

No. 1

SCENE AND

OVERHEARD

CAMBRIDGE LOCAL ROCK RAG

ROCK
COMPETITION
EDITION

HEAT BY HEAT
REVIEW

PRESIDENT
REAGAN
WRITES!



50p.

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EDITORIAL

This is the first taste of what will hopefully be a monthly magazine dealing with Cambridge connected music. This edition is devoted to the Cambridge Rock Group Competition since it is such an important event for local bands. Whilst the winners may not gain very much in terms of recording contracts etc. the competition does focus attention on the sheer number and, more importantly, the high quality of local bands. An interview with the winners of the competition will appear in Issue 2 along with a chat with the Herbs. Your first chance to get hold of it will be on April 3rd at the Burleigh when the Herbs and Strange Brew will be playing a benefit for the magazine.

Currently Cambridge's music 'scene' is in many ways the best it has been for some years and the next year or so should see even more improvements. On the live music front there should be a new venue financed by the Cambridge Music Trust (CMT) and eventually the Corn Exchange will be finished, once again allowing major bands to play Cambridge. Recorded music is in a healthy state with three local record/tape labels (CMT, Peeved and Wimp).

Scene and Heard will give in-depth coverage to all areas of Cambridge music but only if we get to hear about it, so if you're doing anything you think we should cover get in touch. Equally if you want to write or help with the magazine in any way please contact us (we've yet to bite anyone!). We're particular looking for photographers and people to write about local jazz and folk music. The guilty people responsible for this issue are;

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GOSSIP, RUMOURS, & LIES!



The Rock Show on BBC Radio Cambridge-shire will finish its current run on March 8th. It will return later in the year, but at the moment there are no plans for a programme to fill the gap.

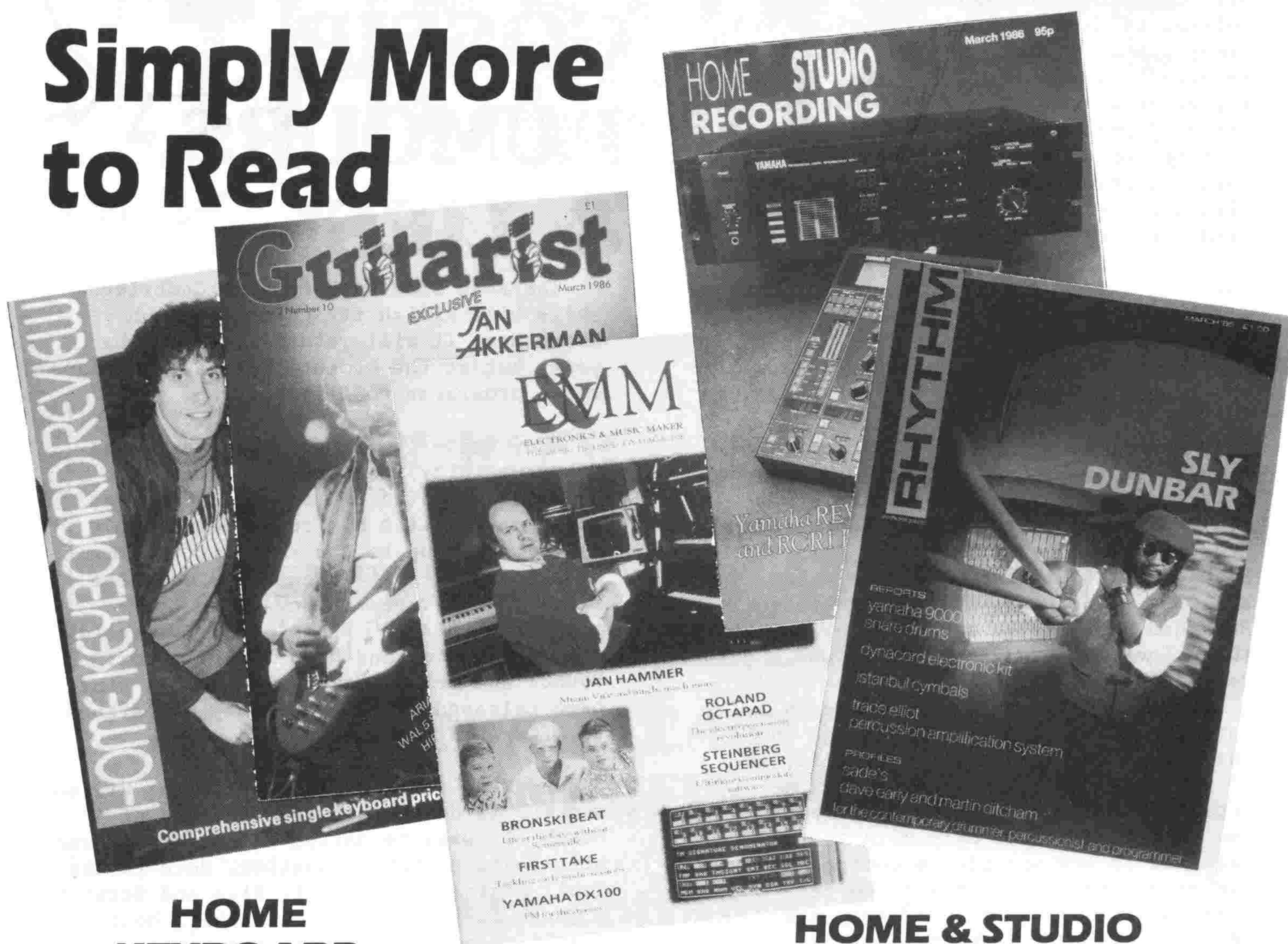
Andy White (no longer with the Ghost Of Electricity) has taken to playing acoustic gigs (he did one in January at the Alma). Whilst his songs/poems don't really stand up to the acoustic treatment, his recordings still feature a complete range of instrumentation. Since the release of his 12" EP he's done a session for Janice Long and been interviewed in Sounds and Melody Maker. The EP has since been released as a 7" and Andy has signed to WEA. An album is due soon.

Speaking of records, the Perfect Vision mini-LP is due out towards the end of March. It will be called "Tongues Out" and will feature Kick, Damnation, Hole in the Soul, Engines, Impossible Blue and Scratch & Howl. It is without doubt their best studio recordings to date, capturing their live intensity.

Roger Chatterton (of Kite Studios) is selling all his PA gear. He can be contacted on Cambridge 313250, although you may have to persevere a bit as he keeps dashing off to do the live sound for famous people like Nils Lofgren and our own Katrina and The Waves.

The Detective, winner of last years Cambridge Rock Group Competition, has just released a new 12 song tape on Peeved Records called 'Human Wreckage'. Also new on Peeved is 'Tickled Pink', the third Cambridge compilation. This features, amongst others, The Lonely, The Lovely, SPIKE, The Force, Vanishing Point and Strange Brew. The tapes are £2 each from Peeved c/o 46 Kimberley Road, Cambridge.

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DEAF WISH II - THE JUDGE'S VIEW

Being a judge is tough and being judged is worse, particularly when the competition is so strong. The judge's view from the balcony is daunting, particularly when the spotlight falls on the compere as he is about to announce the winners. The music fades out to be replaced by an expectant silence broken only by the sound of cracking plastic beer glasses.

"In third place it's

In second place it's

Congratulations to the winners who are ..."

The judges collectively sigh in relief. The audience register surprise, anger or satisfaction and another heat ends.

As for the panel of judges - well they were chosen for their connections, however tenuous, with local music. They included an enthusiast, a journalist, a landlord and a rep from the local BBC radio station. My only quibble is that the average age of the panel could have been lowered a little. Only two were beneath the joint age of Chris and Paul!

Due to problems revealed at last years competition the voting system has been simplified to try and remove as many anomalies as possible. The seven bands were simply marked by each judge in order of merit. For example a voting card would read:
 Band X ① 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Band Y 1 2 3 ④ 5 6 7
 Band Z 1 2 3 4 ⑤ 6 7
 etc.

In theory the band with the most ①'s wins and so on. No guidelines were set down before the judges which made it a very personal matter. I was looking for a band whose music I'd buy and who didn't play staid R'n'B for Cambridge's reactionaries to get drunk by. There were at least a dozen bands prepared to deal blows against the city reactionary pop tendencies but unfortunately they didn't all win through. The 'Ways To Move' and 'Peeved' compilation cassettes were well represented by Glass Asylum, PRIC, The Principle and Fever Garden - in fact the most dynamic selection of groups at the contest. In most cases safety definitely came first with bands choosing to funk or 'rack and roll' (sic) in to the final. The diversity of material performed by new three piece The Beeno and the stomach churning guitar of Fever Garden were like breathes of fresh air. They also served to highlight the surprise absence of old boys like the Herbs, Red Army Choir and Stormed.

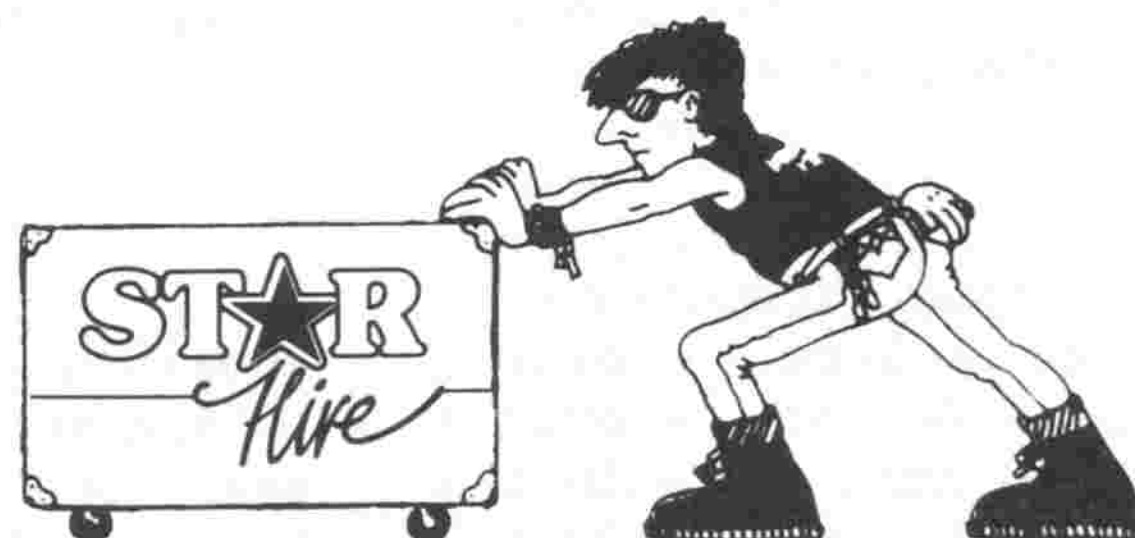
The use of backing tapes is for some reason regarded as a heinous crime and resulted in disappointment for some, as 'Stephen' was forced to drop out because he relied too heavily on them. If they

are played with thought, commitment and passion they should be played and played LOUD. If not they should be wiped but at least they should be given a chance.

The winners will need a big Transit for the prize which is a pure pop package. This includes cash, a 24 track recording session, a radio broadcast, new gear and the facilities and personnel to produce a high quality video. Phew! Worth it though for all the hard work and bravery involved. A great deal of hard work was also put in by the organisers with tremendous effort on the part of the council and technical people. Seven bands on a Monday night in a cavern like the Guildhall is a gruelling task for any mixing desk man. There were teething problems on the first night but after that none.

I hope that the negative attitudes of last year have gone and that the winners realise their full potential. Next year, with fingers crossed, there'll be even more bands entering this worthy competition and more acceptable venues for them to play in.

JULIAN HYDE



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Semi-Final Line-Ups

Monday 24th February 1986

Colonel Gomez: John Devine - 24 - Guitar
 Brian Devine - 28 - Guitar
 Michael Devine - 30 - Drums
 Andrew Clayton - 24 - Bass

Describe themselves as: Heavy Rock

Next: P. Scrivener - 26 - Bass
 T. Day - 28 - Drums
 P. Brown - 31 - guitar/vocals
 M. Heyes - 26 - guitar/vocals

Describe themselves as: Rock

Sardines In Red Striped Dresses:

Gordon Stirling - 23 - Drums/B. Vocals
 Paul Weston - 23 - Guitar/B. Vocals
 Simon White - 22 - Bass/B. Vocals
 Tim Whyley - 22 - Vocals/Guitar

Describe themselves as: Post-Punk R+B

Strange Brew: Martyn Saunders - 20 - Bass
 Gary Brown - 20 - Vocals
 Jole Scott - 18 - Guitar
 Steve Norden - 21 - Drums

Describe themselves as: -

Wild Party Productions:

Lee Gillett - over 21 - Vocals/Cowbell
 Mick Gillett - over 21 - Guitar/Vocals
 Alan Emms - 30 ish - Saxophone
 John Drake - 30 ish - Bass/Vocals
 John Beatboy - 30 ish - Drums

Describe themselves as: Pop/Rock/Cocktail
 Lounge Combo

Therapy: Stuart Davies - 18 - Bass
 Simon Thorp - 21 - Guitar
 Adam Jones - 19 - Drums

Describe themselves as: Rock

The Worlds End Band:

John Cook - 23 - Guitar/Vocals
 John Altomonte - 26 - Guitar/Vocals
 Tino Baressi - 26 - Drums
 David Cooke - over 21 - Bass

Describe themselves as: Rock/Pop

Wednesday 26th February 1986

Children Of Some Tradition:

Jonothan Haines - 16 - Vocals
 Toby Smith - 15 - Guitar
 Philip Green - 16 - Bass
 Adrian Pace - 16 - Drums
 Ann Marie ? - ?? - Vocals

Describe themselves as: New Wave

Double Yellow Line:

Ben Ashby - 18 - Guitar
 Adrian Stanley - 19 - Bass
 Simon Bishop - 18 - Drums
 Chris Williams - 18 - Vocals

Describe themselves as: Pop

Feet First:

Steve Bone - 27 - Bass
 Tim Froud - 30 - Guitar
 Stuart Atkinson - 22 - Sax/Keys
 Mark Arnold - 35 - Trumpet
 Richard Beasley - 22 - Drums
 Paul Gallant - 34 - Perc.
 Rob Varney - 28 - Vocals

Describe themselves as: Jazz/Funk

La Voix:

J. Arnold - 21 - Keyboards
 T. Grimes - 21 - Vocals
 D. Tyrrell - 20 - Guitar
 M. Johnson - 20 - Drums/Perc.
 M. Grimes - 20 - Bass/Keys

Describe themselves as: Pop Rock

President Reagan Is Clever:

David Hildick-Smith - 21 - Vocals/Keys
 Ian Henderson - 21 - Guitar
 Tim Keogh - 21 - Bass/Vocals
 Justin Lord - 21 - Drums

Describe themselves as: Pop

The Principle:

Claire Brooker - 19 - Vocals
 Steve Buttercase - 23 - Guitar
 Chriss Chalker - 25 - Guitar
 Rich Laidlow - 21 - Keys
 Reece Makay - 22 - Bass

Describe themselves as: Modern and Different

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT(S)...

At a glance the list of this years rock competition entries resembled the starting line up for the Grand National; Plenty of unheard of outsiders, a few favourites and one or two non-starters.

Heat 1 looked at one stage as though it may fill the latter category, commencing a full hour behind schedule, due to the late arrival of some PA equipment.

First to test the Guildhall's sound system were PRESSURE DROP, a bluesy combo with a notably dated guitar sound. They were a bit of a disappointment as one might have expected a more modern approach from such a young band. GLASS ASYLUM were a re-modeled version of the Frieze, one of last years unsuccessful entrants. Had they made any progress during the past 12 months? Unfortunately not, this family three piece set the drum machine a rolling, but the remaining combination of vocals, guitar and keyboards a plenty was an uncomfortable mixture that rarely drew a ripple from the 400 plus audience. THE BEENO were next, another trio, all good musicians with one or two fairly interesting songs, but it was all a bit too undeveloped to be convincing. How refreshing then to see DOUBLE YELLOW LINE enter the stage next. Right from the first few bars it was abundantly clear they meant business. Although still a relatively young band D Y L have developed rapidly over the last couple of years, despite one or two changes of personnel. They do have plenty of influences; including a guitar sound that apes the Police, and there are shades of Bowie, Duran Duran and Level 42. However, the sum total of the parts is a distinctive brand of pure pop. D Y L have good punchy songs and on the night their performance was excellent. They were therefore winners of Heat 1 by several clear lengths.

WILD PARTY PRODUCTIONS were a cabaret act. Perhaps no-one told them this was supposed to be a rock competition! Their 20 minute slot comprised of more acting than playing music, and more whistling than singing! An excellent saxophonist was heard throughout, and although W P P were somewhat out of place, the judges must have marked them high for presentation, and they were runners up, thus providing the semi-finals with a bit of variety. There's not too much to be said for the last two bands. TYRADE failed on account of their inability to be more than just another heavy metal outfit, HARVEST WOOD QUINTET harped back to the sound of '73. They did have a useful guitarist within their ranks. However, most of the audience had gone home by the time they finished just before midnight.

If the judge's task had been an easy one in Heat 1, then the second heat in stark contrast threw up at least five acts that could claim to have triumphed had they been competing the previous week. Aptly named FEET FIRST are a jazz-funk outfit that hit you right from the word go, not surprisingly so when you consider their line-up includes such established musicians as Steve Bone, late of the Great Divide on bass, and the very experienced Stuart Atkinson playing saxophone. Their lead guitar sound was superb, and with the lively rhythm section they left no-one in any doubt as to who would be filling one of the two semi-final placings from this heat. Who could follow Feet First? THERAPY that's who. Last year Adam Jones was clowning around on drums with his pals from the Hills Road Sixth Form College in the amusing I.B.O Experience, things have got a little serious during the interim as Therapy produced a compelling set of mainstream rock numbers. Particularly notable was their use of backing vocals 'Jam' style in places. As a three piece with such a full sound and concise songs Therapy were worthy victors of their heat. Winners aside, there was still plenty to enjoy from the other five bands. TEKELA a young pop orientated combo seemed to struggle with the PA a lot, sound problems coupled with their lack of experience, left Tekela stranded and out of their depth on the night. STAND POINT were another band full of proficient musicians, and in Zak Justin (remember him?) they have a lead singer with a great stage presence. However, the gregarious Mr Justin will have to find somebody to write his band some songs if they are to make any progress as it was in this department that Stand Point let themselves down badly. NEW HORIZON suffered similarly, offering plenty of H M cliches, together with some of the most crass lyrics imaginable. FAMILY AFFAIR on the other hand were something of an enigma, providing easily the most interesting and varied set on the night. This band's dilemma however seemed to stem from a lack of direction as their lengthy meandering songs ran into each other. The last one in particular being an over-blown self indulgent piece with lead singer Sue Bridgeman proclaiming love is the way - sadly for Family Affair it wasn't. Lastly, ICENI, another bunch of HM merchants that tried to raise the roof by pushing the controls to an earshattering maximum, an unsuccessful ploy that sent many people rushing for cover in the corridors. As for the bands set, this included the only cover version of the evening, a slightly ponderous rendition of Van Halens 'Jump'. Despite being a very capable unit, IcenI were unplaced.



Double
Yellow
Line

Heat 3 was even better, only six bands appeared following the disqualification of STEPHEN. The competition rules had stipulated that backing tapes were only to be used provided they had been pre-recorded by the bands themselves and that their usage should be minimal. Stephen had apparently promised to bring a full backing band, but come the night of the heat, Stephen's only backing was on tape - hence his dismissal from the competition. NEXT were a live band, very alive and energetic too, delivering a varied heavy rock set with more verve and energy than similar bands that had gone before. Their effort was rewarded with a semi-final placing as the night's runners-up. DEMISE were the youngest band in this heat, their line up including two 14 year olds. Predominant musical influences here seemed to be The Cure with echoes of The Bunnymen. Their performance was one of inconsistency. When they were good they were essential viewing (and listening), but one or two of their songs dragged. Demise should improve given the necessary time and more experience. PRESIDENT REAGAN IS CLEVER

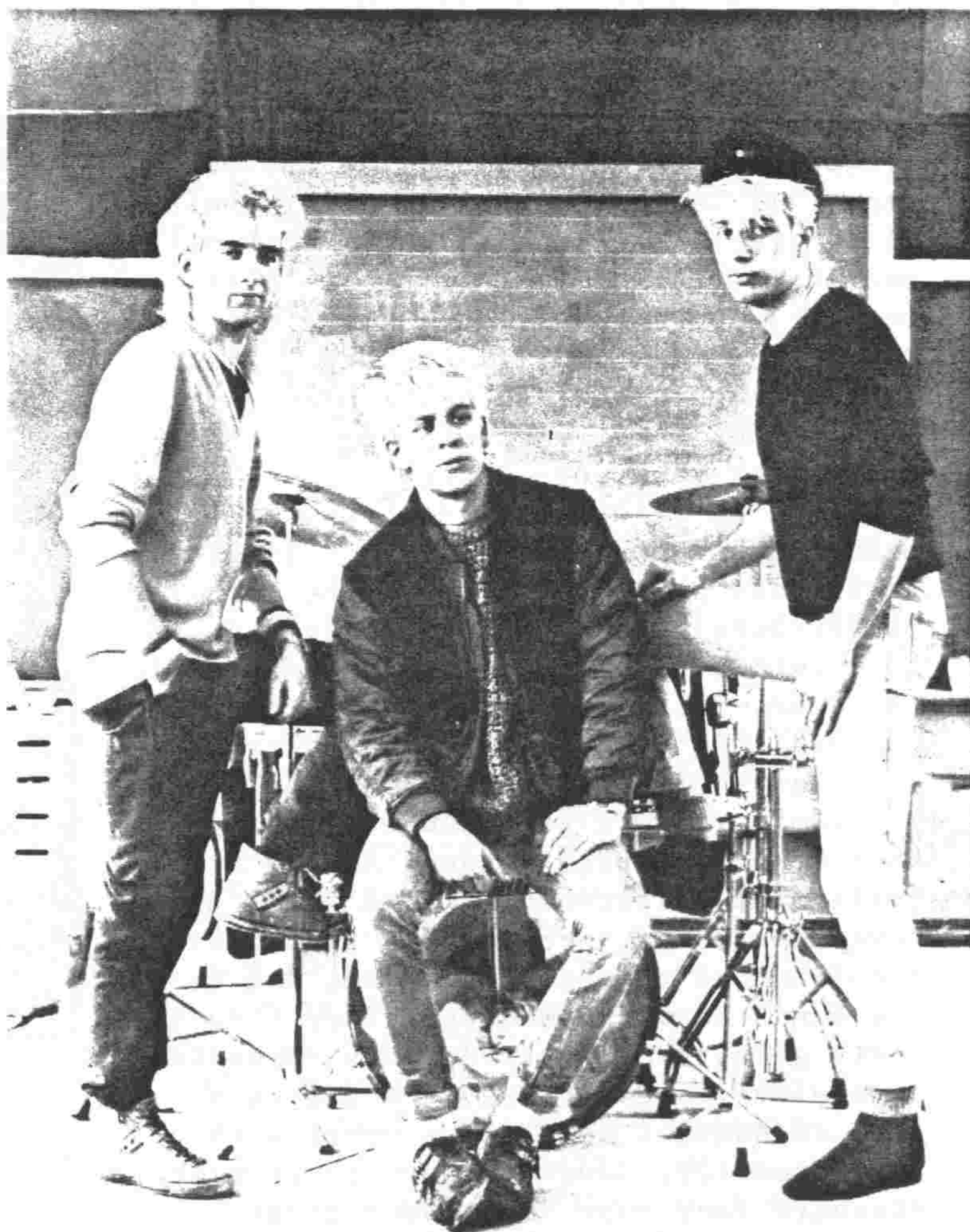
came out grinning. The bands confidence can be attributed to their musical talent (rather than their affiliation to Cambridge University!). They produce a modern rock sound, mostly wailing guitars + synthesizers, with good lead vocals. PRIC's main asset on the night was their ability to build their set to a climax, and by the time they'd finished, their arrogance/brilliance had put them simply (s)miles ahead. COUPE DE VILLE, a bunch of veteran Fifties and Sixties rockers got by far the best crowd response with their vibrant golden oldies show, featuring such classics as 'Telstar', 'I Need Your Love Tonight' and 'Mona Lisa', although never serious contenders for the main prizes largely due to their lack of originality, CDV were terrific entertainment and finished third. RUSSIA were handicapped, having parted company with their lead singer two days prior to the heat. Just to add to their difficulties, this Jazz Funk unit were severely hampered by sound problems throughout. Aggravations aside though Russia's material was not strong enough to see them through. Competent musicians

though they were. AK 47 were a disaster, both in performance and in their puzzling attitude. It was impossible to decide whether the band were trying to be reactionary, or just plain offensive, as they spent 20 minutes tuning guitars or playing a dirge of rock or reggae. Some members of the audience sympathised with AK 47's affectation, cheering them loudly as the organisers pulled the plugs on the band for running overtime.

Heat four was fiercely contested in front of another sell out crowd. First band THE PRINCIPLE revelled in a carnival of musical styles; they had an attractive female singer who sang good songs with a backing of interesting rhythms and tempo changes. The band's versatility was matched by enthusiasm which was infectious to both audience and Judges alike. The Principle got their just desserts, finishing third, which is no more than a band with a tune called 'This is not a song by Talking Heads' might have expected. FILTHY RICH a HM outfit from St. Ives over-stepped the limits of moderation by some considerable distance, that's to say they traded on an excess of volume and played a bunch of riffs that would have sounded dated had it been 1976. Let's hope their hordes of supporters were not too disheartened by FR's performance which was at least executed with some fervour. On a lighter note, CHRIS & PAUL, the two pre-pubescent guitar slinging heroes of last years contest were back. Whilst it was again impossible not to be impressed by their playing ability, the novelty of their act had worn off to a great degree. Their choice of material also was a little uninspiring; 'Alright Now' sounded all wrong in places, and the couple never looked at ease as they went through the motions with three other cover versions of sixties and seventies tunes, plus a composition of their own entitled 'White Waters'. Perhaps Chris & Paul should attempt to broaden their horizons next year, and try to form a band. A lot was expected of STRANGE BREW, who, through constant gigging around town, have built up a fairly sizeable following. The band's own eagerness to do well was apparent as singer Gary Brown stalked the stage in defiant mood, craving attention from the audience. His band provided a back drop of heavy rock with punk overtones. SB's songs are short and catchy, and their overall performance saw them through as winners of this heat. THE WORLDS END BAND, another group with some experience, had the best material of the night. One or two of their songs sounded like hit singles,

and a strong vocal presentation augmented their pop/rock style. WEB could not match the stage presence of either The Principle or Strange Brew, but all three progressed to the semi-finals following a clerical error that originally had WEB placed third behind the other two, however when the Judges points totals were re-cast it was discovered WEB should have been second. Neither of the last two bands were able to make any impact. DOUBLE MEASURE tried a long shot at R & B, but their lead singer merely bellowed her lyrics and the band's sound was by far the least distinguished of the evening. IN FLIGHT did have a bit more to offer, more heavy rock with some good guitar work. At one point, they even launched into a jazz fusion. Their musical ability and diversity should therefore hold them in good stead for the future.

For local rock enthusiasts attending all the competition heats, the first four weeks had provided a good deal of entertainment, with most bands proving themselves to be worthy competitors. However, heat five, by comparison, turned out to



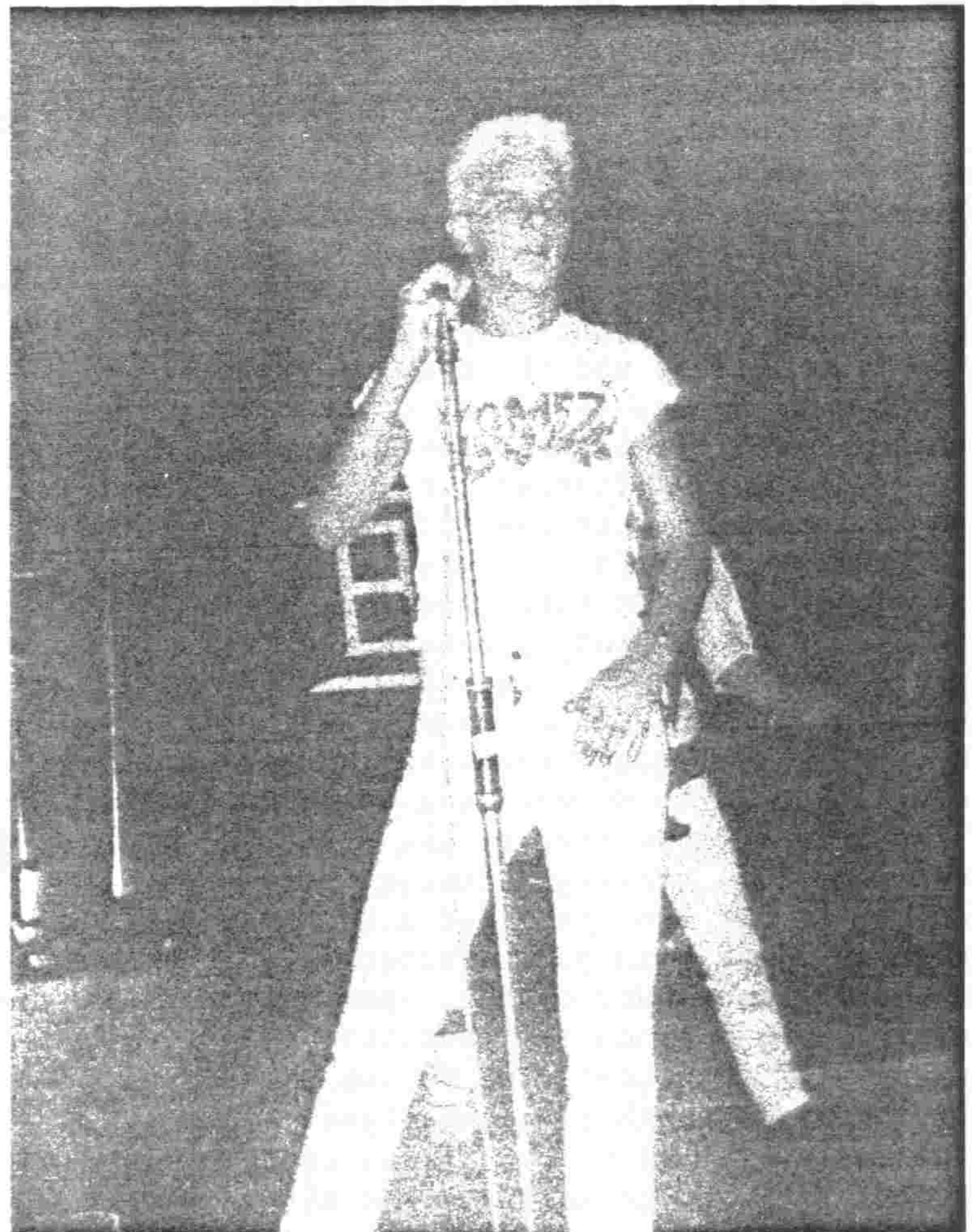
Therapy



President
Reagan
Is
Clever

be a let down of hideous proportions as the seven acts on display appeared, in one way or another, to have contrived their own game of anything you can't do, we can't do either. First band, LA VOIX, did for their part look like a unit interested in the contest, and they did dress for the occasion. Their appearance was by no means deceptive as they played commercial pop tunes, with notably twee lyrics and basic melodies. The curious aspect of La Voix's set was their choice of material. The band do have more solid and sharper songs in their repertoire, but these were saved for a comparatively meaningless and poorly attended gig at The Burleigh Arms the following night. Still, they were very competent and did enjoy what they were doing. This is more than can be said for student band FEVER GARDEN, who spread a little misery with their cold pessimistic approach. The lead singer bore an uncanny resemblance to Ian McCulloch of Echo and the Bunnymen, whilst his band, Bunnymen clones also, could do no more than drown his lyrics. What was especially disappointing about this band, was their failure to produce anything that even resembled a tune. All in all, a quite dire performance. MAC & WHITE did have some songs, a pity then that most of them sounded the same. This was due to the bands heavy handedness. They thrashed their guitars punk style, thus rendering themselves somewhat heavy on the ears. REFUGEE brought terrific support with them from Ely. However, even their most die-hard fans must have found great difficulty in trying to enjoy their heroes contribution. A lack of any remotely interesting, or even listenable material was again the problem here. Refugee sounded something like The Jesus

And Mary Chain on a bad night, which this was. A bitter pill to swallow. SOUL FACTOR 2 were not ready for the competition. They were largely supplemented by backing tapes and still managed to sound disjointed. Were they trying to take-off a soul band? Singer Kevin Ludwig, formerly with PRIC, didn't even take off his scarf! The bands



Strange Brew

songs were ill prepared also, and seemed to go on forever. Their exit was greeted with a sigh of relief, nearly as audible as the scant applause they drew for this performance. SARDINES IN RED STRIPED DRESSES were at least something akin to a rock band. They played with aggression in a Clash/Alarm style. It was nice to see Paul Weston, formerly of The Rapiers, in this line up, venting his feelings together with his bands, against Margaret Thatcher, in a song about the Falklands conflict called 'The General'. CURTIS BROTHERS had the dubious honour of completing heat five, this they did by epitomizing all the worst aspects of what had gone before at an increased volume designed to cause maximum pain in the ears. Following the customary few minutes pause, during which time the bands point totals were accumulated, compere Derek Buxton announced the weeks winners as La Voix with Sardines In Red Striped Dresses coming second. A seven way tie for last place had looked nearly as likely - a dead heat.

The final heat provided plenty of thrills from some notably determined bands. First on though were UNKNOWN PROVINCE, a young keyboard dominated unit. Their delivery was however a little intense, and their songs lacked any punch. UP therefore found the going tough and were unable to fill their twenty minute set. Obviously the bands lack of experience had found them out to some extent here.

COLONEL GOMEZ were no less incredible than everyone had anticipated. They had an array of special effects, a song called 'You Set My Balls On Fire', and of course there was the now customary strip show, this year to the tune of 'Riot In Cell Block No 9'. In 1985, we saw the balloon trick. This year, lead singer John Devine pulled a hoze on the audience before leaving the stage, with first place assured. The next band were CHILDREN OF SOME TRADITION. This young new wave combo from Godmanchester set about their task with great gusto indeed. The singer utilized the stage area very well, much to the delight of the bands large contingent of supporters, who danced like idiots in front of him. The band saw to it that the fans were well catered for as they followed an announcement that 'it pays to be thick' with a song called 'The Boy Without A Head'. This strident hard working bunch went down well, and thus progressed to the semi-finals as the heats runners-up. This success was at the expense of the next two bands. Firstly NUTMEG, or should it have been 'nutcase' stormed the stage firing on all cylinders.



Colonel Gomez

Their front man, Tom Dalpra, got in a right frenzy, he even joined the audience at one point, but then decided he might be better off with his band doing a spot of cossack dancing! The backing track for this lunacy was powerfully played heavy rock. So keen were the band to create an impression, they went over the twenty minutes allotted with the remarkable 'In England They're Going Mental'. If Nutmeg were going out of the competition, and they were, then they were going with their dignity totally shattered - the audience loved them!

JONOFAX were the night's best dressed band. They also played a variety of styles. The band were all very competent musicians. It will be interesting to see whether they continue with their Jack of all Trades approach, or head in one particular direction. Their pop ballad 'Promise' was a very good song on the night. LE JOUR were in a similar mould to Unknown Province, all keyboards and lots of slight tunes that sounded like incidental music for Dr Who. Stage presence is what they lacked, and they left the stage to virtual silence. The very last band in this years competition were CHICANE. Like the previous band, they hardly moved while they played. The content of their set was an adequate dosage of heavy rock. Perhaps they'll recruit Colonel Gomez as consultants on how to present music of this genre!

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

The Prizes

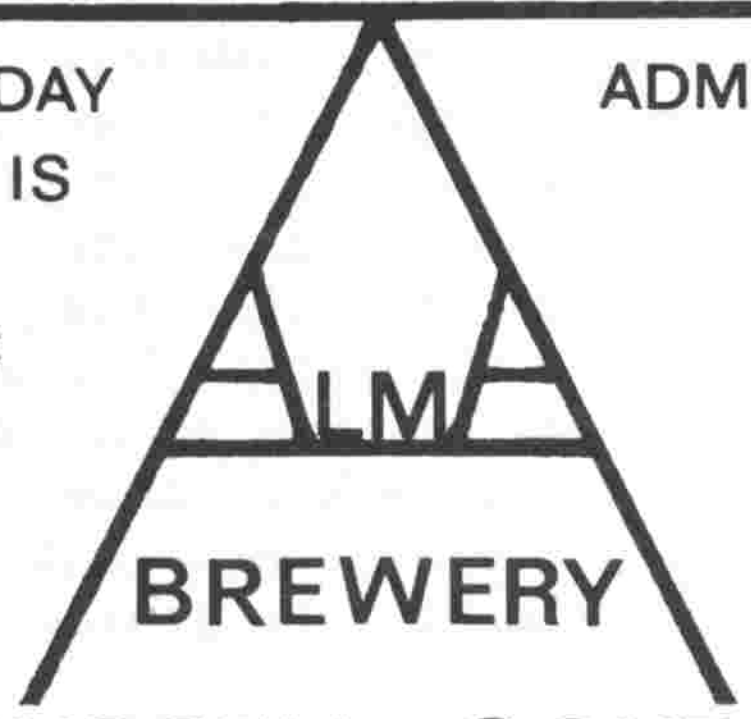
<u>FIRST PRIZE</u>	£250 Recording session at Spaceward Studio - 12 hour, 24 track, value £300 A broadcast on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire (MU rates paid) A promotional video of television standard provided by World Video Productions of Ely, value £1,500.
<u>SECOND PRIZE</u>	£125
<u>THIRD PRIZE</u>	£75
<u>FOURTH PRIZE</u>	£50
<u>BEST GUITARIST</u>	Electric guitar presented by Cambridge Rock
<u>BEST DRUMMER</u>	UP5 Electric drum kit, value £800, and Sabian cymbals, value £500, presented by Music Maker Publications and Ultimate Percussion.
<u>BAND WITH MOST POTENTIAL</u>	Rauch DVT 50S amplifier presented by Monitor Systems Technology, value £575
<u>BEST YOUNG BAND</u>	Trophy presented by Cambridge Evening News
<u>BEST VOCALIST</u>	£50
<u>BEST KEYBOARD PLAYER</u>	£50
<u>HEAT WINNERS</u>	£25
<u>AUDIENCE AWARD</u>	Presented by Town and Around Magazine

All guitarists, including bass, whose band reaches the semi-finals will receive a set of Albion guitar strings presented by Music Maker Publications, value £265. In addition, the winning band's bass guitarist will receive 3 sets of Albion strings, and rhythm/lead guitarist(s) will receive 6 sets of Albion strings each.

World Video Productions, Ely, will also provide two bands of their choice with promotional videos.

All cash prizes presented by Cambridge City Council, Amenities and Recreation Department.

CAMBRIDGE ROCK and YAMAHA provided the amplification for the entire competition, STARHIRE provided the PA and lights, and MUSIC MAKER PUBLICATIONS provided the Yamaha drum kit for the duration of the event. All of these items have been supplied free of charge.

SATURDAY NIGHT IS LIVE MUSIC NIGHT		ADMISSION FREE REAL ALE
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<p>THE DETECTIVE 'HUMAN WRECKAGE' 12 SONG TAPE-OUT NOW ON PEEVED £2</p> <p>FROM PEEVED RECORDS, c/o 46 KIMBERLEY ROAD, CAMBRIDGE CB4 1HH</p>

THE "ROCK 'N' ROLL" SWINDLE?

Competition is a major part of the Conservative Protestant work ethic, right? This is a big reason for disliking rock competitions. Many local bands have been cynical about this years Cambridge Rock Group Competition, calling it the "Rock 'n' Roll Swindle." Why? Could ideology be the reason? Perhaps it could but I suspect that bands, especially locally established bands often don't enter for a simple fear of losing. Just because six local experts don't like you or your music does not mean you're no good. After our heat I overheard the drummer of a band who did not get through to the next round muttering "Ah well, back to the drawing board". This is wrong. All types of music cannot appeal to all people. If the band enjoy it then that is what is most important, and somebody else is bound to enjoy it as well. Beauty is after all in the ear of the beholder. Nobody should be above entering a rock competition for this very reason.

Of course just as losing does not make your band worse, winning does not necessarily mean it's better than the rest. This is not belittling the judges opinions, but there are only six of them and they are not a genuine cross-section of the record buying public. Look at The Detective, I'm not denying that he was the rightful winner, merely that winning does not naturally lead to success. None of the judges is the A + R man who is going to give your band a shove into the charts.

So far in this years competition I've seen little inter-band hostility. There's nothing wrong with friendly rivalry but anything else is damaging. One positive result of the competition is the way it brings bands into closer contact, hopefully breaking down any hostility or jealousy that may have been there before. We are all musicians after all even if our aims are all different.

So if it's not to claim "we're better than them" why do bands enter competitions?

We have entered two in the past year (three to be exact but we don't talk about the third!). The first was Anglia TV's "City Sounds" competition which was screened in June and July of last year. We won our heat after being selected from about 700 cassettes of acts from jugglers to male voice choirs. The final was won by a string quartet playing a cover of a Greig hit. Different aims and musical needs make it impossible and, therefore, almost arbitrary to judge one form of

music against another. This applies as equally between rock and jazz-funk as rock and classical. This shows that rock "competitions" are in one way, ridiculous. This does not mean that they are a "swindle". There are many good aspects as long as the bands realise the limitations of the "competition" situation, which gets me back to why we enter competitions.

For the Anglia comp. we got our own star dressing room (which is pretty funny in itself); an audience of tens of thousands; a video (illegal albeit) to show your mum and dad; and we made £500. Dave (vocals and keyboards) also got recognised in the street the next day by two teenage girls. That's a third of his fifteen minutes gone. Each heat of the Cambridge Rock Group Competition has an audience of about 450. If 5% of them come to your next gig you've won something. The prizes on offer are also a major incentive. Not everyone can win though. Still it's another gig, it's a wider audience, it's a write-up in the local paper and only the very "sloppiest" of bands have failed to benefit from this extra publicity.

So it's not a "rock 'n' roll swindle" but an extremely good idea. It doesn't matter whether you want to be a hugely successful pop band or play a few numbers to your mates down the pub once a month. The competition, if you don't take it seriously, can only be good for each band. So if you didn't enter it this year make sure you do next year. Overall the competition is to the benefit of Cambridge and its musicians. Don't knock it.

TIM KEOGH (PRESIDENT REAGAN IS CLEVER)



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GIG GUIDE

The live music scene in Cambridge suffers from a lack of suitable venues - there are a number of places that put on bands, but none which are intended first and foremost for music.

BURLEIGH ARMS, Maids Causeway. Has a stage and music at least three nights a week. Generally costs £1 - £1.50 to get in, depending on how 'big' the band is.

ALMA BREWERY, Russell Court. Bands on every Saturday night. Suffers from having no stage and a pillar in the middle of the playing area. Admission is free but turn up early as the pub is very popular.

BOAT RACE, Burleigh Street. The bands play on a sort of gallery. Entry is free and there are at least three gigs a week.

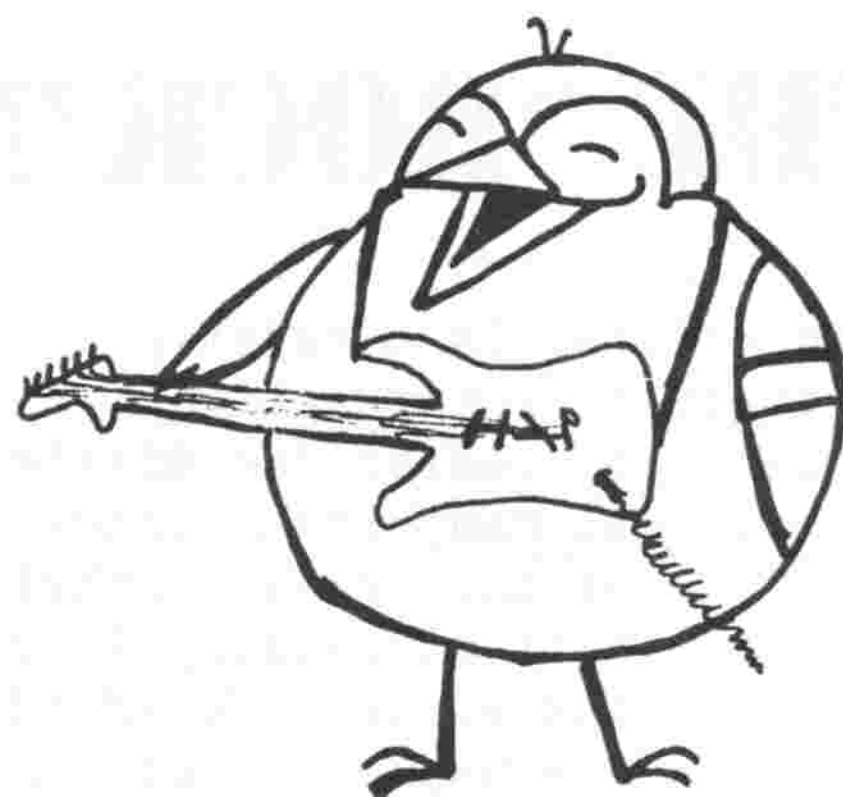
MIDLAND TAVERN, Devonshire Road. As well as putting on bands there's always a reggae/soul disco. Entry is free.

MELBOURN ROCK CLUB, The Moor, Melbourn. As the name implies it's a heavy rock club. Bands appear every Friday night. Some relatively big names on the 'heavy' circuit have played there.

MAN ON THE MOON, Norfolk Street. Home of the Cambridge Modern Jazz Club. Occasionally features acts of interest to rock fans eg. Atilla The Stockbroker.

SEA CADET HALL, Riverside. Not a particularly good venue but is the only easily bookable venue in town. Tends to host punk/metal bands.

GUILDHALL. Only really bookable by the Cat Club, which is the council run rock club. They've had a number of famous bands on, the most recent being the Fall.



MARCH

- 1st World's End Band, Alma
- 6th President Reagan Is Clever, Burleigh
- 7th Country night, Burleigh
- 8th 909's + The Landlord Doesn't Know Yet, Alma
- 9th Coupe De Ville, Burleigh
- 11th Membranes, Burleigh
- 13th Rumour Has It, Burleigh
- 15th Double Yellow Line, Alma
- 21st Country night, Burleigh
- 22nd Perfect Vision, Alma
- 23rd Coupe De Ville, Burleigh
- 28th Therapy, Burleigh

APRIL

- 3rd The Herbs + Strange Brew, Burleigh
(your first chance to buy issue 2 of Scene and Heard)
- 5th The Lonely, Alma

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21st Country Night

23rd Coupe De Ville

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Fast Friends - 841420
Julian Dawson - 323158
Nimrods - 870327
The Herbs - 860665
Strange Brew - 243424
Camera Shy - Histon 3816
Excess Tempo - 247802
The Lonely - 246670
909's - 243144
Between The Lines - 892736
Frigidaires - 247136/316420
2 The Limit - 845026
R.T.'s Wasp Club - 357495
Double Yellow Line - Cottenham 50405
Montreal - 315776
Perfect Vision - 313564
The Deviance - 60701
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Vanishing Point - Histon 4504
Glass Asylum - 276408
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Wild Party Productions - 322879
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Hondo - 315909
The Lovely - 860618
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Russia - 69335
Iceni - Ely 74180
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Record Companies

Wimp - Comberton 3875
Peeved - Cambridge 352612
Blue Murder - Fowlmere 578
Dawn Productions - Stamford 51736

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Stavros - 245047
Roger Chatterton - 313250
Skysound - 358644
Cheops - 249889
Cambridge Rock - 316091
Fuzzy - 870651
Star Hire - 0480 411159
Purple Hire - 0462 894732
Melbourn Rock Club - Royston 61725

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Recording Studios

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School Hse Studios - Bury St Eds 810723
Stable Studios - Ware 871090/870520
The Lodge - Clare 27811/278035
Metronome Studios - Chateris 3949
Thatched Cottage - Bedford 771259
Ace Lane, Bugbrooke - Northampton 831800
Roger Gunkel - March 581608
Live Music - P'boro 67168
Macca Studio - 65534

Venues

The Alma - 64965
Burleigh Arms - 316881/241996
Man On The Moon - 350610
Guildhall - 358977
Sea Cadet Hall - 353172 (evenings)
CCAT Canteen, Batman, Theatre - 312518
Midland Tavern - 311719
Boat Race - 313445

Video Recording

Neil Roberts - 210320
P.T.V. Productions - 0480 61900
Spaceward - 9889 600

Photography

Lowlife Photography - 321260
Chris Hogge - 350799