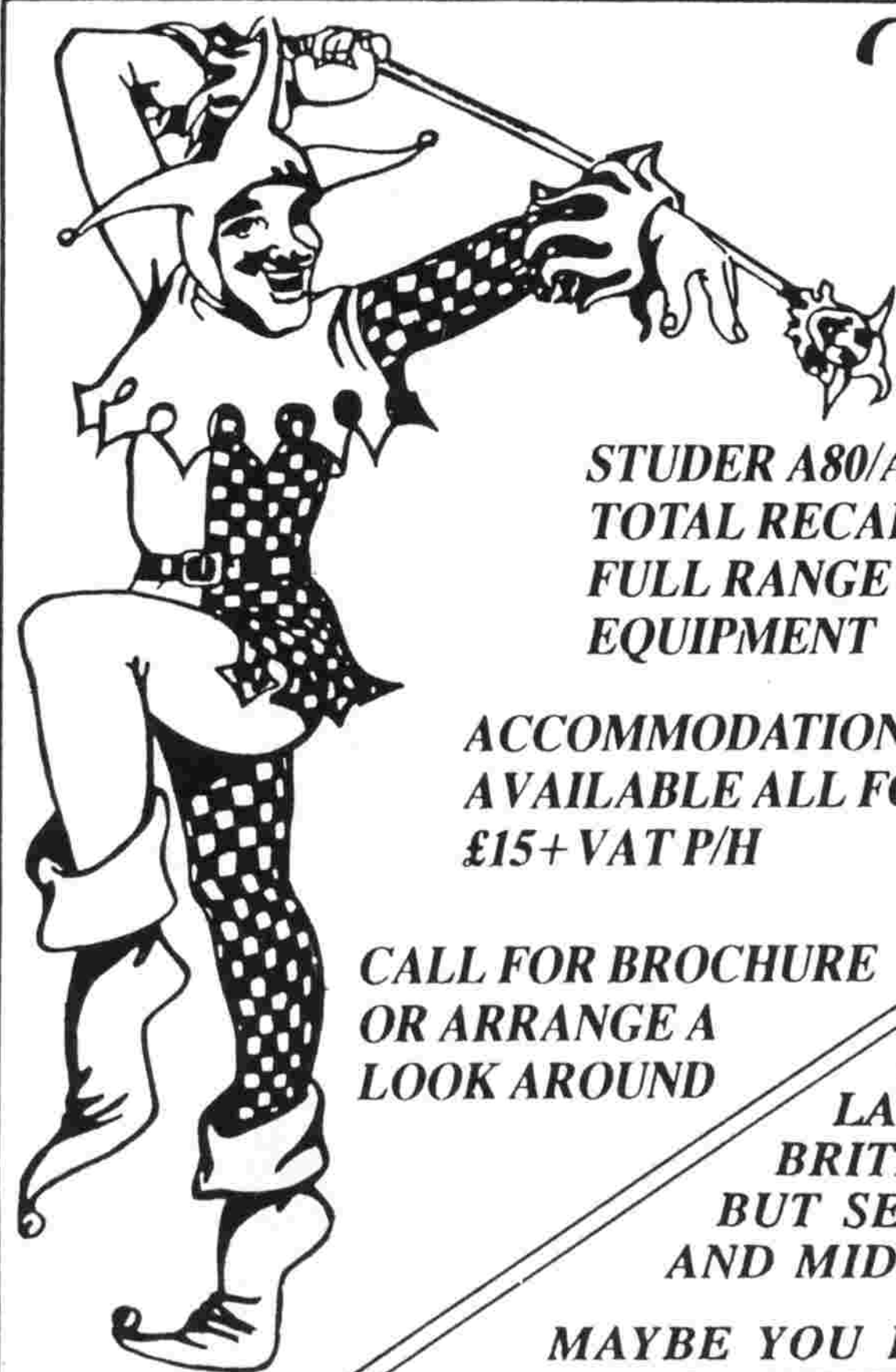
The following week Mandy White rang up to say they really liked the tape. Then the next day she rang back and said "well, what are you going to do, then?". Typical of their attitude - it's like somebody knocking on your door, you open it and they say "yes?". Anyway, she sent the tape to other people. Derek at Backs liked it, but for some reason we didn't do anything about it for a month, and then it dawned on me that if he liked it, then we should put it out. So I went down to Backs and arranged a deal. But it's taken a long time - it was due out at the end of August, but the pressing plant fucked it up and we had to re-cut it.

We're doing some dates with The Bible. We're playing Norwich and Cambridge and if we do the whole tour, we'll play Yorkshire and Manchester, as well. I'm playing acoustic bass and singing, and I've got Richard Heacock on violin, Calum on guitar and Mark Russell as a stand-up drummer. It'll be very stark, very minimal. We want to present the A&R people with something different. I don't want to clutter up the songs, I want to show there's some tight songwriting which can stand up to really violent arrangements. I know Calum is itching to see what some of the songs will sound like after we've ripped the shit out of them. The problem we're up against at the moment is that we need professional musicians and there's no money. If people like Calum and Mark have got musical projects with pay to work on, we have to fit around what they are doing. I'm trying to write a set that, if necessary, Richard and me can go out and do. But a publishing deal is what we're going for. If we get a deal and things look like they're going to pay for themselves, then hopefully there'll be a bit more commitment.

'No Dakota'? - it's a mis-heard song lyric, a bastardisation of "strange is your language, I have no decoder". It stuck, partly because it's alliterative, also because I thought it just didn't mean anything."

George Taylor IS No Dakota.

PHIL JOHNSON



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# The Cherrytree Festival, Peterborough

Now an integral part of the annual Woodston Weekend event, The Cherrytree Festival fills the gap left by the demise of Peterborough's Lazy Sunday Afternoon outdoor event, which used to be held each year in the town's precinct, and provided local bands with a rare opportunity to play in front of a wider (and larger) audience than they are normally accustomed to - as, indeed, Strawberry Fair does for Cambridge's local bands.

The Cherrytree Festival raises money for the Cot Death Appeal Fund, and is sponsored by the Papa Luigi Pizza Despatch. Music apart, the highlight of the afternoon is the orgiastic pizza eating competition - definitely not for the squeamish!

The entire event takes place in one large oblong-shaped marquee, with a stage for the bands at one end, a bar and a barbecue at the other, and - Strawberry Fair veterans, please note - tables and chairs filling the central space, thus allowing the audience to eat, drink and watch the bands in relative comfort.

With nine bands each performing half-hour sets within an eight hour span, not many will have the staying power to see all the bands perform - I missed out on This Replica, Sebacious Border and Stormed. A feature of this year's line-up was, with one notable exception, the complete absence of all the established Peterborough bands: rather curious, for what is now becoming one of the city's top rock events.

TALK MY LANGUAGE are a new young "contemporary rock" band, from the northern reaches of the Peterborough district. I personally find it very sad to see youngsters who have an ability to play

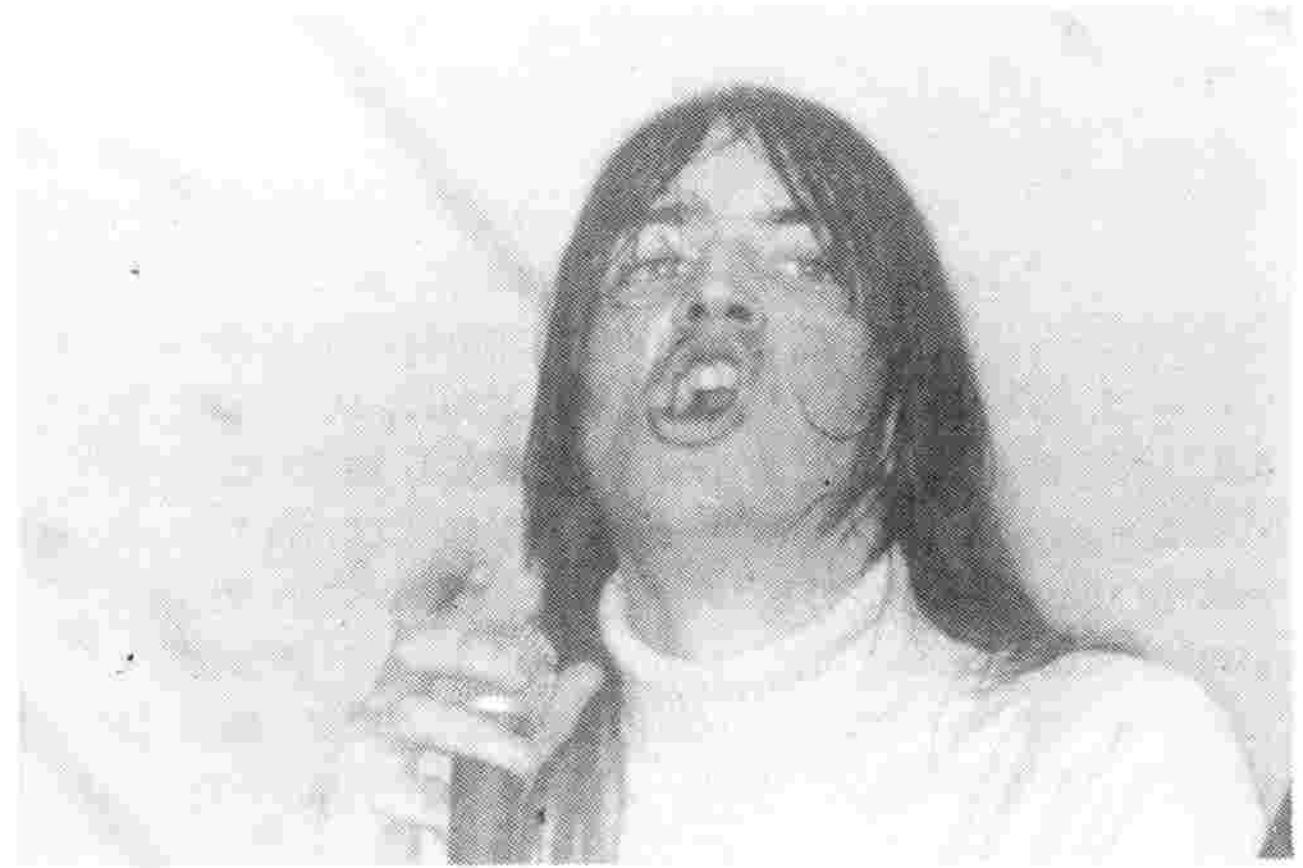


musical instruments, but appear to be unable to make any statement of personal expression outside the confines of Radio 1's 'musak' formula. This band has the potential to step into the shoes of Huntingdon's late (but not lamented) The Principle. Talk My Language really must stop listening to their parents' Fleetwood Mac albums, and loosen up - they're much too serious for such a youthful band.

At this point, I should mention that the comperes for this festival were Pete and 'Del', the Pleasure Heads' twin strikers, and they were in top form throughout the day, with their witty verbal interplay and corny gags.

Next band on stage, THE JEM WATSON QUARTET (trumpet, keyboards, bass and drums), provided some cool jazz sounds, which gave a pleasant, laid-back feeling on a warm sunny afternoon.

We now came to the infamous pizza eating contest, and I can tell you that it'll be a long time before I look a pizza in the eye again. Who better to follow that than NUTMEG, the ideal band for an occasion like this? This was probably the best set I've ever



seen from them - and the crowd really loved it. Tom Dalpra mesmerised the half-dozen or so under 10 year olds sitting in front of the stage, and he even enticed the Pleasure Heads comperes to come on stage and take backing vocals on '(I can't



get no) satisfaction'. It's difficult to see where Nutmeg go from here: if anything 'big' was to have happened to them, then, logically, it should have happened after winning last year's Cambridge Rock Group Comp., but a combination of naivety on their part and let-downs from Polydor Records and the Asgard Agency prevented this happening. But the Nutmeg of '89 is not the Nutmeg of '88 - there's a new found maturity which suggests that a re-appraisal of their potential would be worthwhile. All they can do now is to keep doing what they do best - performing live - and hope that their forthcoming self-financed LP will attract some media interest.





PENELOPE TREE are a new(ish) Peterborough band (although some of them live as far apart as Corby and Birmingham). Named after a '60's fashion model, they have a contemporary guitar/pop sound, some interesting songs and an exceptional singer in Sue, whose unusual voice at times reminds me of Cocteau Twins' Liz Fraser. Definitely a band I want to see again.

I'm sorry I can't say the same for PURE MANIA, yet another newish Peterborough group, who, according to the programme notes, play "their own brand of energetic, guitar based pop/rock", and whose songs "reflect the desperations of being young, and have a hint of concerns for '60's cult influences"! Well, there's a lot of



energy there - misdirected, in my opinion - and mock-anger, but what does it all amount to? Tired music well past its 'sell by' date. At the end of their set, the drummer kicked over his drumkit - phew, rock'n'roll!

I can't recollect having seen WAR DANCE play two consecutive gigs with the same line-up. In their relatively short life, they must have gone through at least three drummer changes and two rhythm guitarists. Tonight they were back to their three piece format -



Gizz on lead guitar/vox, Andy on bass and vox, and Spike on drums. I don't know whether or not they intend to recruit another guitarist, but there's always going to be a problem in finding someone with character and personality sufficient enough to stand up with two such positive people as Andy and Gizz. Referring to the programme notes yet again, War Dance "have attempted to push back the barriers of thrash metal. By using influences from all corners of the musical spectrum, they have avoided the pitfalls and blind alleys of some of their generic contemporaries." Their performance tonight endorsed that philosophy. With most thrash bands, everything's in terms of black and white: with War Dance, there's a constant element of subtle shading. Their frequent

tempo changes may make it difficult for the local moshers to slip into a groove, but it certainly makes for interesting listening. Have you ever watched Gizz's slim, pliable fingers dance over the frets? I don't think I've ever seen such fluidity of movement - a visual fascination in itself. Most of War Dance's songs are of epic proportions, in terms of both construction and running time. 'Enemy Mine' continues to be the high point of their set, but tonight I was also taken with a new (to me) song 'Barriers', a virtually acoustic song with a tune that might have come straight out of the John Lennon songbook. A reworking of 'Ghosts Of Empire' saw Spike move up stage and tap out the rhythm on bongos: just when you think you've got to grips with the new arrangement, War Dance change course again and take it back into the thrash metal format. It's this sort of surprise that, for me, makes War Dance an eminently watchable and listenable band. They've been on the verge of sorting out a recording deal for some time now - until that happens, we have to be content with the occasional tape release (see review of 'The Whisper Becomes A Scream' elsewhere). A satisfactory conclusion to five hours at the Cherrytree Festival.

PHIL JOHNSON

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TIM GEORGE

# THE NIGHT JARS

The NIGHTJARS have been on the wing for almost a year now, and have of late been kicking up quite a stir. Scene & Heard's newest recruit Peter Garner, is despatched to uncover their story.

"We needed a name quite urgently and as I was looking through the Observers Book Of Birds, I saw this one called a Nightjar which I thought was quite an interesting name, 'a mysterious bird of the night'"

Vocalist John Lindsell pauses for a drink while explaining the band's humble origins. "It was also connected with evil and known as the goatsucker - but we thought Nightjar was a bit more pleasant."

We're huddled in the beer garden on a chilly evening talking to the latest band to emerge from the tail end of a 5 year Huntingdon indie-pop explosion. The Nightjars are the result of the sudden demise of agit-popsters Red Over White and noise-bowls The Giant Polar Bears. The basic line-up of Bren (guitar), Dave W (bass) and Dave F (drums) has recently been augmented by astonishingly young thrash guitarist Michael.

"The indie scene at the moment is just a huge premature ejaculation really, a big disappointment", continues John. "The 'pop' songs we write, of which there are only 2 in our set, are more of a pisstake cos we write nasty songs. 'Catherine' is certainly as good a song as any indie band who've made it, in my opinion. We played with The Weather Prophets as the Polar Bears and I thought they were the biggest load of offal since Bernard Matthews cleaned out his fucking turkey shed after last Christmas. They were just arrogant big nosed twats. You ask anyone round here who's the best band - The Nightjars, Polar Bears or even the Charlottes! We're not very technically proficient, tight or slick but I believe in the songs and we always give it 150%."

Brendan: "I think the band has a lot more personality than any I've been in before. We're all writing better and much stronger songs. They shouldn't be compared to the songs on tape but people are in for a surprise."

The Nightjars debut cassette 'The Waiting Room' was recorded at Flightpath months ago and is already into a 3rd pressing. It's rumoured to be being bootlegged at a faster rate than it's selling.

John: "The 6 tracks on that tape are the best I've ever had anything to do with. It all went really well. Tim Harding did a superb job as usual and we did our best to put together a good sleeve with photographs because packaging and presentation are really quite important."

So what bands do the Nightjars rate locally? What influences their writing and style?

Dave W.: "I wouldn't like to list any influences because we'll just end up getting labelled."

Bren: "Well having not spent much time in the country recently, it's hard to say but there has been a noticeable decrease in

bands. They all seem to fade away into the plasterwork and there's no new creative talent coming through anywhere. In a sense it's a damn good opening for someone like ourselves."

John: "Locally I'd rate Turtle Noise; Dave Jordan is far and away the best guitarist I've heard since I saw Will Sergeant and that's no condescending statement. I just wish he played with The Nightjars. Jacob's Mouse are very good. An interesting bunch of nice blokes and gals. Nutmeg and Stormed are brilliant entertainment. They're much better at singing than me but I give it just as much as they do on stage, although I find their songs dull. Nationally I really love The Senseless Things - their singer is brilliant, so charismatic. He's really cuddly but he looks as though he needs a good bath and tucking up in his bed, bless him. Mega City 4 are just as good. Also Inspiral Carpets and The Fall. We're not a band who wants to go out there blowing whistles - Level 42 did that 7 years ago. I think that someone ought to come up with more originality than that. This band WILL play in toilets if they're big enough!"

What about recent comments about 4/5ths of the Nightjars being laid back?

Bren: "Too many drugs! No seriously we're not laid back. It's just difficult when you've got a lead singer leaping around everywhere. If you leap around as well then there's bound to be a collision somewhere, so somebody's got to stand still."

Dave W.: "If I leap around I can't play my guitar anyway. And I'd rather I was playing my guitar than leaping around not playing it. It'd sound pretty silly!"

John: "People just won't come and see you if you're crap - they're not interested."

So audiences are of utmost importance to the Nightjars then?

John: "I think people appreciate the way we treat them. We try to get as many as possible to see us. Bus trips, mini-buses, taking them in cars etc. It's all a great family affair. They're great people and I'm deeply honoured by the amount who do come along. We pulled 300 in a backward little place like Ramsey. Without people like that backing you up, you're nobody."

And what of the future?

John: "Well mainly it will be a case of trying to persuade Brendan to stay in this country and not leave for Australia! We're recording a new tape for early December called Krakowa, a Polish medieval city. We're gigging around Cambridge, then Harlow and onto Nottingham. We'll also be getting some new material together."

Bren: "You'll be able to see the different influences in the band coming out in different ways. We're all contributing to the writing process."

John: "I don't know how long the band will last. All I know is that when it finishes we will still be the best of friends. There'll be no backstabbing, no knives in backs. No band is worth that."



# TRIBE OF DAN



STEVE GILLET

Tribe Of Dan is a bit of a strange animal really. It's regularly a three piece band and is an occasional solo performer, and theoretically it could be a 99 piece orchestra. They're a little like people - very unpredictable.

When Essex-based Back To Jordan decided to call it a day, Dan Donovan wanted to carry on making and playing his music but without the restrictions of a fixed band. So sometimes Dan performs on his tod (no pun intended), and sometimes with a band.

He explained: "In some situations, people want an acoustic thing and it's nice to be able to take what I do into that situation. I think I prefer playing with a band but in some cases that isn't the best thing to do. There's this club in Brixton called 'Holy Joe's' and I'm sure a band would be too big to play in there because it's only a little cellar. I've played bigger places with the acoustic, like that Corn Exchange gig with Nutmeg. It was hard work but I enjoyed it."

That's great but let's go back a step. What sort of music do you play?

"I don't know. It's not heavy but people who like heavy music like it and it's not gothic but you get the odd goth who likes it. It's a little bit Stones-ey, a heavier version of the Stones with lots of guitars. I like Dylan so I'm sure that creeps in as well."



CAROL DONOVAN

What do you write songs about?

"Anything that affects me really. I tend not to write songs about happy situations, which doesn't mean that my songs are all doom-laden and gloomy, but things that upset me, such as world issues creep into my songs. There are also songs about love, relationships, and faith. I don't think there's any one song about any particular subject. Having said that, I wrote 'Cooking Pot' after reading a bit in the Bible which seemed to be talking about the South African situation and Apartheid, so that was the inspiration for that. So in a sense that song is about South Africa but it's also much broader than that. It's about all sorts of situations where that sort of thing is happening."

Dan is an instantly likeable person. Always cracking jokes and larking around. I put this to him.

"You think I'm an idiot don't you. You're embarrassed by me." I told him that I wasn't embarrassed by him but that I did think he was an idiot. He went on:

"I think it's important. I never felt that I could fool around in Back To Jordan. I mean we had a laugh but it was a band decision on everything. With Tribe Of Dan it's different because it's only really me and if the others don't like it, then it's tough."

And there we ran out of time. We shot off to the Grad Pad where Dan was supporting Ben Okafor (the band that John 'Scrapper' Wroe manages).

Tribe Of Dan is a living, changing, moving and growing thing. Living culture - like a mushroom.

NICK WELSH



Dan Donovan · Illustrator

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## TRIBE OF DAN

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# BILL WYFRONTS' DIARIES

Dear Worshippers,

When Scene And Heard asked if they could publish an extract from my diary I thought, yeah why not. Lets show all the fans how I really live. Money, glamour, and underage nubile chicks, are all things you associate with making it big in the music scene; but being globally worshipped is not a bed of roadies, you know. Just remember, even humungously well-hung rockstars have their bad days.

Wednesday 22nd August

What a really wicked hangover. Shit it was 'orrible. I lay in the bed whimpering for a bit and then very slowly moved my head to one side jus' like this, and my brain sort of slid inside my skull like a raw egg in a frying pan. Then I saw myself in the ceiling mirror and did what Mick calls a spontaneous projectile vomit. That stopped me moaning I can tell you. It was just like on that horror movie ... you know the one where the little girl's head swivels round making this scrunchy noise and she vomits this long green jet. There's a vicar in there somewhere as well. Nah. Can't remember the name. So I'm lying there feeling a little fragile and the old iron heart is ticking and clunking like a time bomb. I thought I was a gonner. Anyway, Mrs K. hears the hacking and groans and hurtles in and pours a pick-me-up into my shattered carcass. Thank you Mrs K. I said. (I like to be polite to her). You saved my life again.

Mrs K.'s like a mother to me. She's the only person in the world, apart from Mandy and Mick, that I really like. It's funny how they all begin with M isn't it. Mandy, Mick and Mrs K. I never thought of that before. But all things considered I've treated Mrs K. bloody well over the years. I let her out every month to go and visit her boys in 'Her Majesty's'. I paid for all Mrs K.'s operations and everything but I'm not a soft touch. She has to play by the rules. If she had her own way she wouldn't even bother to shave but I have to draw the line somewhere. I mean, what if a journalist or someone comes round and is met at the door by a 6 foot housekeeper wearing designer stubble and a frock. Doesn't look good for yours truly does it? I mean I'm getting enough grief as it is without looking like the director of the Rocky Horror Show.

I began to feel a bit better, crawled into the jacuzzi and sat there watching a video for a couple of hours. It was about this band called Spinal Tap, which I think I've heard somewhere before. They were crazy. I suppose when you become a recluse like me then you miss out on a lot of what's going on in the music scene, but when I get to hear about new rockstars like Sid Vicious I get depressed. When most of those blokes weren't even born when you were humungous, what's the fucking point, you know? Mandy tells me I'm just being paranoid but she's too young to know what she's talking about. Anyway, there was this great scene in the vid where the band are at a gig and the set was like some wild Stonehenge. It reminded me of some of the gigs we used to do. I phoned down to my manager, Rosenbloomstein, said get me every record they ever produced. They're crazy, I want the lot. He kind of snorted like an addict and said he would see what he could do. See what he could do! This bloke takes 10% of all the royalties and at least 50% of Mrs K. and says he'll see what he can do? That made me really mad. I jumped out of the jacuzzi, pulled on a pair of Y-Fronts and collapsed in a heap on the shag. Yeah, yeah. I know, I know. I'm fooling no-one but myself. All those years at the top, being undulated by fans across the globe



is catching up with me. I felt terrible.

I was just going to phone up for a peanut butter and scrambled egg sandwich when this geezer trots straight into my room. He wore a pair of those really thick glasses that made his eyes look like huge jellyfish and gives me this horrible stare. 'Ello' says I, really calm and fumbling around by the bed for the alarm bell. 'Who are you.' This bloke just gives me a really manic grin and I think gawd I know what the Queen must have thought when that nutter trotted into her room. 'My name is Dr Killmore', he says. 'Mrs K. asked me to drop round to see how you're getting on.' She really finds these quacks old Mrs K. He wrote me out a four page prescription for some dodgy pills and potions and even asked if I needed a set of hypodermics. That's what I call a National Health Service.

After popping a couple of green ones I left Dr Killmore in the lab downstairs cutting a few cocktails and went in search of someone to aggravate. I felt mean, and Rosenbloomstein was going to know it. I ambled along to the office where there was this blonde chick filing her nails and shouted at her for a bit which didn't really please her. So I told her she was sacked and she just looks up from her nails and says who the fuck are you? I mean Jesus. Who are these people? Where was she in '66. Where was she when we were rocking the fucking planet? That made me even meaner. I finally found Rosenbloomstein lying in the zebra skin lounge, wearing these pathetic little black fishnet trunks, with his white blubbery belly spilling out. I punched him about a bit because he looked such a pillock and he just sort of lay there like a beached whale. Then when I'd run out of breath he told me that he'd spoken to the manager of Spinal Tap, you know that totally wild group and he said that after the drummer died they'd reformed under the name of Kylie Minoque or something. Get it! Get it! I screamed. I was getting kind of excited.

Rosenbloomstein phoned the DJ and told him to put it on in the pool area. Man it was crazy. I just lay in the pool all afternoon, like that kid in that movie, you know the one. It's with Dustin Hoffman, who gets really pissed off and rogers his old man's friend's wife and hangs out by the pool wearing mean shades. Anyway I lay around for a bit like Dustin listening to Kylie and the Minogues and just getting totally off on it. I might give them a buzz sometime and get them over to do a jam session or something.

By 6 o'clock I was totally knackered because of all the musical concentrating, so Mrs K. carried me up to bed and brought me some alphabet spaghetti on toast. I like the 'M' ones best, but you never get more than three or four in a tin, and that really fucks me off. We sat up in the superkingsize watching some old Magic Roundabout vids and just, you know, shooting the breeze. But what a totally wild day! I don't know how I can keep up the pace-maker, you know. Maybe I'll get Dr Killmore to give it a service or something ... yeah ... that's what I'll do. If I get the time .. yeah.



# THE BLACK SKY

In our last issue, our Peterborough correspondent referred to The Black Sky as the town's "knee in the groin rockers". It didn't start like that however.

MARK (throat): "The main aim was to be a goth band. We'd seen The Hunters Club down Rock City (Nottingham) and we thought we could be better than them. We got accused of being a Joy Division rip-off because of my vocals - there wasn't any growling then, and I used to sing in a deep Ian Curtis voice."

LEE (guitar): "Mark and me had been chuntering about starting a band for quite a while. Our girlfriends got fed up of hearing about it and told us to stop pissing about and start it. This was in September 1987. We wrote a couple of songs, found our first bass player, Tim, and then Graham (drums) came up in November."

MARK: "Our first gig was at The Peacock in April 1988. We had nine or ten songs. We were supposed to be playing down The Crown, but the night before the gig the landlord rang up and said he'd got the decorators coming in. We'd already postered all over town - we'd gone mad on posters and leaflets - and we were panicking, trying to find another venue. In the end we got The Peacock, but we didn't get paid."

GRAHAM (aka Drug): "The place was packed out. For our first gig, it was quite frightening."

MARK: "We were probably the first alternative band to play there: they usually stick to covers bands. We shocked the established bands in Peterborough when we first emerged. It was a cliquey scene - we're working class, none of us are arty-farty. A lot of the other bands had been to college - student types - but we're from totally different backgrounds; it was a real kick up the arse for them. They've tried to ignore us ever since, but it's not worked. We've now got a hard core of fans who travel anywhere to see us. We've got a relationship with them, like The Mission and New Model Army have with theirs."

LEE: "But not as many! For about the first sixteen months, we didn't get any press coverage in Peterborough. We kept ringing up with gig info., and they'd put it in wrong. If we were playing on Friday, they'd say we were playing on a Saturday. It wasn't until we promoted the Dawn After Dark gig that they had anything nice to say to us."

MARK: "The classic thing about that was that, after the previous cock-ups on dates, we decided not to tell the local gig guide at all. They picked it up on hearsay and put it in the local paper, except that it wasn't Dawn After Dark, it was Cry Before Dawn."

GRAHAM: "A month later, they wrote we'd supported the Blow Monkeys, when it had been Gaye Bykers On Acid."

How did you get involved in promoting (and supporting) Dawn After Dark?

MARK: "A mate of ours likes Dawn After Dark, and he wrote to them. They were looking for places to play, and he suggested they should play in Peterborough. We promoted the gig and lost money on it."

LEE: "Everyone moans in Peterborough about nothing happening, so when someone gets off their arse and does something, they don't support it."

MARK: "If the venue (Fleet Community Centre, Fletton) hadn't been so dear, we'd have broken even. Only about 150 people turned up; we've had more than that at our Christmas gigs with The Brides at The Peacock."

LEE: "We'd be lying if we said that we weren't promoting the gig for ourselves as well, though."

GRAHAM: "We were hoping people would come and have a look at us



as well."

MARK: "We burnt our fingers. It takes a long time to build money up. All the band's money is a bit precious, we don't take a penny out of it."

LEE: "We've recovered since, but we'd have been a lot nearer having the money together for a single, if we have to go it alone."

The Black Sky recorded their first demo in May 1988, just six weeks after their first gig.

GRAHAM: "It was a right balls-up."

MARK: "We had stars in our eyes then."

LEE: "It was done at the Music Room in Peterborough, and we did it all too quickly, really. It took the second demo to convince us that the sound in there wasn't good, The Music Room's also very small; we were literally sitting on top of each other - not a comfortable atmosphere. So we decided that, in future, we'll go somewhere else."

MARK: "Both demos were sent off to mostly independent record companies. The second one got a favourable reaction from Red Rhino, but they went bust a couple of months later."

LEE: "We're recording at Flightpath for a full weekend in November."

MARK: "It'll definitely be a vinyl release. If we don't get a deal on it, we'll do it ourselves."

LEE: "We'll be putting 120% into this one, to get it right."

Ian Taylor recently joined The Black Sky and became their fourth bass player:

MARK: "Our first bass player, Tim, had a good image, always posing and pouting, but he just couldn't play - a real shame."

LEE: "'Shock' our second bass player, lasted three months. He kept wanting to go down the pub."

GRAHAM: "Hell bent on getting pissed."

MARK: "We'd be practising all the time, trying to improve ourselves, and he'd leave halfway through to go down the pub."

LEE: "Terry, the third bass player, left for business reasons. His work made it difficult for him to get to soundchecks."

MARK: "We put an advert in the local paper for a bass player, but nobody replied to it. It was getting closer and closer to our next gig, and I was talking to Pete Sleight (local promoter) who said he knew someone who could play bass (Ian) so I rang him up."

IAN: "It was funny, really, because we were all at Rock City, watching Faith No More, and Mark was going on about wanting a bass player. I didn't know if Mark was serious, whether Terry was leaving or not, so I didn't do anything."

LEE: "We don't know what influence Ian's going to have on the band yet, he hasn't been with us long enough."



MARK: "He's improved the band's image, though."

LEE: "Ian must have a terrible time, 'cos he wears make-up. But you've got to admire the blokes bollocks, because he likes to look like that, and goes out and does it."

Some thoughts on The Peterborough Effect:

MARK: "I'm the only original Peterborough boy in the band. I can remember how it used to be. It's now the classic Yuppie town. Our music doesn't match Peterborough, it's hard and brutal. Twelve years ago, when you went in the pubs in town, you knew everybody. If you had a punch-up with somebody, you knew who they were, where they came from, and (if you wanted revenge) where to go. Now, you don't know anyone. Queensgate has ruined the centre; it's completely characterless, just like the people. Everyone wanders around, looking exactly the same. Boring, bland people - I despise them!"

The virtues of hard work and team work:

LEE: "Everything in the band is done democratically. We do have a lot of arguments, but it's healthy because you get all opinions heard, and it works out to the advantage of the band."

MARK: "There's no silent partners here."

LEE: "We put 10 to 15 hours a week into the band, in one form or another."

MARK: "Whole weekends are spent doing nothing else. All leisure time goes out of the window, we're totally dedicated."

LEE: "Mark's obsessed with it. The rest of us can shrug off anything that goes wrong. If things don't go how Mark expects them to go, it can have a worse reaction on him. He can be unapproachable at times."

GRAHAM: "I'm in it for a laugh. I enjoy what I'm doing. If, in two years' time, we make it - great; if we don't, well at least we tried."

LEE: "We're all geared up to believing that something will happen next year."

MARK: "But it's down to luck, being in the right place at the right time, and who you know."

LEE: "Which suits our philosophy in a way, because if you work hard, play as often as you can, in as many places as you can, then the chances are that sometime, in some place, you'll have the right person there."

PHIL JOHNSON

Since the interview, Graham (drums) has left the band, and has been replaced by Paul Vjestica, who used to drum for a Peterborough '70's punk band, The Doll.

# REVIEWS

## RECORDS

THE CHERRY ORCHARD  
SING SISTER GLORY  
RED HONEY RECORDS 12"

SUMMER would've been a far more appropriate time for the release of The Cherry Orchard's first 'real' disc outing. Jam packed with shimmering guitars, tinkling tambourine and breezy vocals (courtesy of Liz Creasey), it's the sort of record you could put on a lazy Sunday morning in June without annoying the neighbours.

'This Big Love' glides along like a butterfly on a breeze, it's jangly, colourful and boosted no end by Liz's harmonies. 'These Times We Cried' is a lot less graceful. It flounders over



an almost clumsy drumbeat. Singer/songwriter Jason manages to keep the whole thing grooving with his insistent, gravelly voice, and some brilliant use of rock cliché ('C'mon, C'mon!' and 'Yeah!'). 'Pennies Made Of Gold' is the track which really shines out - it's a simple and incredibly gentle pop with soft guitar and softer sentiments!

On the flip side, 'Shining Cadillac' transfer badly from the live freeway to the big vinyl road. Liz has a real chance to show off that wonderful voice, but it's not enough to save a song which never really gets into gear and loses the passion and tension it has live.

I've waited a long time for the Cherry Orchard's first disc, but 'Sing Sister Glory' hasn't won me over completely. Perhaps I'm expecting too much from this fine live band - or perhaps it'll sound one hell of a lot better when summer comes around.

STEPH McNICHOLAS

NO DAKOTA  
OUT OF THIS WORLD  
NOH RECORDS NOH 1

You've got to hand it to them, ALMOST managing to recreate the intros to Pink Floyd's 'Breathe' and Peter Gabriel's 'Red Rain' simultaneously shows good taste, not to say great intentions. 'Out Of This World' is made up of great ambient chord changes with David Gilmour style guitar twangs that wash within and without the Gabriel-esque falsetto cries that dance daintily on the outskirts of the music. It was apparently written with the help of Boo Hewerdine who effortlessly injects some of his facile fluidity which runs constantly and consistently throughout the



song, fortunately managing to bypass any of the 'mainstream miserablism' so prominent in other parts of his work.

The extra tracks underneath reveal a more sinister world, particularly in 'Colour At Night'. The Thomas Lang song 'Injury' creeps into the consciousness at this point, but 'Colour At Night' has the edge with striking touches of strings and saxophone. The final track 'Good' is just that, sounding curiously like an Eno/Lanois collaboration which leads me on to say how effectively the production skills of Jez Coad lend themselves overall, helping to give the record its characteristic feel.

It's hard to say who and what this record is aimed at as it sounds too progressive and ambitious to be a 'hard hitting debut', yet too rootless and removed to pass as a 'major contribution (man)' to any of the pretentious guises that satellite pop music nowadays. Ultimately, 'Out Of This World' seems to have been infected by the hand that makes some music more rewarding when heard in solitude. And the punchline? Don't be caught alone without one.

CHRIS WILLIAMS

NUTMEG

ELECTRIC PUTTY

GROUND RECORDS, NUT 4 (LP/MC/CD)

Well they say you can't beat a bit of hard graft and that's certainly the maxim applicable to Nutmeg judging by this first LP.

Don't be fooled by the arty cover design - it doesn't suit them. Instead you can award them a few Brownie points for hitting the nail on the head with the apt album title.

Although Nutmeg have to be seen to be appreciated in all their glory, the ten songs they have committed to vinyl capture both the spirit of rock and roll and the vibrance of their own live performance. Side 1 rips open with 'I Need You Too' a stop and start raunchy rocker that has Tom screaming his vocals like a desperate man. 'Real Live Wire' likewise is played with verve and enough vigour to guarantee the movement of every muscle in the listener's body (Nutmeg and relaxation just don't go together!). 'You Gotta Go' has a rhythm that drives like the 7.32 to Liverpool Street, and guess what? Side 1 ends with a ballad. 'Wasted Soul' features Tom Dalpra as the great philosopher (stop laughing!) lamenting over the subject that is his trade, the rock and roll lifestyle. The album's one tranquil moment works well.

Side 2 is brim full of rockers including the re-worked 'At The Fair', now complete with gibberish lyrics and extra layers of guitar, making it sound more fun than ever. 'Why You Lie' may

just as well have been recorded on stage, it sounds that live(ly). On the debit side 'Baby Baby' is nothing like as instant as the album's sharper tunes and tends to go on a bit, whilst 'Eternal Love', the closing track, threatens to turn into 'My Generation', an irritating imitation in terms of the structure of the song, and didn't Pete Townshend's anthem say just a little bit more?

Still eight out of ten ain't bad. Credit must go to Minstrel Court studios and in particular to Phil Darke, the engineer for turning Nutmeg into 'Electric Putty'. Every acne covered mixed up adolescent should have some.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

## FLEXIDISC

ARIA SORBONNE

RIGHT TO SAY

FLEXI-DISC

So here it is then, your very own free flexi-disc. I must confess I wasn't sure what to expect from this lot, after all the name gives little away and the band's line-up has been through so many changes they probably had to introduce themselves to each other at the recording session!

To my ears 'Right To Say' is a most commercial slice of pop music, incorporating elements of Depeche Mode, New Order, Human League and one or two more. The main riff sounds like a TV Theme, but which one? I'm sure the band will have the integrity to return all parts borrowed to their respective owners shortly.

For once it's not down to the editors or contributors of S&H to play God and decide the merits or otherwise of a local band's efforts. You've got the record so the verdict is yours. Enjoy it.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

## TAPES

JACOB'S MOUSE

3 track demo tape

Q: What sound does Jacob's Mouse make?

A: A roar.

Jacob's Mouse is a band of four from the Bury St Edmunds area, who, I hope, will shortly be seen on the Cambridge circuit. Their inclusion of a viola in their musical line-up gives them the potential to create a stimulating and unusual sound but that potential has yet to be fulfilled. They are talented and certainly pushing at the conventional boundaries of thrash bands and that can only be admired, but they need some seasoning.

The first track 'Sign' has a chunky, staccatoed base-line and is an excellent grounding for the stylishly strained vocals. The starkness of the lyrics and structure of the song gives it a King Crimson, 'Elephant Talk' feel. The pattern of 'Sign' is broken half way through by the extraordinary crescendo of a noise that sounds like an orgasmic Space-Invasion on helium. Oh please, more, more! It certainly deserves a track in its own right. But, unfortunately 'Skyprint' brings the come-down. As the slowest of







the three tracks this should have been the perfect vehicle for the viola and was presumably put on the tape to show Jacob's Mouse's 'scope'. Big mistake. The viola, which I fear was in need of tuning, sounded well passed its sell by date. The song is weak, and, as if to shoot themselves in the paw, it is numbingly repetitive. Nuff said. 'Enterprise' is the track which IS Jacob's Mouse. It is wildly energetic, played tightly against an anvil hammer drum beat. The sound is loud and gritty with a now perfect balance between an earthy viola and frenzied guitars. The energy of this song is infectious and whilst playing it on the car tape the speedometer registered a respectable 85 out of 100 mph. Jacob's Mouse has a strong identity and a good sound, but please, don't tame the beast.

EMMA FINN

WAR DANCE

THE WHISPER BECOMES A SCREAM

War Dance's third tape release features five songs recorded live on a day in June 1989 in the Netherlands. Normally, recordings of live performance are notorious for their variable quality, and whilst this one is by no means perfect, it is one of the better recordings I've heard and it does capture the vitality and of the power of a typical War Dance set. The tape starts with the band's tour de force (and title of their forthcoming LP), 'Enemy Mine', which encapsulates all that is good about War Dance: it's not only a fine example of their use of tempo changes, but it also highlights Gizz's cross fertilisation of sounds from a wide and diverse range of rock guitar styles (I could swear I detected a touch of the Eagles in there). 'God Machine' could almost be two distinct songs, such is the difference between both halves of yet another live favourite. 'Officially Pronounced Dead' is the only track to have already been released (on their 'Short Sharp Shock' tape), and is probably the fastest song in their set, with one of the most riveting of instrumental breaks. 'Four Minutes', starting and finishing with siren-soundlike guitar, is of course a complete misnomer, for, like its predecessors, it's yet another 10 minutes plus concerto. After the intensity of these four War Dance originals, their version of 'The Boys Are Back In Town' (done as a 'let's get all the bands back on stage' number), brings a much needed respite. With almost 45 minutes of music for a mere £2, this tape is excellent value for money.

PHIL JOHNSON

PENELOPE TREE  
FLOWERS AFTER DARK  
GIFT 001

This month's new name is Penelope Tree, currently based in Peterborough but with band members dotted across the region. The two tracks recorded during the hot lazy summer of '89 are short, sharp and simple slices of indie oriented pop. 'In The Park' features Sue's gorgeous vocals over some nice guitar hooks and basic backing from the boys, akin on a local scale to the Charlottes' less intense beginnings. The split channel vocals during the verses are particularly effective as is the short guitar solo. The whole song is wrapped in a crystal (if somewhat drum heavy) production. 'Fireworks' crashes in fast and furious - all Shop Assistants thrash guitars and wild tambourine, before slowing to a shimmery riff very similar to The House Of Love's 'Hope'. Sue's vocals again stand out breathy and dreamy, but just as we begin to loosen our collars, we're plunged headlong back into the white noise introduction. It's difficult to tell from this tape whether the band are acting as a vehicle for the voice, or whether they're really frustrated rockers who'd love nothing more than turning up their amps and kicking up their own little electrical storm. Either way there's a vast potential market for Penelope Tree, and this comes across as a very impressive debut indeed.

PETE GARNER

MIDWICH CUCKOOS  
3 TRACK DEMO TAPE

A strange hotch-potch from this virtually unknown Cambridge band who have played some cracking, if poorly advertised, gigs in Cambridge and have now disappeared again. The word is that they are taking time off to write and re-arrange their material as a line up change is in the offing. Live the band are a gutsy, energetic four piece, featuring ex-James Dean Quartet drummer Phil Gaze, but the studio sound is much lighter with girly backing vocals and keyboards giving the songs a pop orientated sound than the aggressive almost heavy metal-ish live band.

'Who Wants To Be A Soldier?' is a shimmering anti-apartheid song with a faint Bhundu Boys feel to it. The multi-layered guitar tracks swirl over the 'tight as a ducks arse' rhythm section, guitarist Martin Randle obviously was the busiest man on the day that this was recorded but the strain doesn't show. Strain does show itself occasionally however in Richard Ninds' vocals, but I'd rather put this down to a case of nervousness as in the other tracks he sounds more confident and, more importantly, in tune.

'The Hurting' despite the title, has no resemblance to Tears For Fears, is a chugging, dancable anthem to self reliance although the underlying theme of 'tell me if somebody has hurt Jon and I'll kill them' is a bit worrying. There's some nice guitar work again by Mr. Randle and a rather tasteful solo that I was surprised to learn was played by bassist Tim.

The final track is not the best of the three. 'Just Another Day' is less than volatile, fairly catchy, but over long and not really what the Cuckoos are about. After the more visceral tracks that come before it this song is as bland and unchallenging as a plate of cold haddock.

But never mind, with a few gigs under their belts and some stronger material this bunch will deserve some attention.

BOB CAT



The first thing that struck me when I gave this tape a listen was the similarity in musical styles between RBB, who hail from Royston, and Montreal, the Sixth Form band that went on to become Spiritwalk (RIP).

RBB are melodic rockers with an ear for a catchy tune. They sure know how to pack a punch with their uptempo numbers, and cool things down without sounding limp on the slower songs. Basically then RBB are purveyors of good old fashioned pub rock, with the emphasis unfortunately on old fashioned.



If one were to have to guess as to the year in which their cassette was produced then 1972 would by no means be a conservative estimate. I suppose you could argue that today's seventeen year olds could easily be conned into thinking that the basic 2 guitars, bass and drums line up is something new as there are not many around in the current acid house/hip hop climate. However there remains the nagging feeling that music of this genre is simply old hat, and unless you have the style and panache of Guns 'N' Roses, Iron Maiden etc., you are likely to be dismissed as such. A pity for the likes of RBB as they have the talent if not the sense of direction to get themselves noticed.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

SHRIKE  
6 TRACK DEMO

When I received this tape complete with a fourth generation photocopied tombstone on the cover I realised I was probably dealing with a band that take things a bit seriously, if not deadly seriously. Yes there's certainly a problem here, starting with the first track. As that's the one people listen to first why have Shrike placed 'Pick Me Up' at the start, with a covering note excusing themselves for the awful recording quality? This is hardly a move likely to endear them to A&R men or fanzine editors.

The accompanying advertising blurb promises 'songs (that) are melodic, flowing and well crafted'. What we get in essence are half a dozen exercises in how not to present your case, especially on the vocal front. Take the lyrics away from 'I Will Close My Eyes' and you do have a pretty arrangement of piano, viola and flute, but that's about your lot. The 'harshly delivered lyrics about intense emotional states' - more 'promises' from the advertising men who should have warned us against the sufferer's determination to inflict his own pain on the listeners.

Strike's CV includes a week of shows with slides and poetry at the ADC theatre. A supply of anti-depressants were surely an optional extra.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

Well after God-knows-how-long I STILL can't think of any reasonable comparisons to make with Tribe Of Dan, nice or nasty ones. Good for them, not for me ... Gulp! That means trying to think of something ORIGINAL to say whilst I'm pumping up the word count ... erm ... yeah, well it's like this ... Tribe Of Dan are a bit like that tape of last night's practice, or a spare pair of shoelaces or something, seemingly unnecessary and disposable, but best kept at hand. There is something about these songs that draws you closer leaving a sneaking suspicion that there is actually more to Tribe Of Dan than just a pair of shoelaces. The overall sound is powerful, punchy and pretty crunchy too, although it does step into banality at times, 'Cooking Pot' a case in hand. This song brings out the very worst in 'Trite' Of Dan, which fortunately, for them, there isn't too much of. 'Learning From You' and particularly 'Away From Here' DO come up with the goods, but although it's all very proficient and accessible I think these songs, like a beer, have not travelled well from the BBC studios where they originated. Yeah that's it, a 'Pint' Of Dan please, with all the sparkle but none of the splendour.

CHRIS WILLIAMS

## GIGS

BATTLEZONE / DIGITALIS / TIGERS EYE  
SEA CADETS HALL

A stormy October night in Cambridge, meant that most people didn't bother to venture further than their local pub and this was reflected in the poor attendance at the Sea Cadets Hall. Still, the show must go on...

TIGERS EYE opened, mixing their own castrated rock compositions with some competently rendered covers, proving that they have the necessary musicianship but not, as yet, the songs to match it.

The untimely demise of Infernal Death left the local scene in pitiful need of a decent thrash band. Over the next fifty minutes DIGITALIS showed that they have virtually filled this gap with their cliché-free (or so we were vehemently informed) music to mosh to. The lead singer entertained as he floundered across the stage in a deformed manner to the sound of the dark and sinister riffs. The tongue in cheek 'Marcos Mosh' rounded off the set of the evening.

The raw energy of DIGITALIS might have reminded PAUL D'IANNO of the days when he steered Iron Maiden to the crossroads of metal and punk. Now with BATTLEZONE, D'Ianno returned to Cambridge for the second time within the space of a year. Unfortunately most of the old aggression has drained away and been replaced by a contented mediocrity, which suits his band's American style hard rock. BATTLEZONE soldiered on as the size of the audience dwindled with the departure of some of the Digitalis supporters. I stayed in the faint hope of hearing one of D'Ianno's halcyon days classics, but it wasn't to be.

He left the stage applauding the audience and I couldn't help but like the bloke. However, the thought of what might have been, had he stayed with Maiden, lingered with me long after the lights had gone up and the memory of an indifferent performance had faded.

NEIL WILSON



A disappointing turn out for this 'all thrash' gig: in fact, most of tonight's punters had travelled to Ramsey on the bus from Cambridge which was laid on by the bands. DIGITALIS, who promoted the gig, may well have found themselves out of pocket, but the real losers were those who didn't turn up to witness one of the best ever local metal gigs.

The evening started innocuously enough with a new Cambridge area band, ACROPOLIS. More 'noise' than thrash, their set was erratic, as you would expect from a band playing their first gig. But what they lacked in finesse, they made up for in enthusiasm and I'll even forgive them their rendition of 'Wild Thing'.

This gig was the third occasion on which I've seen DIGITALIS since their debut in the 1989 Rock Group Competition, and the progress they've made in the space of eight months is quite remarkable. They now perform as a four piece, having parted ways with their second guitarist some time ago, but the most significant line up change since their rock comp appearance has been the acquisition of bassist Rick Quillen: his resonant hardcore twanging makes a perfect foil for Steve Bothamley's imaginative guitaring: (listen to the Mozart riffs in 'Fires Of Jealousy'.) Digitalis aren't strictly thrash; there's obviously strong elements in there, but, like Peterborough's Wardance, there's quite a few unexpected tempo changes in their songs. Singer Sim Webb's strong melodic voice is well suited for HM/hard rock, but he showed he could growl with the best of them in 'Carnage', their one and only out-and-out thrash tune. They concluded their tight, well balanced set with a customised thrash version of The Beatles/Isley Brothers 'Twist & Shout', appropriately retitled 'Mosh & Slam'.

ARCANA, on the other hand, dispense with any pretensions of subtlety, and go straight for the jugular with an awesome juggernaut of noise. In fact, the audience were so overawed with the ferocity of Arcana's sound that it wasn't until the third song, Metallica's 'For Whom The Bell Tolls', that the moshers actually budged from their seats. Arcana are now reaping the benefits of regular gigging: John Lander's rasping vocals, Neil Harvey's insistent bass patterns, Chris Nunn's powerful twin bass drums and Phil Barry's driving guitar work all combine to produce a noise of such intensity, the likes of which I've not witnessed since Slayer's set at Rock City, Nottingham, last year. Arcana's performance is essentially a team effort, but I must single out the guitaring of Phil Barry - so powerful and fluid, and yet, during the slower songs - so sensitive, often reminding me of Gary Moore.

On tonight's performance, it will be unforgivable if neither Arcana or Digitalis make the final of next year's Rock Comp., assuming they both enter. But then, what are the odds on there being the usual prejudice by the judges against all forms of metal, be they thrash, heavy or hardcore?

PHIL JOHNSON

BENNY PROFANE / THE CHARLOTTEs / POTTING SHEDS  
THE ARTS CENTRE NORWICH

Norwich's Arts Centre is a converted church, and the atmosphere in the auditorium would ideally suit a goth gig - it's dark, dank, cold and a little eerie. As the name implies, the Centre functions as a multi-purpose Arts venue.

It's reassuring to discover that Cambridge is not unique in having its quota of nondescript bands, if Norwich's POTTING SHEDS are anything to go by (although Madigan redressed the situation somewhat with a workmanlike but interesting performance in AHEC's

Batman a couple of weeks later). It's difficult to find a kind word for their dull, nondescript jangly guitar/synth pop music. Perhaps it's best left as "room for improvement".

THE CHARLOTTEs, fresh from recording their session for John Peel's Radio 1 programme, soon brought the sparse crowd to life with their wall of sound, psychedelic pop tunes. Petra now looks much more comfortable with a guitar, which she uses to good effect on the occasions when it's necessary to fill out their sound. After opening with two up tempo tunes, The Charlotte's get down to playing on their strength with the slower, intense 'Could There Ever Be' and 'Keep Me Down' - for me, the highlights of tonight's set, although the highly dancable 'In My Hat' and 'Venus' (yes, the old Shocking Blue hit) would have won most of the punters' votes. Yet another confident, positive step on the road to fame and fortune: 1990 promises to be an interesting year for the Charlotte's!

BENNY PROFANE, a Liverpool band exiled in London, have been a vinyl favourite of mine for some time, though this was the first opportunity I'd had to see them play live, and I wasn't disappointed. The first thing you notice about the band is their dress and footwear - quite unremarkable and functional, obvious signs of people living on a tight budget. The same description could be applied to their performance - nothing flashy, a very solid, dependable and re-assuring set of catchy guitar pop songs.



Singer Dave Jackson comes over as a younger, tuneful Mark E Smith, but it's Robin Surtees' guitar that gives Benny Profane its distinctive sound. Tonight's set fluctuated between gentle, folk influenced ballads to Fall type rumbles, the high spots being 'Skateboard To Oblivion', 'Stitch That' and the classic single 'Devil Laughing'. Benny Profane aren't going to set the world on fire, but there's a comfortable warm feeling emanating from their music.

PHIL JOHNSON

NUTMEG / THE SENSELESS THINGS / COLOR FACTORY  
SEA CADETS HALL

Power pop made a welcome return to Cambridge as this triple bill bravely tackled the now sadly familiar awful Sea Cadets sound and, on this occasion, some under utilised strobe lighting.

COLOR FACTORY, Ely's latest pop sensations, bounced enthusiastically onstage and launched into a no holds barred confident set. That said, their own material was infinitely better than the several choice Ramones covers that cropped up. The thronging mass below lapped up Color Factory's stage presence and excellent guitar and bass work.

With a vast tour coming up over the next couple of months, THE SENSELESS THINGS, whom most people had obviously turned out to see, surprisingly appeared next on the bill. All smiling faces, Soundgarden T-shirts and loud guitars, they produced some superb



two minute pop gems chock full of melody, harmony, vitality and dynamics. Bordering on thrash metal on several occasions, I spent much of their set trying to work out who 'chiz' was (that their affable little vocalist was referring to after each song.) Along with Mega City 4, The Senseless Things' wall of noise has a very bright future ahead of itself.

At the time I couldn't think of one single band who could have competently followed The Senseless Things but, despite much of the crowd disappearing into the night for air or to throw up the chronic draught 'lager' that the bar eagerly served, NUTMEG coped admirably. Down to a four piece following the departure of Hobbsey, their sound has mutated into a louder, harder rock beast splashed with wah wah and keyboards. Tom Dalpra has restrained his aerobatic antics but still managed to dislodge a guitar lead during a customary run across stage. For some reason known only to themselves, Nutmeg produced a hairy thrash grebo for 'And In England ...' who, in true metal tradition, succeeded in stealing the show, sending the song haywire and dishing out the same 4 letter expletive at every available opportunity. The band ended with 'Eternal Love', a "new song" which seemed to owe more than a nod to the Who's 'My Generation'. In the end you just can't beat originality can you?

PETE GARNER

#### ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND THE ROCK, CAMBRIDGE

Remember Adventure Playground? They're a band that enter The Rock Competition annually only to fall victims of the writers' poison pens, and the contests' judges who have even less time and sympathy for them.

After a couple of cracking performances at the Boat Race, possibly the highlights gig wise of the action-free long hot summer, I decided AP were due for re-assessment. Perhaps I should have remembered that the cosy confines of the recently re-furbished Rock, complete with an expensive new carpet (it's nearly as loud as the bands!), is a far cry from the less salubrious surroundings of The Boat Race.



On entry I'm greeted with AP's version of Dire Straits 'Walk of Life', a note for note cover, played in front of a very small audience - looks like a family and close friends only job. No question AP have come on a bit, in fact the improvement is marked. Ralph's lead guitar is outstanding, Keith Warden's songs stand a fourth or fifth hearing, and the band, as a unit, now sound as one. AP illustrate their instrumental virtuosity with a bunch of covers; 'Let's Stick Together', 'Dancing In The Moonlight' et al. Ominously, the standards, sung by the bass player Mark are received with more appreciation than their own original songs. So having learned to play well and entertain an audience (when they can find one), Adventure Playground are now caught between two stools. Thank goodness for that new carpet.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

#### IAN MCCULLOCH AND THE PRODIGAL SONS / THE CORN DOLLIES CORN EXCHANGE, CAMBRIDGE

I had heard of the Corn Dollies, but that was no preparation for hearing them. The night's support band filled the Corn Exchange with a sense of inspiration and discovery that's impossible to dismiss. The darkness of Crocodilian Bunnymen merged amazingly with the emotional rock experimentalism of Philip Boa; all of this with country loneliness and the pop thrill of the Petrols. It seemed so easy for them, switching and merging styles without ever verging towards anonymity, their style seems truly their own. This is firmly established by the presence of violin, the versatility of which far too few other bands venture or care to exploit. Talent such as this shouldn't be allowed to remain without the greater recognition it deserves.

Having been so enlightened, anxiety pervaded the hall - how will the great man himself manage to follow that? Isn't the company of a superb support band setting the scene for his own demise? Or is he so confident that he can do better? Nobody wanted to be disappointed, but the anticipation of it ran rampant. I couldn't keep scepticism at bay, I hated myself for it, I wanted to see the Porcupine Bunnymen again. So they came on. Mac says "Hello", and it's immediately obvious that this is a 'performance': in the old days it was an 'event', intimate but untouchable. So, Ian and the Prodigal Sons (and it did look like Father and Sons) launched into the set I had imagined Echo and the Bunnymen would have been doing in a couple of years time when I saw them a couple of years ago in New York with New Order and Gene Loves Jezebel. A few songs drifted by and relief came suddenly with the opening chords of 'Rescue'. My heart sank as backing vocals appeared and the chorus-verse-chorus format never became so obvious, literally spelt out with strutting guitar and staccatto bass. I was unhappy. Mac didn't seem to care at that gig 2 years ago, my excuse for forgiving. But he was into it tonight. I was sad, but I couldn't leave, so desperate was I to be proven wrong in my hasty judgements. And I was, thankfully. The intensity of Mac's delivery grew and grew, the Sons grew up before my eyes as individuals no longer the responsibility of their parent, yes things were really falling into place. Darkness has been traded for romanticism, take it or leave it. I chose to take it, I had no choice. And it certainly counts for audience approval. I doubt anybody there will forget the lullaby of 'Candleland', the band enmeshed and crossed in rays of white light, McCulloch illuminated in ruby red, whispering. Throughout the set, his voice was showing the strain, but it was the last night of the tour and the sound man never let it become more than a curiosity. The only other Bunnymen memory to resurface tonight was the 'Killing Moon', all bassed and snared up. Transformed, but not destroyed. With a gig sharply divided into 2 parts, the best saved until last, McCulloch and his Prodigals proved their worth to newcomers and Bunnypeople alike.

Three encores were demanded and very happily performed, Mac even going so far as to shake the hands of grasping fans. He never did that before .... the audience never wanted that before ... has his audience changed too? The intensity of the 'Do It Clean'/'Light My Fire' of the olden-day encore is something I really, really missed, but I shouldn't moan, having been granted instead with covers of New Order's 'Ceremony' and Lou Reed's ("the baron of rock 'n' roll") 'Sweet Jane'. And never before has McCulloch ventured so much into the pop song. Perhaps the influence of the Prodigals? So now I'm going to do something I hadn't anticipated - I'm going to get the album.

AMANDA O'REILLY



# LISTINGS

## Bands

Abraxas - Cambridge 64346  
 Aria Sorbonne - Ely 861150  
 As It Is - Market Deeping 342254  
 Arcana - Cambridge 860460  
 Bible John - Histon 7112  
 The Big Blue - Cambridge 420997  
 Big Blue World - P'borough 47294  
 The Black Sky - P'borough 238163  
 Blind Ambition - St. Ives 494004  
 Blind Mice - Saffron Walden 30645  
 Bogus Renegades - Cam. 842344  
 The Brides - Peterborough 265456  
 The Brotherhood - Cambridge 353006  
 The Charlottes - Huntingdon 433589  
 The Cherry Orchard - Cam. 248058  
 Chill Out - Crafts Hill 81882  
 Colonel Gomez - Ely 740900  
 The Color Factory - Ely 667385  
 Crossland - Ely 664931  
 The Dear Johns - Cambridge 314833  
 Deja Vu - Newmarket 720090  
 The Desmonds - Cambridge 843551  
 4 Fit - Cambridge 62730  
 The Frigidaires - Cambridge 312694  
 The Fruit Bats - Fowlmere 578  
 Gangster - Huntingdon 52951  
 Geneva Convention - Cambridge 860470  
 High Treason - Cambridge 420997  
 House Grinder - Cambridge 872348  
 I Thought I Told You - Haverhill 704452  
 Inflite - Cambridge 65048  
 Jacob's Mouse - Haverhill 61562  
 Jack The Bear - Royston 61295  
 Joint Venture - Cambridge 329165  
 The Lonely - Cambridge 246670  
 Making Progress - Cambridge 276820  
 The Moment - Ely 740244  
 Mr Meaner - Cambridge 834928  
 The Midwich Cuckoos - Cam. 420997  
 The Night Jars - Ramsey 822745  
 Nutmeg - Ely 721761  
 On The Brink - Cambridge 263870  
 The Outworkers - Ashwell 2607  
 O-Zone - Cambridge 321696  
 Pagan Billy - Cambridge 881113  
 The Pleasure Heads - Pboro 48805  
 Possession - Cottenham 50423  
 Quiet Life - Cambridge 420997  
 Rat Bat Blue - Cambridge 420997  
 Real Time - Cambridge 352237  
 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  
 Shotgun Wedding - Peterborough 71139  
 Shrike - Aylesbury 85913  
 Sitting In Cafes - Cambridge 467052  
 Stormed - Cambridge 65449  
 The Sullivans - Harlow 37048  
 This Replica - Ely 721761  
 Thrilled Skinny - Luton 453385  
 Throws Of Passion - Peterborough 68336  
 Tribe Of Dan - St. Neots 405972  
 Vampcow - Cambridge 880798  
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 Woolly Mammoth - Cambridge 843211

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 Flite Audio - Cambridge 316094  
 Fuzzy - Cambridge 870651  
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 Skysound - Cambridge 358644  
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 Soft Spot - Cambridge 244639  
 Star Hire - Huntingdon 411159

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### Cambridge

The Alma - 64965 (Maggie)  
 CCAT Batman - 460008  
 Corn Exchange - 357851  
 Devonshire Arms - 311719  
 The Globe - 241220 (Roger)  
 Man On The Moon - 350610 (Stan)  
 The Rock - 249292 (Steve)  
 Sea Cadets Hall - 353172

### Huntingdon

Three Tuns - 53209  
 Waterloo - 57199

### Melbourn

Rock Club - Royston 61725

### Newmarket

Rising Sun - Cambridge 353172 (Status)

### Peterborough

Crown - 41366  
 Gaslight - 314378  
 Gladstone Arms - 44388  
 Glasshouse - Stamford 65776 (Ann)  
 Norfolk Inn - 62950  
 Oxcart - 267414  
 Worrina - 64861

### St. Ives

Floods Tavern - 67773 (Stan)

### St. Neots

Cockney Pride - Hunt. 73551  
 Kings Head - Hunt. 74094

### Sawston

University Arms - Camb 832165

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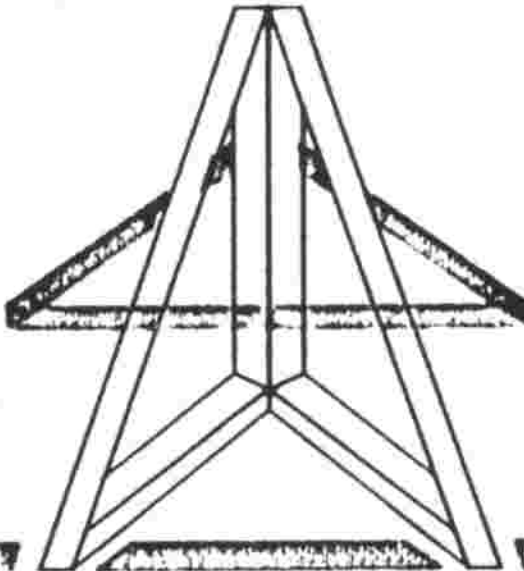
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