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SCENE AND **OVERHEARD**

CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S ROCK MAGAZINE

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
1988

**THIS REPLICA : THE JACK RUBIES
AS IT IS : GENEVA CONVENTION
THE WEDDING PRESENT**



THE CHERRY ORCHARD

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Scene & Heard No. 15. With this edition we can truly claim to be both seen and heard, courtesy of The Cherry Orchard, whose flexidisc is given away free with a limited number of copies of this issue.

Since the summer, we have seen the departure of two of our most loyal scribes, namely Paul Attwood and Steph McNicholas. Both have moved to London, from where future contributions will continue. Best of luck to the pair of them.

Regrettably, the Cambridge rock scene has suffered a major blow with the closure of the Burleigh Arms for live gigs. It seems that while the Council can provide us with an annual Rock Competition, and some very welcome concerts by national artists at the Corn Exchange, they have little consideration for the requirements of local bands. With the opening of the new Council-financed Venue Centre only a year or so away, finding local bands to fill it could become a problem, if support for them, in terms of sufficient pub venues, is not forthcoming. The City Council should remember that there is little point in giving with one hand - and then taking away with both.

PAUL CHRISTOFOROU

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5TH CAMBRIDGE ROCK GROUP COMPETITION

Yes, it's coming round again, the Great Cambridge Rock Group Competition Circus. Mick Gray drew the short straw in the Leisure & Amenities Office and has the thankless task of organising the local rock scene's most prestigious and most controversial annual event. Entry forms are now available from Mick at Mandela House, Regent Street, Cambridge CB2 1BY (tel. 0223-538977), and must be returned by 2nd December - so there's not much time left! The Competition will be held, once again, at the Corn Exchange, but this time, it will take place on Wednesday evenings, starting with Heat 1 on 25th January, and then every Wednesday till 1st March (Heat 6). The semi-finals will be held on 15th and 22nd March, but the date for the final has not yet been finalised:

Mick Gray's hoping to persuade Radio Cambridgeshire to do a live transmission of the final. So, depending upon the outcome of discussions, the final will be held on either 29th March or 2nd April. The only rule change from this year's competition is that drummers will be allowed to bring their own snare drum. And, yes, the Organiser's decision is **definitely** final!

LETTERS

Dear Scene and Heard,
In reply to what was promised to be 'a quick note to set the record straight', but turned into a lengthy mock aggressive exercise to prop up the 'tough/no compromising/we are the best' War Dance by Andy Frantic. I can only offer so many words. I suspect that anything beyond the Peter & Jane stage may invoke further veiled threats from Mr Frantic

and his gang. (Is Graham Butt incapable of speaking for himself?)

In writing the review of the War Dance tape, it was never my intention to compile a complete life history of Graham Butt, merely to suggest his experience in varying forms of music and how it seems a shame that he should disband the Desecrators in favour of jumping on the thrash metal bandwagon with War Dance. Regarding the English Dogs, I thought I'd spare young Graham the embarrassment of even mentioning their last LP - perhaps the real cause of their collapse. Of course Andy, I don't **know** this, but I'd be unsurprised. As regards the Pleasure Heads, again Andy must have been overstraining his brain cell. I most certainly was not suggesting that I was in love with them - would I really have called them "a much hyped

phenomenon"? I very much doubt it. I was attempting to suggest that the incessant 'we're head and shoulders above all local bands' stance, pales slightly when compared to the Pleasure Heads' achievements, even if they were hyped.

It seems a shame that participants in this particular musical genre feel that they have to ape the more neanderthal elements of heavy metal, Frantic being no exception. His "quick note" turns into a vitriolic catalogue of personal abuse: "you pompous twat", "arseholes like him", "you cretin", "we say you are a wanker", "incompetant" - doesn't he sound sadly like the generations of spotty, ugly, Kerrang reading 12 year old pubescent boys that he's so desperate to appeal to?

Trevor Weedhi

THE WEDDING PRESENT

Scene & Heard commission rival fanzine Editor, Petra (of Fish On Your Head) to suss out the lads from Leeds.
Pictures: Neil Carter

There were times when the duelling guitars of The Wedding Present could be heard almost every night in some form or other on the John Peel Show. Realms of student types would gather together, clutching their 'Once more' singles to their chests, whilst questioning the meaning of David Gedde's lyrics. Now it's The Wedding Present for the masses, as their new single 'Why are you being so reasonable now?' creeps perilously close to the Top 40: we'll soon be seeing The Wedding Present up there with The Primitives and Transvision Vamp on the brightly coloured sets of Top Of The Pops, Wacaday and Cheggers Plays Pop.

I met David, Simon, Keith and Peter (aka Grapper) backstage at Cambridge's Corn Exchange, where they played in October, and asked them about it - you know: the records, the fame, the scandals and all that.

David: I'm not so sure about being on children's shows, but Top Of The Pops will be great, though.

Simon: It's a different world, isn't it? It's strange when bands like Transvision Vamp and The Wonder Stuff are really obscure, and suddenly they're right at the top of the charts.

Are you ready to be pin-up idols in teen magazines?

David: Personally, yeah. Can't say

much about the others, though. Bit of make-up - I'll be alright!

Why did you decide to do a limited edition of 'Why are you being so reasonable now?' in French?

David: It was just a whim. The other idea I wanted to do was to do a French record to sell in France. You see, the French record market is very conservative, and about 80% of the records in the French chart are actually French: it's very difficult for an English group to make it there.



So I thought it'd be nice to do a French one because I quite admire that conservative spirit, and then I thought, obviously people are going to import it back into Britain and inflate the prices to sell to the British collector; so we thought we'd better release it here as well. We didn't want to put it on the 12" 'cos that would have made it five tracks (not counted in singles sales returns). So we released it separately. Quite long winded, but there you go - life's like that with us sometimes.

With major record company interest, you must feel tempted to reap the financial and promotional benefits?

David: Brilliant - yeah!

But would you compromise?

David: compromise, no: getting them to listen to what we've got to say, maybe. I mean, it's not that we never talk to these people; just that they never listen.

Peter: It all sounds tremendous when you hear about it, but in reality, it's very little: it's a lot less than it seems. You think about £25,000 in your pocket - brilliant. But that would be an advance for an L.P.,

which is two years for us anyway. Divide it by two, that sounds quite a lot too, but on top of things like this now (playing at the Corn Exchange), we're finding out that the tour actually loses money: you've got to put some of that money into that as well. So, at the end of it, if we did take £100,000 from a major record company for making an L.P., we'd be very lucky if we could end up with what would be an average office job earnings.

So are you staying on your own Reception label then?

David: At the moment - yes.

What major record companies have made you offers?

Peter: All of them.

David: We're trying to find one that hasn't yet. What they do is look in the Music Week (trade magazine) charts every week, and if they see a band on an independent label, it's "what's this? No. 42 - The Wedding Present and they're not on a major label..."

Peter: "... let's get them quick!"

David: That's the attitude.

Who finances your label then?

David: Us.

Keith: Our bank.

David: We have an account with our distributors. Red Rhino in York, and they pay for everything upfront; and they give us an advance, and then we recoup it from sales - it's like a constant thing. It's funny, I was just saying today that we've never been bigger in our career and yet we're more overdrawn.

Peter: When we used to be on the dole, we'd hire a van for £20 and travel down to London, and get paid £100 - get back twice as much as you spent out, and it's great. But now, although we get paid about £1,000 for doing something like this, you don't get £55 back out of it, that's for sure.

David: Also, we used to sleep in the back of a Transit, but now it's bed and breakfast, and we've got a huge great tour van out there.

How's the tour going?

David: On the first day of the tour, we couldn't get Keith out of bed; we were outside his house, knocking for about an hour, and ringing him up, and everything. Eventually, we got a key, went in and dragged him out.

Do you think your attitude will change, once you've 'made it'?

David: I think there's a danger of it changing without you knowing about it: people's perception of you changes.

Simon: That's probably what it is with a lot of groups - people slagging them off for changing when they get in the charts.

David: People will obviously change their view on what we are like now and what we were like a year ago. Our last three singles have nearly been in the Top 40 - for some reason, they think that we're doing something we haven't done before, i.e. make records more suitable for daytime radio, which we haven't. Or paid someone a lot of money to get us on the radio.

Simon: Or signed to a major label.

David: There's been a lot of rumours.

Simon: People always come up and say "I see you signed to so and so", and we say "have we?"

What about the rumours that the band are splitting up?

David & Simon (in unison): Same



again, really!

David: It's quite good; as you get bigger and bigger, the rumours get more and more. We started off, and there were no rumours..."

Simon: ...when no one knew who who we were.

David: They write stuff about us which is completely untrue: every time I ring people up, they say "what's this I heard about...", and I don't know what they're talking about.

Do you get annoyed with that, or are you quite flattered that people want to know so much about you?

David: It can be irritating and a bit embarrassing - if we tell someone that we're not going to sign a major deal with whoever, and then they read that we are. They think they've found something out, then they phone up, saying "you lied to me", and it's not till they actually talk to us when they find out exactly what is happening. There's been a couple of incidents that have been a bit embarrassing, but you've got to accept it: people want things to write about you, and if they can't find things, I think they make them up, to be honest. Boy George had 50 times more of the problem than we have.

Do you get on well together?

David: No, we hate each other: they're horrible, these are! (pointing at Keith and Simon)

Keith: The Housemartins were playing a football match in Leeds once, and it's awful to see them together: four lads going to a pub,

and they'd all follow each other to the car. We'd never be like that.

You seem to be getting nothing but applauding support from the music papers at the moment. Are you concerned about any potential backlash that might occur?

David: "Applauding support"? That's a good phrase. We don't get it from the Melody Maker - you're obviously an NME reader. The NME seem to be pretty much behind us at the moment. The music papers are all pretty irrelevant to me personally. When I was about 16 or 17, they were my whole life: I've got more in common with Cosmopolitan now.

Roadie (the one who played guitar

on 'Don't dictate' at the gig): I don't think people really like or dislike bands because the music papers say so. They receive a certain amount of publicity, and then that's as far as they can go. Look at New Model Army - they haven't had a good review for six years, but it hasn't stopped them.

When you write your lyrics, do you make a conscious effort for them to be angst-ridden and unlucky-in-love?

David: I used to, but I'm not trying to do that anymore. I'm trying to get away from it more than anything.

Is your love life really as tortuous as your lyrics

suggest?

David: Nah, I make it up!

Keith: He's such a bastard - they all leave him.

How do you feel about people coming up to you and raving in your face?

David: It's a bit embarrassing, really: it makes me wonder if people haven't got better things to do.

Keith (to David): Those girls that were screaming at you - you just coughed straight in their faces, didn't you?

David: Well, after every song, there was a great big "aaaah!". We got a tape of the gig, and it was wrecked, because all the way through there was just "aaaah!". You'd think we were the Bay City Rollers or something.

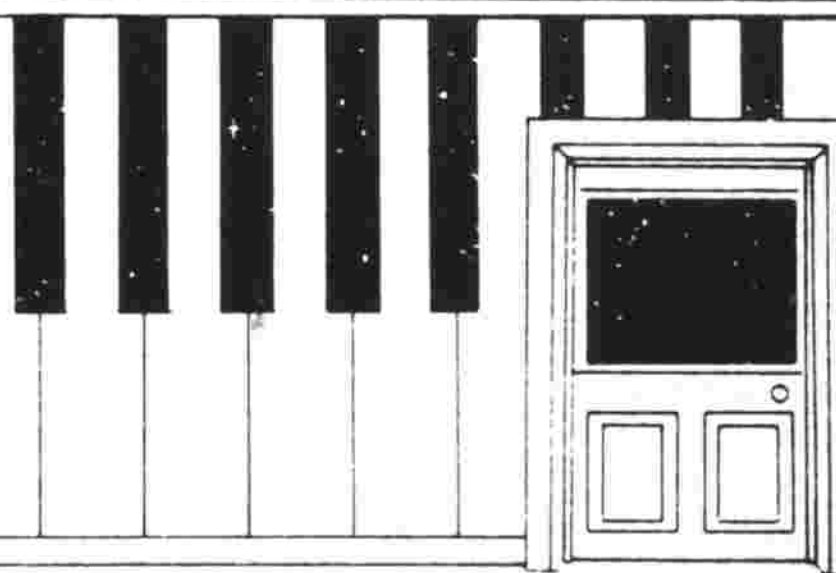
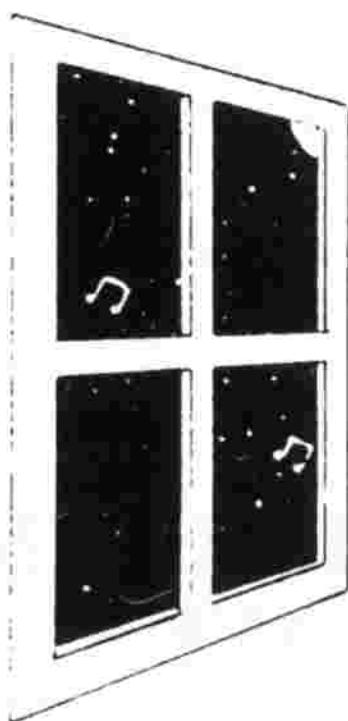
Finally, if you were your fans, what would you like to know about yourselves?

David: Less, I think. People want to know too much about pop stars. Every time we come to do a gig there's always about 30 or 40 people outside hanging around all day. Why? Haven't they got other things to do? We're exactly the same as them except we play our guitars and they listen. If they want to ask anything I'll politely answer them, though it mystifies me. I'm a fan of music and I respect musicians but I wouldn't dream of asking some of the things I get asked.

.....
So, remember, pop kids, if you want to stay cool with David Gedge - don't ask him the colour of his underpants.



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THE CHERRY ORCHARD



Jason and Jamie

Ah.... Autumn in Cambridge, and the streets are paved with golden leaves and homesick first years. Autumn.... that time of year when traditionally the local music scene is meant to hot up as the temperature gets colder. But as the Fall stumbles in this year, there seems to be a break with tradition. Half of the bands in Cambridge seem to be either splitting up, squabbling, or just staying in their bedrooms. Thank God this season has one saving grace.... they go by the rather wistful name of The Cherry Orchard. I thought I'd wander into the orchard and find out more...

The Cherry Orchard started to grow around two years ago, when Jason Smith, House Grinder samples whizzkid, decided to look around for something a bit more - er - tuneful. Now his band is ripe for picking, pop pickers, with a brand new flexi disc. And while other local bands are stuck in a musical swamp (and I ain't mentioning any names), this bunch have reached for the sky and blossomed. If you managed to catch the band at their recent Burleigh outings, you'll probably recognise the two tracks on the disc: 'So blind' and 'Build it up'. The two songs are perfect slices of cherry pie pop - sweet and delicious and rich... even to someone like me

who's been brought up on a diet of tasteless hardcore. Jason's 'second' band budded into the current line-up of Rob Miller on bass, Joel White on guitar, Jamie Somerville on drums, Andy Roe on harmonica and vox, and Liz Creasey on backing vocals. Jason keeps the show on the road on guitar and lead vocals. I met up with Jason and Jamie in the splendour of my bedsit to find out how The Cherry Orchard came to blossom...

It turns out Jason, who'd been in a succession of Cambridge bands (including the Mood Assassins) had been writing the current C.O. stuff constantly for two years. Being in House Grinder meant plenty of contacts, and "really helped" him get his act together. And band members like Jamie, he says, "were old friends". The mixture of old friends and experienced musos means The Cherry Orchard already sound tight, but keep "one big happy family" atmosphere on stage. Jason is the obvious frontman, "but Liz is a much better singer than me."

So how do you feel, Jason, about the never-ending comparisons with Lloyd Cole?

Jason: *I can't sing, I have to groan. But it's more like Lou Reed than Lloyd Cole!*

So which field would you say the Orchard is working in?

Jamie: *Definitely indie... but that's a difficult question (you what?)*

Jason: *I stop the funk coming in (Jamie's a bit of a funk freak, and has even been*

spotted wearing a huge Prince badge), I have to do that.... it's more my influence than anyone else's.

That's telling 'em! So what do they think of the Cambridge scene in general? It's a bit of a thumbs down, really, though Chopper get an honorable mention. There are plenty of things Jason and Jamie could say damning local bands, but they hold back: it doesn't really get anyone anywhere...

Their main grumble is the lack of decent venues. The Burleigh would be OK, they say, without the Limiter. But as I write, the Burleigh is a no-go no-gig area (RIP). The Cherry Orchard are now looking further afield for gigs, as far apart as Coventry and London.

Jason: *We have got to go and find the smaller venues - that's the whole idea of the flexi. Hopefully through that, we'll get more gigs.*

So what do you think of your first disc outing?

Jason: *We are pleased with it.*

Jamie: *Reactions so far have been encouraging.*

The cover's pretty groovy too. A bit mean'n'moody p'raps. So how important is the band's image?

Jamie: *Image is definitely important.*

Jason: *You can sell a record on just the look of the sleeve.... but we don't go to a gig and say "we're going to wear this..."* Even so, The Cherry Orchard have got their 'look' just right. Try and categorise them if you dare: it's pretty fruitless, because they draw their influences from so many places, from the tang of Orange Juice to the spirit that spawned punk.

Eager to escape the tag 'Cambridge band', they are ready for pastures new. Try a bite of the Cherry with their new single before they fly the roost - it could be soon. Both Jason and Jamie complain about the lack of ambition from Cambridge bands, past and present. They say Double Yellow Line are a classic example of a local band who could have done well, but chickened out. The Cherry Orchard aren't going down that same road to ruin, methinks. Maybe I'm biased, but I reckon by the time winter sets in, everything in the Orchard will be looking pretty bloody rosy....

STEPH McNICHOLAS

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THE JACK RUBIES



Americana has long been the object of fascination for young British musicians; its street talk, accents, rituals and lifestyles have been aped and regurgitated by countless of Mick Jagers and Bono's. Be the originals Muddy Waters or the Velvet Underground, the copyists the Rolling Stones or the Jesus and Mary Chain, music history is littered with English singing Americans. The Jack Rubies were initially singled out for their lyrical allusions to the Great American Western myth, evoking images of a wind blown cactus tossed desert land where neon images of coca cola and the stars and stripes walk hand in hand. Their wry, tongue in cheek manner ensured no comparisons with those other exponents of the 'cowboy' theme, Fields of the Nephilim. Their singles bring to mind a menage a trois of the Housenartins, the Godfathers and Sergio Leone. The addition of acoustic guitar and percussion add a shimmering sheen to the exuberant sound, and coupled with Ian Wright, one of the most assured, confident and accomplished vocalists I've heard for a long while, the combination is irresistible. Although ugly, grimy, industrial Peterborough is a long way from the burning deserts of 'Wrecker of Engines', the latest single release by the band, they performed a cool driving set to a Glasshouse Sunday lunchtime, and Ian Wright and guitarist Steve (or SD on the single covers) Ineson explained what brought the Jack Rubies into being.

Ian: I went to America on a holiday and came back with a notebook full of bits and pieces of ideas and wrote a few songs when I got back and got a band together on the strength of that. It was originally a three piece, myself the drummer and the bassist,

but I knew Steve from Art College and he knew the percussion player and as the three piece wasn't quite right, I said why don't you come along to a rehearsal. It sounds rather showbizzy but it just sort of clicked.

And the wonderful name?

Ian: Well that was a very mundane thing, just a case of choosing a name from a list. How we came up with it was there's a question in Trivial Pursuit: "who was responsible for the first ever televised assassination" and Jack Ruby was the answer (he killed Kennedy's supposed killer Lee Harvey Oswald) which kind of appealed to our warped sense of humour.

And after touring with the Blow Monkeys, signing a publishing deal and releasing four independent singles, the band have just signed a major American record deal.

Ian: The first two singles we did were on a label set up by the publishing company. When that folded we got a deal with Red Rhino for this and the last single but that's all we'll be doing with them. It was a two single deal we wanted so we had some breathing space. We've nearly signed on a number of occasions to major British companies but we didn't because the deals were so vague the band would have fallen apart.

Steve: If we'd signed we'd have got really good distribution but you get immense inevitable pressure to change what you're doing. They say you're great then they sign you and that's when the pressure starts ie you've got to chart the next single at such and such a level.

So how do your records sell?

Ian: We've never touched the real chart, but each single has got progressively higher in the indie-charts and our last one 'Foolish Boy', which really was a mistake, sold the best of all.

Mistake?

Ian: It was a case of we changed management at the beginning of the year and that sort of messed things up a bit; and they were saying you must put something out to keep the

profile up. The songs weren't really finished or worked out and it wasn't a great recording. We weren't happy with it and it was much more poppy/pseudo commercial than we'd wanna be.

Steve: Every band goes through it; it's like a test of conviction in a sense. You should put out what you think you should put out.

So what's the American label you've signed to?

Steve: It's called TVT which originally started out as TV tunes which was a whacky idea this guy had; making several volumes of very short tracks of American theme tunes, but he didn't use the originals from the TV companies - he recreated them with old-fashioned session singers....It's like a work of love really, although its like the Flintstones - it's all been recreated. It's fantastic. He's a bit whacky and he's a bit off the wall so that's why.

A sort of American Alan McGhee of the cartoon world.

Steve: Yeah, but a lot bigger, he's got a helluva lotta money. He had his own distribution agency so he made about 50% or 60% on each LP sold, as he cut the middle men out. He's worth several million dollars now on the basis of selling this incredibly popular stuff. As you can imagine everybody knows those sort of tunes.

Ian: Funnily enough there's always been a lot of interest in America.

Steve: American people come up to us at the Marquee and said Yeah you'd do really well in the States.

Do you not worry about being English but portraying elements of American culture to Americans?

Steve: No, I think they'd find it quite interesting. It's still from an English point of view, there are some Americanisms...

Ian: But above all we are from this country.

Steve: The interest comes from the mixture of strong English lyrical satirical black dark humour using American images...It's sort of ironic really.

So have you actually played America yet?

Ian: No, our first gigs are in November.

Steve: In a strange kind of way

English people think that all Americans are so middle of the road, but there's an incredible undertone of underground music: Groups like REM prove that.

So what have TVT done so far?

Steve: Well they've just released an LP which is all our past English singles packaged up and it's out on CD and they've put a lot of money into promoting it. We may actually have to go and live there for a while, I mean you wouldn't believe it but in Rolling Stone magazine they had a little section called English bands to look out for and it said "Jack Rubies and Siouxsie and the Banshees" which is ludicrous. They see us in the same perspective.

So how do the Jack Rubies see themselves fitting into a traditional English indie-guitar sound like, say, House of Love or Darling Buds, two current press darlings?

Ian: Well I think we've an affinity with House of Love, they use guitars and melodies well, which is what we're into. The Darling Buds I'm not sure about, it's like a race to the top between them and The Primitives.

Steve: I think the Darling Buds are in a really dangerous position. They've had so much press it's incredible and maybe it's jealousy but I really don't think it justified. I think they're in danger of the bubble bursting and no one will want to know and they won't have made any money!

So how are the Jack Rubies for gigs nowadays?

Ian: When we first started we played every little dive in London, probably more gigs than we do now actually, four or five times a week we were playing in like shitty back rooms in pubs and warehouses just so the name Jack Rubies was in the City Limits gig guide every day of the week.

Ian: But the Blow Monkeys support was our first real break. It was literally playing to forty people in a dingy pub back room on the Saturday and then to 2,000 people in Brighton on the Monday. We initially got offered three dates, but they liked us and we finished the tour.

Steve: In the sense of an unknown band we've got quite a good situation now, financially there's no problem any more and we can release records when we want and we've got total freedom which is what we wanted all along.

The gunslinger appeared as a black smudge on a shimmery desert horizon, galloping nearer and nearer to the old shack. Reaching it in a dusty frenzy, he left the horse and advanced slowly, gun in hand, to the door. Kicking it open, he grinned with black teeth and curling lips, put on 'Lobster' by The Jack Rubies, and watched the Flintstones on the silent TV.

Norman G Oliver

THIS REPLICIA

For the past year, a relatively young band from Soham have been playing the circuit, picking up a vaguely gothic following along the way. The four piece comprising Darren Walker (vox & gtr.), Chris Scurrah (bass), Lyndsey Paxton (keybds) and Jim Thorby (drums) are known as THIS REPLICIA, and have on occasion been likened to The Cure in their early days. They are, however, anxious to point out that they are not trying to copy them.

Chris: Our music doesn't sound like them at all. It's just that everybody looks at the image and thinks we're like them.

Jim: The band was formed when I got a drumkit for Christmas. Darren already had a guitar and an amp (which, incidentally, his brother had made for him).

Darren: We persuaded Lyndsey to join after a lot of aggravation.

Jim: We practised every Saturday night in my room when my parents went out; my little sister used to bring us drinks and cakes.

Darren: And play tambourine on 'The Subway Song'.

Chris: When I met up with these three, they needed a bass player. I said I would play bass as long as I could play keyboards as well, but I've never played them live since: I think I'm stuck with the bass. Most of my songs are written on the keyboards, though.

One fact that may be well known to everyone (but is not going to be mentioned much here) is their involvement with Nutmeg, who actually claim to have discovered This Replica lurking in a corn shed. This explains why Tom (Dalpra: Nutmeg frontman) has sauntered in and settled in the corner to see how they get on.

Lyndsey: Not too much about Nutmeg, alright?

Jim: Because people think we hide behind them.

Tom: That's right, I went down the shop the other day, turned around, and there you all were, right behind me!

Jim: We don't support Nutmeg much now, only to help them out, because they do need helping out!

So, ignoring Tom, we carry on. Have you always been called This Replica?

Jim: No, only since Chris joined.

Lyndsey: We used to be called...what the hell was it?...Epoxy Grout, then The Violet Catastrophe, and Can The Bliss.

Chris: Then we got 'This Hideous Replica' from the lyrics of a Fall song, and we dropped the 'Hideous' bit for obvious reasons.



Lyndsey: Because Chris is hideous, and he got embarrassed about it! Our first gig was at The Burleigh Arms, October 1st 1987, supporting Nutmeg.

Where was your best gig?

Darren: the best audience response was Ely.

Chris: That was with Nutmeg and The Children Of Some Tradition, but the best we played was at the Sea Cadets Hall, with The Charlottes and the Surfin' Druids.

Jim: I think I most enjoyed playing The Glasshouse in Peterborough: it made a change from playing evening gigs, playing at lunchtime.

Darren: We've played all over - Peterborough, Little Thetford, Huntingdon, Biggleswade. Ely was the best place, because we've all got friends in Ely.

Chris: We've never played an outdoor gig, and I'd really like to.

Are you entering the Rock Competition this year?

Chris: Yes, mainly for experience. We're not bothered whether we win or not, but it

would be nice!

Lyndsey: It's to get exposure, the idea of playing in a large hall with decent equipment.

Chris: Getting all the local bands together is a good idea.

Jim: The first local gigs we went to see were to see bands like the Sardines and Stormed at The Rising Sun in Newmarket; we used to really enjoy that, and mosh along. We'd go in with really clean shoes, then come home and they'd be filthy.

Lyndsey: We used to get really pissed as well, on half a can of Special Brew!

Jim: You can't tell them that!

Lyndsey: I used to be really into groups like the Sardines and Stormed. I really like Flowershop; Nutmeg are OK, I used to go and see them quite a bit before I knew them, but it gets a bit boring seeing them at every gig - well, not boring as such, but you've heard it all before.

Tom: Oh dear.

Jim: I can really appreciate most local bands, even if I don't like the music. I like the ones

who dance around: The Desmonds, they're brilliant, they've got a really good approach to it all.

Darren: I like the Rancid Annabells (who?).

Chris: Everyone hears about Soham and thinks, blimey, fen boys, and that we don't know what the hell is going on around us...

Jim: But we do: three of us work in Cambridge. I work at General Accident in the Life Department, so if anyone wants a personal pension, endowment, etc....

Chris: I test lights for Pulsar; it's an extremely boring job.

Lyndsey: I ended up on the YTS, but I didn't like it because they wouldn't pay me! But now I'm very jolly at work, I'm a computer programmer.

Darren: I make life...

Lyndsey: He works with chickens.

Why did you release 'Tunnel Vision' as a single?

Chris: Because we had the opportunity to. It's not really us - we could do better now, as then we had only been together for about four months. It was OK for then.

Lyndsey: We could have done a lot better, especially now.

Jim: We sold about 400 copies, but we've still got 600 if anyone wants one!

Chris: We're going into the studio within a couple of months to record a really good demo. This time we'll do about four songs and concentrate on the mixing, and we're going to use it as a demo for London gigs and record companies.

Who are your favourite groups?

Jim: Don't ask Chris - he'll copy all of mine!

Chris: No I won't. I like The Cure, The Bunnymen, Joy Division, The Stranglers, Blondie. I like lots of different kinds of music, some of them I care not to mention, because I might get hassled for it!

Lyndsey: I didn't used to be influenced at all; it's only recently that I've been getting into a lot of music. My main influence and favourite band is Joy Division. I also like The Cure, a bit of early Pink Floyd, Cocteau Twins. I don't like The Beatles much - I don't mind them - and the Velvets, The Stones, even doomy, gloomy, dirgy stuff. I've got no keyboard player idols at all.

Darren: My idol is Mark E. Smith; he's my favourite singer and songwriter. I'm not really into guitar players. John Lennon, I'm really into him. Favourite bands are The Cure, The Fall, Velvet Underground and The Beatles.

Jim: I haven't got an idol as such. It's obvious that John Bonham was the best drummer ever, but his style wouldn't suit our music, even if I could play it. I just take influences from the different kinds of music I listen to, such as The

Smiths, Bunnymen, Wedding Present, House Of Love, etc. I used to like The Cure, but not any more, they're boring. If you like a bit of the corn shed pop enigma, This Replica are definitely worth going to see. Until recently, they have been regulars at the Burleigh Arms, but thanks to the City Council, that's becoming less frequent. They still manage to find gigs in quite a few places and are always looking for more; so have a browse through the gig guides or get in touch with them - they're bound to be around somewhere.

SOPHIE YOUNGE & GRAHAM STEVINSON



A-Z OF CAMBRIDGE ROCK

The first in a short series which sets about disembowelling some of the seamier sides of 1988's Cambridge music scene. By Luke Warm

A is for audiences; seemingly split into several factions this year. The Rock Competition managed to home in on all of them, concentrating the tribes in one place and often creating an atmosphere of brooding tension. The increase in casuals is a cause for concern. They don't seem to come for the music (a deep rooted tradition) but insist on standing stagefront, lemon-cardiganed chests forward, choosing who to tip their fifteenth pint of lager over or who to punch for smiling at their 'bird'. Also of concern are the overnight goths - 24 hour transformations from permed Debbie Gibson clones into crimped black rags and crosses and a sudden host of impressionable insecure friends. The indie faction, a drunker, quieter, but just as impressionable bunch have helped to swell sales of Primitives T-shirts and shades. Also worth a mention are the new wave of hardcore moshers who debuted at the aforementioned Rock Competition, and proved beyond doubt that brain death can indeed occur long before a fall onto the Corn Exchange's nicely polished floor.

B is for Burleigh Arms, late lamented hostelry - another victim of the council's new 'Ghost Town' campaign. A pub where the walls dripped, the

beer frequently ran dry, but a place where you could guarantee a relaxed and genial atmosphere. The former testing ground for new upcoming talent was gradually wound down to two nights a week live music. Following the installation of the ludicrous noise limiter which cut out on the first snare beat, bands refused to play and provided a further loophole to close the Burleigh down altogether. This was much to the delight of the pub's neighbours who had the audacity to object to music running on until 1.00 am (and I thought the pubs closed at around 11pm!) The overall result was the loss of a potentially decent small and much needed venue, often booked solid three months on, and a very unhappy landlords renowned for putting music before anything else (including decor and lighting!) Gone but not forgotten.

C is for Council - disjointed, misinformed, misguided hypocrites who on the one hand openly fund the ever so trendy Rock Competition, but on the other, deliberately run down music licences in smaller venues. They also banned essential advertising and flyposting for local musicians, an integral and artistic form of expression. This latter fact, connected with the sudden

development of a minimalist gig guide in the press, it came as no surprise that audiences dwindled to a pitiful level. Admittedly, the Council now seem to be getting their act together and are promoting some decent major concerts a year after opening the venue. It's a half hearted "we've done our bit" gesture which certainly won't win them my vote at the next election.

D is for press Darlings, of whom Phil Johnson emerged once again as the most credible. This year also saw the Hunts Post's 'Principlespeak' column brought to its knees - self interested, blase and incestuous, I suspect very few letters requested its return. We now await the new candidates to develop a column of similar nature, no doubt extolling the virtues, and inside leg measurements, of some other Huntingdon band. Scene & Heard meanwhile, grows in stature and provides a healthy breeding ground and forum for budding Sounds writers. It's pupated from an ugly but still slightly upmarket fanzine, into a 'colourful' and often controversial resume of the current music scene in and around Cambridge. Credits too to the two Pauls, for holding things together and bringing us excessively detailed Bible articles and the serious side to interviewing. Fish on Your

Head, the area's other alternative press, continues to wriggle and flap relentlessly at the heels of Scene & Heard, amidst rumours of a potential buyout! Watch this space.

E is for Extremities - not the Farrah Fawcett movie of the same name, but some of the cruder more earthy aspects of the all embracing music front in the City. The well-known goth band who turned their backs on us and swiftly moved to the gold paved streets of London, seeking the proverbial fame and fortune. The fame never materialised and it cost them a small fortune when the band split, and half returned to start over again, tails tucked well between their legs. Extreme! There's also the extremity of the Corn Exchange lager (now unrivalled anywhere). It's not particularly expensive but definitely aimed at the less discerning punters. Quite potent but a taste that must either be acquired or thrown straight back up! And back to music, what about that student thrash band taking song structure and harmony to its absolute extreme; or that wideboy on tambourine, laudibly defying the barriers of ageism. Or the laid back, laconic anti-interest movement in lead vocals, led by those gangly youths with the Mary Chain hang-ups. Extremity does seem to abound in Cambridgeshire.

GENEVA CONVENTION



The central pivot of this band, and, indeed, the one constant in an ever changing line-up, is Paul Garner, perhaps best known for his drumming with The Herbs and The Surfin' Druids. In this band, he plays guitar, sings the lead vocals and writes all the songs. In fact, he was responsible for many of The Herbs' and Druids' songs, including the award-winning 'Books about fashion'. So how does a drummer turn into a singer/guitarist?

Paul: We had a few singers and I wasn't happy with the way they were doing it, so I thought I'll have to do it myself. So instead of getting in a lead singer on his own and another guitarist - because we need two guitars - I decided that I'd have to teach myself guitar and do the singing as well. With no me on the drums, we've got to have a drummer; that's where Simon (Bishop, backing vox, ex-DYL) comes in.

I started playing drums when I was 14. My dad had a guitar (which I'm now using); my cousin thought he could play that, and I was sort of hitting things and shouting down microphones songs called 'I live in a wardrobe'. I always thought I was going to play drums in a band: it hasn't turned out like that.

The band were playing two London gigs just after the interview, so how did a band who'd only played three gigs (all locally) get booked for the big smoke?

Paul: I didn't think you could ever get London gigs without having a manager or an agent. When me and Jeff went down to see Stormed the other week, I took a tape with me and gave it to the bloke on the PA, who gave it to the bloke who handles

the bookings, and I kept ringing him up until he gave me something. They don't want to know if you've never had a gig in London, but once you've got one, all others follow off it. The Mean Fiddler is a good place to get a gig; it's one of the better places to play, and other clubs know you're good because you've guaranteed the Mean Fiddler 100 people through the door. The contract says if you don't get 100 people, you have to pay them £50. The more gigs the better - for experience, for getting people to hear the name, and selling a few tapes.

At this stage I don't think there's any point in having a manager. People have come up to me and asked to manage the band, but to be quite honest, I'm more of a pushy character than they are. Once you can't handle everything, playing in the band and setting everything up and sorting dates out, that's when you need somebody to help you out.

Simon: As far as Tim Cole (former DYL manager) went, he was the best thing that Double Yellow Line ever had. He just took so much off our minds; we never had to worry about how we were getting to gigs. OK he got us some extremely dodgy gigs, like the Cotters in Luton, where we were playing to a bunch of fruit machines. We had a hundred people in there but no one clapped. About half way through the set, we thought someone was clapping, but somebody had won the jackpot. *The idea for the band has been around for about five years, originally with just Paul and Matt Maunder (whose brother was a founder member of DYL). Matt and Paul subsequently played together in th Surfin' Druids. Whilst still in the Druids, they did some recording*

on their own. They didn't continue as Matt went off to University, so Paul started to get together a complete band. Whilst not in the band, Matt has played keyboards and bass on all Geneva Convention recordings (he has recently suffered from a motorcycle accident - get well soon). The original line-up was Paul on drums, Chris Pointon on bass, Sebastian 'Spazz' Jones on guitar and Chris Evans on guitar and vox.

Paul: It was really frustrating with Chris and Spazz: the amount of times Chris (Pointon) came round for a practice, and we just sat there and sat there till 10pm, and they hadn't turned up, and there were various excuses like "we're getting costumes for the next Desmonds gig" - it's got to be all or nothing.

Chris: Paul is very single minded, and it got very ugly when Spazz and Chris were in the band. Paul had set his heart on it, and he was really enjoying it and I was too, and he can be downright bolshy when he's annoyed.

The line-up of the band is about to change again, with Chris leaving to go to University; Simon has been offered a post with The Mullahs (at the time of writing, he has given Geneva Convention a month to get a recording contract before he signs his life away to The Mullahs), and they may well soon have a keyboard player. At diferent times, both Simon and Paul have drummed for Standpoint, who, of course, featured Geneva Convention's current lead guitarist, Jeff Prince.

Jeff: They split up because everybody just lost interest. It fell apart after the S & H interview (issue 12). Zak had different ideas to the rest of us

and he's pursuing them now, and we're leaving him to it.

Chris: A long time ago, I played in Family Affair, and with them, I did the Rock Competition. At the time I was also playing in The Heretics (a Hills Road band). We kept going for 18 months or so and entered the Rock Competition 2 years ago: we came third in our heat by a point, which pissed us off something chronic. We just split up because sixth form college finished.

Simon: DYL split up 4 months ago through Ben the guitarist wanting to pursue his own personal musical career which he has now developed down the Hopbine.

Claims to fame?

Chris: I've been on Playschool, that's my claim to TV fame. They did a whole programme from Thriplow Primary School.

Paul: I was on the Tom O'Connor Roadshow last year, escaping from a straightjacket, whilst drinking a pint of beer and playing tambourine at the same time. The whole point was that it was a spoof - I couldn't get out of the straightjacket!

Chris: He got dragged off by his feet by the floor manager after a minute or so. Tom O'Connor was absolutely lost for words.

Simon: I have sung backing vocals with The Enid at the Hammersmith Odeon, with Limahl's sister.

Jeff: I've met Batman and Robin!

Paul: I've got myself in a position where I'm surrounded by good musicians and things are going well. I'm more pleased with this band than I have been with any other band.

Steve Hartwell

JAGGED EDGE

Jagged Edge, a band with a distinctly British feel and outlook, landed a great support slot on the Ozzy tour earlier this year. The band, Mike Grey (gtr), Billy Kulke (bass), Rob Armitage (vox) and Steve Hopgood (drums), were interviewed at the Corn Exchange, Cambridge. They discuss the world of HM, both in and around them...

I notice that you seem to be billed as essentially a young band - the fact that you have a 19 year old guitarist, etc.: has that created a problem? In the days when we see the older musicians (some would say 'dinosaurs') continuing, you're up against the Pink Floyds, Robert Plants and even Ozzy Osbournes of the rock world.

Mike: Not really. Each member of the band came forward in their own field before they all came together in this band. They were all very well known in the rock scene, individually, from other bands.

Steve: It depends on how much experience you've had. I mean, you can start at, like, 10 and be totally well known by 20: that ten years will give you

enough experience to make you better than someone who is 50, but who started when they were older. Basically, we are all experienced individually, and all have done a lot of ground work to get where we are.

Billy: It just meant that initially there was a lot of response, even before anyone had heard us.

Mike: That's right: because of the names involved in the band, people immediately wanted to come and see us, because they knew each member from previous things. It may be a problem for other bands, but not for this band.

Your stage style is not instantly identifiable with other bands, Mike, your guitar style... you're not another Steve Vai clone or, moreover, an Eddie Van Halen clone. When people say "teenage guitar wizard", the image conjured may be that of a guitarist who may lack individuality.

Mike: The way I play is that I like to get as much communication as possible with the audience, and that is how I base my whole style, really.

Obviously, everyone has influences: from a very early age, this band found its own direction instantly. It wasn't like

we wanted to be a certain.... a Motorhead rip-off, or a Van Halen rip-off, or a Europe rip-off: as soon as we came together, we found our own sound. We didn't have to try and suss out what route we wanted to take - it became obvious by the way people sung, the way people played bass, and so on. We have a very aggressive style, a very powerful style, and it doesn't suit us to play anything light or whimpy, or that sort of thing.

Rob: We don't copy anybody. We just play what we want to play, and that's how it comes out - that's it.

Mike: We're much more influenced by, say Black Sabbath or Deep Purple, than by the modern bands. We like to take the style of the older bands, but play it in a modern way. The production of bands like Kingdom Come or Dokken is more where we come from: modern sounds, but played in a way that the '70's bands would play it. I tend to find that a lot of it lost its direction half way through: older bands, Zep, Sabs, Purple, have lasted a lot longer. We're like that, but play in a modern way. Because if you were to take Yngwie Malmsteen and compare him to Jimmy Page, there isn't much of a comparison, as they have progressed in different eras as musicians.

So do you all feel, then, that a lot of the '80's bands are generally not listening enough to hard rock, or do you feel as a musical unit you're set apart very much?

Mike: I feel that some of the newer English bands haven't got a clue anymore.

Billy: What the new bands do nowadays when they're forming a band, they put five people... a keyboard player, guitar, etc, but we kept away from the keyboard player...

Rob: On purpose.

Mike: This band was formed at a time when Bon Jovi were big, and we wanted to stay away from that; we wanted to go back to the old way, a less commercial way. Back to basics.

Billy: It makes you work harder if you're a four piece. You can take it easy if you've got a keyboard player to fill it all out.

Mike: we don't want to jump on the bandwagon, try and have a hit single: that's not important to us.

Steve: We don't want to give the impression that we're harking back to the 1970's: we're influenced by a lot of things, but nothing in particular.

Mike: we still like American bands, Dokken, Guns'n'Roses, Tesla and White Lion, Van Halen, Aerosmith. But what can you name that has sprung up in England in the last 5 years?

There hasn't been anything since Def Leppard.

But to a lot of kids, US metal IS heavy metal.

Rob: No, it's not.

I'm playing Devil's Advocate.

Billy: In America, perhaps it is. Bands here THINK that's what they want, so they go out and say "we're British, but we'd like to be American" - so they come out with American production styles, American sound; kids don't want it - they want a British rock band who sound British, with no pretense and a bit more sincerity about it.

Rob: Communication with an audience is what this band's all about. British audiences are much more reserved than American audiences; American musicians know how to communicate - English musicians in general don't.

Mike: When recently has a British band made it in America? There hasn't been one. American bands have taken over, their whole production on stage, their personalities, their music has overstepped England by years. There's nothing coming out of England 'coz they can't compete with it.

So do you feel yourselves as a HM band up against it, then?

Mike: Oh, definitely. We are always battling because there are no radio stations, little TV; they try and keep you off as much as possible. Rather than conform to what the media wants - tone down our image, have a hit single - that's exactly what we don't want. We do what we want and hope people like it, and there's no compromise in the band. 'A' isn't compromising 'B' by saying "OK, I'll play this if I can have a solo in the set". If that happens on that level, you won't stop all the way down the line.

Rob: This is the easiest band I've worked with - how many weeks have we rehearsed?

Billy: We've spent most of our time playing tennis, actually!

Mike: rehearsals tend to start with a game of tennis, then pool, then cards, then they give me all their money! (fall about laughing)

Steve: But I think people respect English bands. If you do well and you're English, they respect you even more. If you go all out for what you want, you'll get there.

MARK CURTIS



THE MULLAHS



The Mullahs are currently riding on the crest of a wave. The last six months have been extremely hectic for the band, who are now based in London. They have signed a prestigious recording contract with top producer, Paul 'Doc' Stewart, and a debut single is imminent. They have also recruited into their ranks two new musicians: drummer Simon Bishop (ex Double Yellow Line) and backing vocalist Sam Dowson (ex That Saxe). The addition of this new blood completes a line-up of exceptionally talented musicians. I caught up with Shaun Murphy (vox), Stephen Hewitt (gtr) and Jon Whitmore (sax) in South London, and asked them to explain the recent developments.

Jon: *There have been two recent major developments.*

Obviously, the signing was important, to help up on our way, and the second is that we have at last managed to get a line-up we are happy with.

Stephen: *The watershed was probably just before the Bronski Beat gig last year. The sound had been very different, and somehow the sound we have now, which we feel is unique, developed spontaneously. That gig was the beginning of the new sound: it was a real morale booster.*

Jon: *We were really lucky to sign the deal with 'Doc' Stewart. If you are a small band and get signed to an enormous record company, you may end up getting crushed underfoot. We didn't want any of that "yes sir, no sir" relationship with a company, so we signed a one year contract*

with a producer who acts as an intermediary. If nothing else, the contract will help us find our feet musically.

Stephen: *The thing is, 'Doc' has the money to help us a lot. We're about to record the first single. I think the best thing about it is that he's really on our side, and into the music: he's seen a lot of bands and chose us, which means he must like us. He wants us to go a long way, and he really thinks we can. The arrangement we have is that the material is recorded by 'Doc', and is leased to a major who would distribute it.*

Shaun: *The single is a double A side (Die for love/Sing to be free). There is a pile of other newer material as well, but it's always the case that you record the older material first.*

A while back, I was in the Corn Exchange and Phil Johnson came up to me and told me that 'Die for love' was the perfect pop song. That was our first critique. So there you are - it can't be bad.

The Mullahs appear to have come a long way over the past few months: but has the attitude of the band changed since the days when they played the Cambridge circuit?

Stephen: *We have a very professional attitude, and it's a very serious commitment. It's not just a once a week practice at Makka anymore: it takes a great deal of time, organisation and money - but it is very rewarding. The feeling is very good in the band at the moment - there's a load of vitality and energy - and I think we're going*



Stephen and Jon
(Photo: Steve Gillett)

to have a good time. I pointed out that many bands fail at the first hurdle because they do not promote their first single properly. Bands tend to ignore the promotional and marketing elements of the music business, and end up only selling a few hundred copies to their friends. The Mullahs have a head start on many of these bands now that they have signed with a producer who is genuinely concerned with the band's affairs. They are now beginning to make a name for themselves on the London circuit.

Stephen: *The gigs are fairly regular: we are doing the*

regular London spots. They're pretty hard work, you tend to make a loss on them, but they are vital: you get seen by really important people. If you pester the A & R men enough, then you can get them along to a gig. It's just indispensable for your musical education.

Jon: *We've started building up a following down here. If you play the circuit long enough you start to get yourself known. It's a long and difficult process, but we're getting there.*

Stephen: *The same names crop up in Time Out, Melody Maker, etc., and people will go along. Some of the pub gigs are very nice and extremely*

professional: they are really good places to play. Most of the venues are in far flung areas in London, but we find people do make the effort.

Obviously, the move to London was important for the band, and they had been considering it for some time. The Mullahs realise that if you want to make it, then it is vital to live in London and play the regular showcase gigs. They pointed out that although Cambridge is a good breeding ground for new bands, London is a more liberated place, and, hence, the place to be if you are a new up-and-coming band. However, they are fairly level-headed about the competition they face in the metropolis. I asked them what were the qualities they felt they had which set them apart from other bands.

Jon: *The style is very original. You see so many funk or rock bands playing the same old riffs: they may be very slick, and get the audience dancing about, but what sets us apart is that we have these qualities, together with originality.*

Shaun: *It's quite strange really, but when Stephen and I first worked together about three years ago. I was always aware that there was something there. As time went by, I knew that something big was going to happen. Just looking at the band, myself apart, everyone is really capable.*

Stephen: *It's more that that; the combination is very dynamic - an explosive brew of musical styles and influences.*

Shaun: *When we are at our best, I really believe there is not another band who can touch us!*

The strength of The Mullahs' music is the strong danceable melodies and the undoubted quality of Shaun's voice. Stephen has now matured into a songwriter of some distinction. With all this in their favour, they are justified in viewing their future with a great deal of optimism. Hopefully, their debut single will provide that initial springboard to success.

PAUL ATTWOOD



Sam and Shaun
(Photo: Steve Gillett)

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AS IT IS: the way it is

As It Is signed to Lemon Records (which they co-own) in early '88. Shortly afterwards, the 12" single, 'Someday (will bring it out)', was released. This single was then taken to 15 major record companies: MCA, London and CBS all showed interest, and requested further material from the band. They then did a 10 date tour, including Dingwalls and three days in Leicester - where they had an excellent response - and finished off at the Glasshouse. I met up with three of the band - Will, Richard and Kev - and we talked about everything from underpants to Rome, starting with their tour.

Will: It was really good; good venues, good people, great response - the whole reason for setting them up was to put Frognall on the map (*it certainly isn't on mine!* - Ed.). It's not a career move at all, we don't care. Frognall has been sadly neglected over the years, and we feel that it is a cultural centre, as far as...

Kev: Sheep.

Will: yeah, as far as sheep are concerned.... and barley fields!

Has there been any feedback from the tour?

Will: We should be having another Dingwalls date with a name band on a decent night, so the place will be packed, and we won't have to take anybody.

Richard: We'll probably run a coach, though...

Will: ...we don't have to.

Kev: We didn't have to last time.

Will: Also, the last Leicester gig we did, the Social Secretary wants to arrange another gig for us.

What are all the rumours about an Italian tour?

Will: Well, when we played Leicester, a rep. from Radio Leicester saw us, liked us, and played the single on her programme, and as it turned out - this was just luck - she's a British representative for Radio Roma. She put us onto this guy, Steve Austin, he runs an agency in Italy; so we sent a record out, phoned him up and told him what we wanted to do. Then he phoned us, telling us he'd sent the record around Rome and Sardinia, and they'd loved it!

Richard: At the moment, it looks like as if we'll be doing a four- to six-day tour of Rome



and Sardinia, and it could well be all expenses paid, but we may need sponsorship for air fares.

Will: The Italian music scene has got an underground level that you're never going to hear about in England, and also, a lot of countries look upon London as a Mecca... I don't know why.

Richard: There's a lot of respect for English bands...

Will: They think London, and then, in general, British bands have got 'something'; so when you go over there... I mean, we're going to have press conferences over there, and Radio Roma are going to give us an hour live session just to play - you're never going to get that over here, because there's not the facilities.

Richard: Anyway, the positive things that are happening are that I'm going over to Italy and I'll meet the director of Radio Roma, and I'll have a letter from the Woodston Weekend Committee, asking Radio Roma to spearhead the search for a band from Italy to come over here and play the Woodston Weekend. Also, I'll be meeting the agent to discuss us going over there for the tour.

If the Italians wanted to know what you're about, how would you describe yourselves, musically?

Richard: It's really hard, isn't it? It's a very personal thing for us because we're involved in doing it.

Will: When we talk to somebody who hasn't seen us, and they want to know what it's about, we'd say it's better to hear us: we find it hard to pigeon-hole ourselves - we're just a pop band. It's a very natural thing. Richard sings the way he sings; he's never contrived his

vocals, and that goes for everyone in the band. Anyone that turns around and says "oh, he's been listening to this, that and the other...", is bollocks (10p!). We have crossovers where we all like the same sort of music; I mean, we all like Prince, but we don't sound a fart like Prince (10p - well, 5p, 'coz 'fart' is quite acceptable on BBC TV, isn't it?)

Richard: As you get older, your influences count for less, anyway; it's like self-expression - you're learning to express yourself in your own personal way, and that's what we try to do in the band.

Will: If we were all 17 year old U2 fans, then we'd probably sound like U2. Basically, if people like us, that's good, but we have to balance up the business side with doing it for the pure love of it.

Richard: We're not interested in making mega-money, we're not interested in mega-fame - we'd just like to be able to earn enough not to scrape, and, at the moment, we are scraping.

Will: People will say "oh, they're just in it to make money", but because we're so used to having no money, our relation to having money is everybody's normal relation to a poor wage. Basically, if you've got no money, you can do fuck all (10p), but if you've got some money, you can do more. We work five days a week with the record company, so we don't have to dig into our pockets, and so we can continue to record. People will read this and say "oh, yeah, they've set up their own record company", but it gives us a far stronger base to work from.

Richard: at the moment, we want to keep Lemon Records so that we've got that identity within a bigger record label, but we haven't really got the identities sorted out of either the band or the record company, so Lemon Records will always be 'As It Is'. You ask us how we would identify ourselves in the music we do, but I think it's all irrelevant, anyway. If you're going to listen to the band, you make your own judgement, but from my point of view, we don't really care what people say we sound like, we just do it.

OK then, a very relevant question - what colour underpants do you all wear?

Richard: I don't wear underpants - no, not really: they're actually boxer shorts. I'm wearing all my dirtier, creappier ones because I'm going on holiday soon. What about you, Kev?

Kev: Green. Originally lime green.

Richard: What about you, Will?

Will: Oh, blue!

(Richard laughs hysterically at this)

Kev: Only you could find that funny.

Richard: Can we mention that our new bass player can't eat Brazil nuts?

Kev: Yeah, because he dies. Richard: He's hyper-allergic to Brazil nuts - he ate one at Christmas and he nearly died!

What are the best impressions you can do?

Richard: Well, if I could get my willy out, I could do Kojak in a roll neck sweater.

How about your favourite TV programmes?

Richard: Mine used to be Seiwyn Froggitt.

Kev: My favourite's Bewitched.

Will: Well, we've got to admit, we're the original fans of Neighbours: it used to be breakfast TV for us. But when it changed over so the collar was down on Scott, it just hasn't been the same.

Kev: Yeah, he used to wear his collar up.

I don't understand; can you explain?

Will: Well, when he was floating down the river, we knew it couldn't be Scott, because...

Kev: ... his collar wasn't turned up....

Will: ...and then, lo and behold, he comes back as a different character, which just spoils it completely for me, and his

collar was turned down. He'd taken on a different persona. Kev: That was obviously what he felt he could add to the part. Will: It was sort of method acting, wasn't it? Some people hold oranges, some people take their gloves off, and some people just turn their collars up.

Finally, what are your ultimate ambitions for As It Is and Lemon Records?

Will: For the band, it's to be signed, so that we can produce material that is available to as many people as possible, and we want Lemon to be a solid base, like a bubble around As It Is, so that we have a stronger grounding with whoever takes us up.

Richard: If they're going to take



the band, hopefully, they'll take the label as well, and we would have an element of control there.

Will: We'll feel that we have a certain grounding as though we can hold our own - er, is that 5p or 10p? 20p? What? Holding your own? Yeah, right - friar, friar, friar! Well, there you go! I can't remember what I was going to say!

So here the Interview ends in hysteria, as Will gets out his effects pedal, and we spend the rest of the session burping into a microphone. So, Watch out and catch As It Is live... and see for yourself What It Is!

SANDRA DALTON

SCENE

COMPILED BY ANDREW CLIFTON,
GRAHAM GARGIULO & PHIL JOHNSON

PETERBOROUGH

The Pleasure Heads have a new bass player - but it's only temporary, until regular bassist Pete Heron returns from his sojourn abroad. And the guy who is standing in is none other than Music Room Recording Studio manager Dave Colton. I hear that the Heads are about to make a video of 'Something You're Above', to go on a compilation video in aid of raising funds for Shelter, the charity for the homeless. The band is also seriously considering an increase in numbers: Pete and Dean realise that they're not the world's best drummers, so, if they could find a 'proper' drummer, both would alternate between vocals and percussion. The **Music Room** Recording Studios and the Peterborough College of Adult Education are jointly launching a course for aspiring recording engineers, consisting of eight 3-hour seminars, with the emphasis on practical work. Anyone interested in participating can obtain further details from The Music Room, tel (0733) 46901. Against all the odds, local Goths **Two The Dark** won a local competition which was held a couple of months ago to select a local support band for Erasure's

recent charity gig at The Court, in Bretton, beating off stiff opposition from the Chris Watson Band, The Brides, Big Blue World (ex Le Tricot Rouge) and The Hunting Party (originally known as Plastic Heroes or The Heroes). Incidentally, **Big Blue World's** debut single is expected to be released any day now: more about this in our next issue.

There's a rumour going round that **Gizz Butt** of War Dance (who seem to be coming in for a bit of stick from various contributors to this magazine) is planning to join forces with local musician Dave Reid (whose recent demo tape was critically acclaimed in the last issue of S & H) and a local soul singer: is Gizz hedging his bets?

The second issue of **'Two Pint Take Home'**, Peterborough's newest Indie fanzine is now on sale. Included are interviews with Talulah Gosh, Darling Buds, Jesus and Mary Chain, Batchelor Pad, Whiskey Priests, the Flatmates - all for 30p plus s.a.e. from Mark D., 12 Chatsworth Place, Longthorpe, Peterborough. Incidentally, Peterborough's newest Indie band, **Fat Tulips**, have now expanded into a five

piece, and will shortly be coming up with a new demo.

HUNTINGDON

The Huntingdon music scene now looks bleaker than ever; the area littered with broken bands, disillusioned or disinterested with the supposed lack of interest shown in their performances and releases.

Graham & The Mushrooms/Stinkhorn,



whose heavy swirling blending of thrash and psychedelia seemed perfectly in step with the Loop-ish revivalism of the moment, announced their disintegration, blaming audience apathy, despite securing some good London support slots. **Flowershop**, who regularly appeared with the Mushrooms, have finally revealed a short retirement from performances,

suggesting their appeal has waned, and are reputedly composing and rehearsing for a re-emergence, featuring, perhaps, a changed line-up and/or name (a projected Hunts Post 'Rockspeak' competition inviting suggestions for a new moniker was called off at the last minute).

The Children Of Some Tradition, whose fortunes have been unsteady since the last Rock Competition, seem finally to have split up for good. After a short period of personnel reshuffles, the nucleus of Toby Smith and Jon Haynes have now apparently parted ways, the former teaming up with **The Men From Uncle** (shurely shome mistake - Ed.), and the latter joining another Cambridge band. It was a shame that the group who emerged as a fresh antidote to the then staid music scene were unable to avoid the world of Double Yellow Line et al.

Gangster, formed from ex members of Out To Lunch, and all working for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, are temporarily out of action, following the departure of John Hyde and Chris Bank. However, founder member and singer/songwriter Richard Allen is undeterred, and is busy putting together a new line-up, which, he promises, will have a real drummer and a raunchier live sound. The departures were ironic, for Gangster were enjoying a high profile, following the release of their charity record 'Build On Our Dreams'.

New or potential bands seem extremely thin on the ground at the moment. **Under The Glass** recorded a demo tape recently, but have been absent from live appearances, and there have been rumblings of another Red Over White/Polar Bears hybrid, featuring John Lindsell, being formed and in rehearsal.

Quite why the local music scene is so stagnant, inactive and totally irrelevant and out of step with the national scene is disheartening, and one wonders

about gig-goers: we should ask are they happy now?

(One more blatant plug like that for the forthcoming BRILLIANT Charlottes' single, and you're out, Gargiulo! - Ed.)

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge's rock scene has been dominated by the events concerning the **Burleigh**: it's a sad loss to the city, and, in particular, to the young bands - for where do they go now? We're left with the Alma (one night per week), The Rock (two nights), The Boat Race (one/two nights) - all noted for their conservative bookings - plus the occasional rock gig at the Man On The Moon. The Corn Exchnage's too large and costly; the Sea Cadets is too far out of the centre (and, some would say, too dingy); and the Cattle Market site's at least a year away: it's a bleak outlook. One of Cambridge's longest running bands, **The Frigidaires**, have finally bitten the dust. Due to play a support slot to The Blues Band at the Corn Exchange recently, the Fridges failed to turn up. Rumour has it that Marten Rae, their vox/harp player, had walked out. The Frigidaires have always been one of the most popular bands in Cambridge, but not even their most fervent fans can condone their attitude to the Corn Exchange gig. City Council promoter Mick Gray goes out of his way to give local bands the chance to support a name band at the Corn Exchange: surely he has every right to expect bands NOT to let him down? We had another example of 'bad attitude' at the Burleigh a couple of months ago. Local Indie entrepreneur Tony Jenkins had booked a London-based band, **The Servants**, to support The Cherry Orchard at the Burleigh. However, The Servants considered themselves to be far too important to support a local band (they boasted the presence of Hugh Whittaker, the Housemartin's drummer, in



Hugh Whittaker
(The Servants)

their line-up), and insisted on headlining. By the time they had completed an over-long soundcheck, and after The Cherry Orchard had completed their full-length set, there was barely time for the night's 'superstars' to complete two songs.

Why can't more bands take a leaf out of **Nutmeg's** book? If ever a band have an excuse for a good old moan, then surely this band have. Having had their praises sung loud and clear by those fawning sycophants from the 'music business', only to be dropped in double-quick time, Nutmeg's "c'est la vie" attitude is to be applauded. They've just recorded some new material at the Music Room in Peterborough, which they will tout around the record companies - again. Good luck to them.

Finally, the old S & H hoodoo struck again last issue: no sooner had the artwork on the cover of the last issue been completed, when I learnt that our page one boys, **Infernal Death**, had split up immediately following a prestigious thrash gig in Birmingham and a complimentary two-line write up in Sounds. The split wasn't all that amicable, by all accounts. Bassist Chris Cutting wanted to continue with the name and the material, but founder members Steve Asbridge and Wally Waldman were having none of that. Wally and singer (!) Mark Wretham are forming a new band, reputedly to be called 'Clit'!

A.P. STOTT'S DIARY

WEDNESDAY 14 SEPT.

Dreamt I was back at school again; the teachers were giving me a hard time because of my dress. When will these nightmares end? It's over six years since I retired as headmaster, and almost four years since I stopped wearing dresses.

THURSDAY 15 SEPT.

So much happened today. I must try to write it all down before I go to sleep.

FRIDAY 16 SEPT

It's the eleventh anniversary of Mr Marc Bolan's death today. I can hardly believe it. Must find a way of breaking the news to Mr Paul Christoforou, it's getting hard to keep making up excuses. I'll tell him after I've told him about the Beatles splitting up.

SAT 17 SEPT

It's old Hank the postman's birthday. He's sixty-five today and everybody hinted about his retirement. Unfortunately he said he'd keep working as long as he was able.

SUN 18 SEPT

Old Hank's wheelchair was stolen today, hopefully. The church service was poorly attended again. The ladies of the W.I. are still blacking the Reverend Tony Blackburn after he refused them permission for a film show by Mr Martin Scorsese in the church hall. The sermon was a thinly disguised attack on the green belt. If I hadn't been afraid my trousers would fall down I would have taken it off.

MON 19 SEPT

Old Hank today accepted his retirement. Our doctor and local MP Dr Owen David, had a meeting of his SDP in the church hall. Although I was the only person in the audience, he still refused to lance my boil.

TUES 20 SEPT

Old Hank's wheel-chair was returned. He promptly announced that he would not, after all, be retiring.

WED 21 SEPT

Old Hank finally accepted retirement and signed a document to that effect, but only after riot police had surrounded the post office and secured his release.

FRI 23 SEPT

Dreamed I was being thrashed by the Head of Divinity last night - happy days.

SUN 25 SEPT

Harvest Festival today at our church, Saint Clive of the Blessed Electric Tricycle. The Reverend Tony Blackburn asked everyone to "bring something from your garden". Young Lord Lewin brought a pineapple, Old Gabriel the gardener told him he grew it from seed, in the orchid house. He actually sent his boy down to the greengrocers to buy a grapefruit, but young Morrissey became confused. Geldoff took "something from your garden" to mean the dustbin. I, as usual, brought a wheel-barrow full of grass cuttings.

MON 26 SEPT

Mr Phil Johnson's brother Ben was arrested for speeding today. This came as a shock because he wasn't driving his car, he was just sprinting to Mr Simon Beverly's Chemist shop. He was taken to the Police Station where his sample unfortunately proved positive. Johnson's excuse was that he had taken two doses of 'Night Nurse' the evening before.

TUES 27 SEPT

Mr Ben Johnson is now in hiding at his brother, Mr Phil Johnson's house. The 'gutter-press' have camped out on the lawn. Every cloud does have, however, a silver lining, Mr Phil Johnson is making 'a few shillings' selling the journalists nettle tea and beetroot sandwiches.

WED 28 SEPT

I was persuaded to leave my 'local' public house, 'The Derek and Dominoes', to see a 'local band' playing at the 'Burleigh Arms'. A jovial landlord greeted me as I stepped through the door, and promptly served me a glass of most refreshing ale. The 'band' were named 'Mustaffa Shit', and I availed my colleague of my opinion that the title was appropriate: they could neither play nor sing terribly well and their songs were intensely boring and instantly forgettable. My friend insisted that they had "chart potential."

THURS 29 SEPT

I was stuck in the toilet with a dose of the 'Dire Straits.' Whilst there I took the opportunity to listen to Radio One, it is called 'aural toilet paper' (or is it 'aural wall paper?'). I came to the conclusion that my colleague had been right last night.

CAMBRIDGE'S VENUE CRISIS

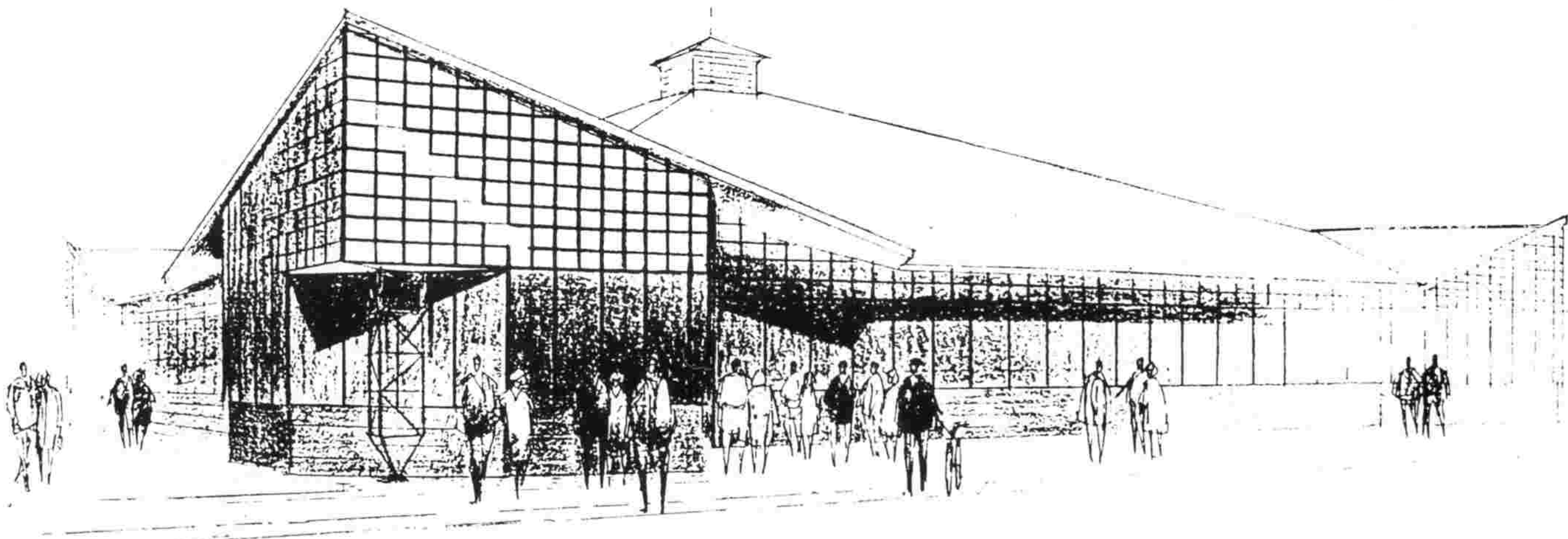
Live music at the Burleigh officially died on Tuesday, 27th September, but, to be honest, rigor mortis had started four months earlier, when that wretched limiter was installed. As it happened, I was there at the death... and it wasn't a pretty sight. Les Cargo will go down in the annals of Cambridge Rock History as being the last band to play the Burleigh: in fact, they had stood in at short notice (about 10 minutes!) for the scheduled band, who couldn't be bothered to turn up. Towards the end of the evening, our genial host Reg, who'd obviously been doing some serious thinking and drinking, came in, and, near to tears, announced that the Council and his neighbours had beaten him, and that there'd be no more live rock music at the Burleigh. We marked the occasion with a minutes' silence.

Could anything have been done to save the Burleigh? Stormed frontman and spokesman for a generation, Mike Michael, had come up with the most practical solution a couple of months ago: get our local bands to do a couple of charity gigs at the Corn Exchange, and enough money ought to be raised to pay for having the Burleigh partially soundproofed, thus allowing the limiter to be raised to a level acceptable to both the bands and the City Council's Environmental Health Officers. On the face of it, a couple of full houses at £3 per head ought to do the trick. And what happened? A rescheduled gig - the first attempts fell foul of local government beaurocracy - took place on Tuesday, 26th July, attracted 645 paying customers, and realised.... just under £300! And that princely sum was only reached thanks to the 'subsidies' granted by the Leisure & Amenities Department, otherwise there would have been a loss of around £100! Here are the official figures:

INCOME	
645 tickets @ £3 (less VAT)	
	= £1682.61
EXPENDITURE	
Hire of hall	300.00
Hire of P.A.	400.00
Printing	232.50
Advertising	96.64
Box Office Commission	96.75
Stewards	84.00
Security	125.00
Bands expenses	50.00
	= 1385.89
Net profit	= 296.72
The boss of Amenities & Recreation Deaprtment, John	

Wilkinson, has subsequently allowed a rebate of £104 against publicity and advertising, thus bringing the surplus up to £400. This will be given to Reg as a contribution towards the £600 plus, which he was obliged to fork out for the purchase and installation of the limiter. The moral of this tale is... don't hire the Corn Exchange if you want to raise large sums of money! The Burleigh is now licensed to hold discos (yuk!) for five nights a week. And, oh yes, the limiter's been turned down even more: if anyone breathes in the Burleigh, there's an automatic power cut-out.

On the brighter side, there's encouraging news of a couple of colleges who will be opening their doors to town bands. CCAT have always had a liberal policy in allowing townies into their gigs, particularly those in the Canteen, where, in recent years we've had an opportunity to see Gene Loves Jezebel, Stump, Red Guitars, Orange Juice and The Moodists. New Ents Officer, Kath Russell, and Assistant Ents Officer, Clare Kitchen, are busy planning a series of weekly gigs in the Students Refectory (known to all and sundry as The Batman). This room can accommodate about 100-150 people: notable bands who have appeared in The Batman in recent years include Age Of Chance, Indians In Moscow, Mighty Mighty and The Snapdragons. I would suggest that any local band interested in playing there gets in touch with either Kath or Clare on 0223-460008. Incidentally, I hear that The Darling Buds will be playing at CCAT on 19th November, supported by The Charlottes. The other College venue in question is Clare Cellars: former student Rob Mamadi is arranging a series of fortnightly Sunday night gigs down there. By the time you read this, The Light Blues Band and (probably) The Cherry Orchard will have played there: on 6th November, you can see Spiritwalk. Once again, I would advise bands to contact the organiser - Rob's number is Royston 62552. PHIL JOHNSON



ARTISTS IMPRESSION

THE VENUE - THE LATEST

With more and more music venues in the city closing all the time, it is a major achievement that, after nearly four years of persistent campaigning, the Cambridge Venue is at last going ahead. A contractor from Newcastle has been chosen, and work on the Hills Road site begins in November. The venue should be open by Christmas next year. The long series of battles and controversies that have dogged the history of the Venue so far have led to a whole load of misconceptions about what the venue will be, so here are the facts:

The venue has been designed by Norwich City Architects, who have been working on a similar project (initiated by the Norwich Venue Group), and who have been briefed by the Venue Steering Committee, which is made up of City Councillors and representatives of the Cambridge Venue Group. The final plans include an acoustically designed auditorium for 400 people; a bar; cafe; ample foyer space; and extensive artists accommodation. The building will also include the structural provision for extension into the first floor, where a community radio station, rehearsal rooms, a video suite and creche could be housed. The centre will be leased to a non-profit distributing company (now being set up) that will employ a professional management team led by a creative Director.

Users of the centre will have a duty to respond to suggestions and input from local people. When the venue opens, it will offer a diet of weekly gigs, including local bands and national independent bands, regular club discos, theatre, cabaret, dance, etc. Besides the possibility of some all-day events, the venue will be available as a rehearsal facility and music resource during the day. The aim is to provide a local and accessible centre for music and other performing

arts, and a focus for other new cultural industries in Cambridge.

The City Council is contributing £850,000 to the project, which will cover the cost of designing and constructing the building, and an appeal has been launched to find £150,000 to fit out and equip the building. The fundraising will take the form of an appeal to local business, plus a number of small and large fundraising events. The Cambridge Venue Group will be running a series of monthly Dance events at the Guildhall, and there are plans to start a regular Alternative Cabaret spot somewhere in the city. The venue represents a real chance to make an effective and valuable contribution to the future of music in Cambridge, so "speak now or forever....."

ERIC ORME

(Eric Orme is an experienced Arts Administrator who has been employed by the Steering Committee to help get the venue going. He is available on Cambridge 358977 Extn. 3835)

HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL SCANNER APPEAL: GANGSTER'S FUND-RAISING SINGLE

Richard Allen of Gangster (a Huntingdon band whose members all worked for the hospital) tells the story behind the making of the record. Hinchingsbrooke Hospital started its appeal for the new Hospital Scanner last Christmas: we thought of donating half of our fees from anywhere booking us in the local area (as an idea to get us gigs quickly!). During one of our rehearsals, we decided to write a song with the Appeal in mind. I had an idea that we could get people together from the hospital to sing on the song, and try to get local backing to enable us to record it and press some singles. I put notices around the hospital asking for backing singers, and approached the Scanner Appeal Chairman, Dr Cathy Hubbard, with the idea. She was very enthusiastic about it all, and arranged for me to attend a meeting of the Scanner Committee, to play them a rough tape of the song, and see if they would also like the idea. Everyone agreed that if financial backing could be sorted out, then the venture was worth an attempt. It was aimed at providing further publicity for the Scanner Appeal, and that had to be worth trying. The Committee said that they would leave the actual plans for the recording and publicity, etc. down to me. The band, with the help of a few friends, began distributing leaflets, explaining what we were trying to do, and started rehearsing the song with the hospital singers (none of whom had sung publicly before). I wrote to TV and radio stations, and also approached local recording studios and record pressing companies to ask if they could help. After a few weeks, things began to start moving. Radio stations replied, asking for copies of the song when completed; Anglia TV said they would like to cover the event if they could; and

Spaceward Studios offered their time at a reduced rate - so too did SRT record pressing of St. Ives. HMS design of St. Ives gave their services free of charge in setting up the lettering on the sleeve, and Prism Cameras of Huntingdon donated a large sum towards costs and took the sleeve photos for free. Everything went so well, I could hardly believe it. We set the studio date and had received enough donations to enable us to pay all costs, and have 2000 singles pressed. Local papers covered the story, and everybody concerned was pleased with the end result.

The next thing was distribution: with the help of local papers, people came forward again, willing to sell the record in their shops, pubs, clubs, etc. I am still working on this, and have almost distributed all the records: they are selling quite well everywhere, I believe. That, of course, makes it all sound easy, but a lot of footwork, time and effort was put in by all those involved. As far as Gangster was concerned, it was all for a good cause, and it was great publicity for us, too. We played five good live gigs, including a big outdoor event in Huntingdon for the Appeal, with the backing vocalists taking part during the charity song.

RICHARD ALLEN

(If you want to purchase a copy of this record, write to Richard at 45 Stukeley Road, Huntingdon - minimum donation £1)

RECORDS and TAPES

Reviewed by Steve Hartwell, Luke Warm, Tom White, Paul Christoforou, Chris Williams, Jezebel and Lydgia Stevens



Tom Hodgkinson
(Chopper)

CHOPPER

Workout Demo tape

In keeping with the songs we'll keep this review short and sweet, or rather, short and angry. Seven songs in as many minutes, you're still reading the sleeve when the tape finishes. Not as humorous as their live performances but just as thrashy (and trashy). If only the rest of the Cambridge scene was this lively and this willing to take risks. Grab this now before they mutate something more extreme! Available from: James Parker, c/o Jesus College, Cambridge. SH

THE BIBLE

Honey Be Good/Up In Smoke/White Feathers/Coming Of Age
Chrysalis Records BIBX3

And so we come to Honey Be Good by The Bible, their second single from their second album, Eureka. Honey Be Good doesn't grab you in so much as tempt you with an alluring invitation to the Biblical world of meaningless goodbyes, American '50's nostalgia, and casual references to The Temptations. It's a single that ponders without seeming to have much to say, and wanders, as if it had nowhere to go. It's tugging at your sleeve and coughing discreetly in the background, trying to attract attention. In short, it's too shy, wielding the ultimate line in concession: "be good, and if you can't be good, be good at being bad". Honey Be Good is a long way from the hook of 'Crystal Palace' and the sublimity of songs like 'Mahalia', but it snuggles nicely into a warm space in The Bible's repertoire. In true Bible tradition, the 12" has been packed with goodies like every 12" should, with extra songs - Up In Smoke, White Feathers, and the excellent Coming Of Age. Honey Be Good deserves every good word it can get. CW

THE BICYCLE THIEVES

5 Track Demo Tape

The sole word that sprang to mind on hearing the opening track from this recent demo was 'calypso'. 'Liverpool St.' shows a slight departure for The Bicycle Thieves and for the Cambridge music scene as a whole. Of course, it's still very much indebted to the Bhundu Boys for its Africano rhythms and intertwining guitars. In fact, the whole tape has a much softer edge than their live performances, and this sterile production does little to set them further apart from other lightweight pop-oriented student outfits. The songs are short, tight and well-arranged - in particular 'Margaret Vidal', which is constructed around a whole shopping list of popular household names, interspersed with a neat little chorus. Student bands, however, are notoriously unstable beasts, but The Bicycle Thieves seem to be taking themselves more seriously than most. LW
(Tape available from Simon

Ounsworth, St. John's College, Cambridge)

BLIND MICE

Nothing/Just Like We Do
Davy Lamp Records

Having already taken full advantage of the vacuous hole in the music scene in deepest Essex, Saffron Walden's own Blind Mice have emerged as the county's brightest hope. Already under the watchful, albeit capitalist, eye of the national music press (resulting in a 'single of the week' award in Melody Maker recently), and with radio session airplay just around the next corner, this, their second single, is sure to take the Mice one rung higher up the Indie ladder. It's a nice package, with glossy upmarket sleeve, spoilt only by a hideous drum sound and some pretty blatant plagiarism. 'Nothing', on the Wedding Present side, is a perfect showcase for Mark Willson's pure Gedgist vocal assault. Busy drums and bass are complemented by a slightly flanged but frantic guitar, and, played loud, create quite a little maelstrom amidst the grooves. 'Just Like We Do', on the Men They Couldn't Hang side, continues the angry young man theme, but in a more paradiddly vein, hinged around some abrasive guitars, neat backing vocals and harmonies. Let's hope they're not too blind to walk into the corporate A & R traps that will inevitably follow. LW
(available from all good record shops)

THE SARDINES

Hot Diggety Dog - Yeah!
Pink Fish Records: PF001

It's been a long time coming, but here it is, the Sardines first venture onto vinyl on their own Pink Fish label. While the argument rages about whether it's a mini-LP or a maxi single, we'll merely note that it's sold as a 12" at a 12" price, it contains 10 songs and is excellent value for money.

The Sardines have released a number of cassettes in the past but they were always disappointed that they never managed to capture the excitement of their live performances. This time they recorded a gig at the Sea Cadets (last December) and then replaced all the instruments to get a good quality recording but still with that live feel. 'Feel' is exactly what's plainly evident on this record, not simply in terms of the playing but also in the intelligent lyrics. The humorous side of the band appears in songs like 'Big Mouth Shut' and 'Motormouth'.

The music is heavily based on R'n'B and 60's soul but sounds distinctly contemporary, with two tracks lilting along with a reggae beat. There are some excellent songs here so reserve a space for it in your record collection!

Available at gigs, Andy's, Parrot's or from Paul Weston, 2 Glebe Road, Cambridge, CB1 1JY. SH

THE BRIDES

It's No Picnic Demo tape

The Brides have a task ahead - they must rebuild the interest achieved through their previous recorded Jilted Brides releases. This tape goes some way to this, but at the same time it reiterates the faults facing this genre. This effort can be divided into sections: 'Brain Child' and 'Yesterday's Man' both purvey a forceful exterior, but this soon falls to reveal hollow promises. In the other section reside 'Sheriff' and '54 Hours'. Again, both front a strong exterior but where the others lack, these follow through with the initial kick and show much more thought in their construction. '54 Hours' wins overall, pipping 'Sheriff' with its harder beat and more direct promise. Here The Brides have shown us they're still competent in purpose: they must now reveal that this covers their intent too. J



The Bicycle Thieves

BOYSDREAM

'In Your Eyes'/'Betrayal'/'The Wind'

Dreamscape Records ESP001
Boysdream have so far - though intermittently - followed in line with other local 'alternative' bands, both in direction and, sadly, in fortune. The A side, 'In Your Eyes', follows those well trodden paths as does one of the B sides, 'Betrayal', sounding as we've come to expect: 'In Your Eyes' scores only with the more inventive structure. It's not until you reach 'The Wind' that their potential shows through, and the sections come together, unified in a concerted direction with which they can have hope of recognition. The singer's vocals live have so far dogged this acceptance outside of their niche, but whether by clever mixing or, hopefully, a realisation of limits, a more ambitious vocal and sound has emerged. Expounded with care, final justification should come. J

(Available from local record shops or direct from Boysdream, 69 Crown Street, Peterborough PE1 3UX, price £1.50.)

HOUSE GRINDER

Hit Me/Heavy Beat

Prods in the Dark: Grind 002

Now here is something unusual, a record from a Cambridge band that actually sounds up to date! In this case the music is a high speed collision of funk, rap, hip hop and house. Since the release of their first single in the early part of this year, House Grinder have expanded from a Chris Mann solo project into a full band, who are powerfully evident on 'Heavy Beat'. In contrast, 'Hit Me' is Chris solo again, trying to create something different in the live version, but it doesn't work as well as it might. It sounds too similar to the band version and lacks the excitement it creates live. Even though the A side is slightly disappointing this is the record which could bring them national fame - buy it before it becomes a collectors item (an

alternative version of 'Heavy Beat' will appear soon on a compilation being put out by Grim Humour fanzine). Available from record shops (distributed by Backs and the Cartel). SH

THE DEAD GOLDFISH ENSEMBLE

Reality: A Surrealist Nightmare

Peeved Tapes PV032

Let your mind be transported by the surrealist nightmare, as created on tape by The Dead Goldfish Ensemble. Here's how: close your eyes very tightly, apply your index fingers to your temples, and pull a pained expression on your face (like the ones Dr McCoy used to be so good at in Star Trek). You will find that bouncing eggs (yes, bouncing eggs!) will come bounding towards you in a menacing manner, excerpts from the film Koyaanisqatsi will appear before you, and after a little longer, a big sleep will overwhelm your overworked senses. The sounds of 'Reality' are a rather unique cross between Ceefax and the music on Countdown, where the contestants are busy scribbling away on their anagrams. It has that sort of nervous energy in it, and a white sterility that reminds you of microchips, supermarkets, and bright lights flickering on and off. And somehow the word Zanussi gets mixed up in it somewhere, ooops... time for my tablet..... CW

(available from Steve Hartwell, 46 Kimberley Road, Cambridge CB4 1HH, tel. 352612

THE CHARLOTTES

Are You Happy Now/How Can You Say

Molesworth Records

All bands are liable to get labels hung on them. And a band that plays speed-pop and is fronted by a girl is more liable than most to be labelled as Primitives copyists. If you read their exclusive interview in this magazine (issue 14), you'll remember how The Charlottes are

keen to play down any similarity: "That's only one colour of the rainbow", they say. The A side of this single, 'Are you happy now', is a really stupid one minute forty-five seconds, from its gatecrash intro to the strangled feedback wrung out at its denouement, that will do little to deflect the Primitive charge. The B side is less thrash, more song and a hint of those other colours in the rainbow. This is a single that will please their fans, although it doesn't come close to the shambolic energy the band can fitfully muster on stage. Buy it, but make sure you go and see them too. TW

(Available from all good record shops in a few weeks' time)

THE SURFIN' DRUIDS

The Man With No Name Demo Tape

At the time of writing The Surfin' Druids looked to be no more, main man Jez Quayle having fled the nest for University somewhere - so what have we lost? One of our best local bands, that's what! However we can console ourselves with their final recordings. For the Druids have left

us with an excellent selection, eleven in all, starting with the title track which bursts into life with Jez's frenetic harmonica. Obviously Jez has been listening to his Elvis Costello LP's of late: there's no mistaking the EC vocal trademark on all these songs. The wonderfully catchy 'Mr Optimistic' with clever back-chat vocals from Richard Barker (bass) and Simon Sheldrick (drums) beats the rather corny 'Too Cool to Dance' but then we'll forgive them for their sins and move over to side 2, where the short and snappy 'Perfect Girl' has hardly started before she's finished and left for 'Angela'. There's a guest violinist called Phil Slater on this one, and very nice too. 'Rita' is a dreamy whimsical type by the sound of things and 'New Shoes'n Tux' finds the Druids in very mellow mood indeed (remember 'Stray Cat Strut' by the Stray Cats?) 'Surfin' Druid' is either a tribute to, or a rip-off of 'Wipe Out'. It hardly matters - the song's merely an instrumental work out, especially for Simon's percussive skills.

The icing on the cake and the Surfin' Druid's swan song is called 'Tick'. Quite simply the most infectious chorus I've heard this year, but please don't take my word for it - buy it yourself! PC



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VARIOUS ARTISTS Strange Fish LP Raven Records

Of the 12 acts on this, the first Cambridge compilation record for at least 6 years, less than three-quarters are familiar to even the most enthusiastic of local music followers. The inclusion of Mean Business (with an eponymous track) is explained by a quick look at the insert, which tells us that it is Pete Ingram's band. Pete, of course, is one of the people responsible for the records release (the other is Jay Taylor). But who are Fanny Egg and Crazy English?

The record has suffered from an exceptionally long gestation period which means that only three or four of the bands are still in existence. The Mullahs are now signed to another record label, The Fire Department have moved to Brighton (their track, 'Girl Girl Girl' is the same as their single), Graham and the Mushrooms are still going (not true: see County Scene) but under the name Stinkhorn, and how could Su Lyn split up? Actually Su Lyn's track is one of the more atmospheric, evocative parts of this album, so why don't we see more of her around Cambridge?

The Wood sound rather dated and conventional particularly compared with their performances at the Rock Competition. The famous 'Books About Fashion' is credited to Paul Garner/Surfing (sic) Druids as Paul, the writer of the song, has left the Druids (who thus no longer do the song) to form Geneva Convention who still do it but in a revised form. The Vivgil's Aunty track is 'Turn To Blue' (not one of their best) whilst Turn To Blue offer us 'Rhythm City' (a good song but why didn't they put on the award winning 'Rain Parade'?) The biggest surprise is the Double Yellow Line track 'Treasure'. This is DYL's only available vinyl recording and shows them doing what they did best, funky pop songs in a Level 42 / AHa vein. This one is so polished and catchy it deserves a release as a single in its own right.

This LP, whilst not directly associated with the CVG, is intended to raise money for the new venue. If it had come out a year ago, or with a better selection of the popular local acts/songs, it would probably have sold a lot better. It's a good cause particularly with the recent demise of the Burleigh so if the record doesn't appeal why not donate some money directly to the CVG?

The most surprising feature of the album sleeve is a credit for a firm of

Solicitors. Are Raven expecting some legal troubles or is it some form of sponsorship? Available from local record shops or direct from Raven Records Ltd, PO Box 188, Cambridge, CB1 1BJ. SH

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Causing A Cammotion: A Cambridge Compilation Peeved Tapes PV31

Causing A Cammotion, a Peeved Tape Compilation, featuring ten bands performing no less than eighteen songs between them. First off is GENEVA CONVENTION, with more of their music for dancing mules. 'Read about her' and 'I can't stand it' are, in fact, only two of many tunes penned and performed virtually single handedly by Paul Garner. It's all very commendable, and the songs aren't bad, either, particularly 'Read about her'. But it takes a fearless fellow to take on the singing with a voice like his. It is true that the songwriter will usually have the best idea of how his or her lyric should be sung, but if you can't do it, you just can't do it. He should keep the songs but get a singer; look at Vince Clarke. As for FIRES IN ARABIA, I was beginning to wonder whether each member of the band were even playing the same song. They sound about as together as Bros will in six months. They paper over the cracks by trying to sound as shameless and diverse as possible. This is done by adopting the old 'we recorded it in a telephone box and we don't care' attitude. I could well believe it. Boil it down and what remains is a shambolic muddle with the sound of someone gargling on Corn Flakes in the background. From the fire into the frying pan, and onto the Giant Polar Bears, who don't leave much of an impression. Their songs are fast and largely incoherent, leaving little space for anything like a tune. LOUISE ALBAN's contribution, 'Autumn', is a welcome relief. If Tracey Thorn was singing, it might easily be an Everything But The Girl number, but she isn't, so it doesn't.... songs about seasons are easy to knock, but the eloquent acoustic guitars and fragile voice blend nicely to conjure up pleasant images of September rain, falling leaves, puddles, and things like that. The final songs on side one are provided by GLASS ASYLUM. They use string sounds and rolling military drums to produce a rather bizarre but intriguing piece called 'Three portraits of a consumer'. Need

I say more? It's bathed in a wash of reverb and effects, which is a shame, because the tune suffocates and becomes indistinct as a result. Their second song 'What a waste' is a news commentator talking about nuclear dumping over a marching drum pattern for one minute. Definitely not for Bananarama party types.

And so on to side two. 'Walking the tightrope' by ONLY ON A SUNDAY is arguably the best song on the tape. Its melody and telling lyrics combine to produce a song of remarkable puissance and originality. However, the second song 'Pinstripes' sound laboured and hurried, as if someone was in a terrific rush to get it over with. I don't blame them, but it doesn't do the song any favours. A band to watch out for.... hopefully. Next up are QUIET LIFE. For a band with a name like that, they make an awful lot of noise, and most of it's unnecessary. 'Get out of here, 'cos here you don't belong', they sing. Well, I'd go along with that. They construct an enormous pyramid of solid shit with their music, and top it all with a vile dropping of pretentious prattle. They have one ability, and that is to destroy, but the smouldering pyramid remains intact. THE DETECTIVE manages a crazed crossbreed of Depeche Mode and rhythmic raving in 'Fanfare'. I'm not sure that it warrants repeated listening, but it is one of the more distinct tracks on the compilation. In stark contrast comes the twangy folk shuffle of PLUCK THIS!, fronted by the distinctive chat-rap of Demmi. The jive is infectious, and the treatment's unbelievable! It leaves little to the imagination, but that's not the point. It's pure, open air, cider drinking jig-rap! DEAF GOES EAST contribute a couple of 'movements', by the names of 'Window panes' and 'The beating of washing hearts'. The former sounds like something straight out of Brian Eno's sound lab, and the latter like something out of his rear end. About as artistically satisfying as picking your nose in a Happy Eater. Performing the playout is A BAND OF STEVES with 'Marching'. It sounds as if it could have come from The Dead Goldfish Ensemble tape, and maybe it did. It's a bumpy ride though Causing A Cammotion, but having said that, it does have its moments. 7 out of 18. CW (available from Steve Hartwell, 46 Kimberley Road, Cambridge CB4 1HH, tel. 352612)

THRILLED SKINNY
Clinging To The Shelf/So
Happy To Be Alive
Hunchback Records

Pausing for the briefest of moments after the stylus had rapidly left behind 'Clinging to the shelf', I thought to myself, well what's the point, and why such an ugly noise? Mary Chain meets Buzzcocks, but replete with psychedelic lyrics, painfully distorted vocals, all thrown up over a thrash noise backdrop. Is it necessary? How come they're increasing their popularity over East Anglia? Questions questions questions. The flipside advances their musical boundaries with a few more chords thrown in for good measure, but is it a case of tongue in cheek and foot in production? Or is it something more deep rooted and meaningful? If you rearranged the words, could they have come directly out of a first year school love letter? And then I glanced at the bottom of the sleeve and found a contact address in LUTON - and everything suddenly became much clearer. LW

(available from Hunchback Records, 22 Claydown Way, Slip End, Luton, Beds.)

P.S. Thrilled Skinny will be playing at the Sea Cadets Hall in Cambridge during November.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD
So Blind/Build It Up

Red Honey Records

(flexidisc)

I'd always been a bit wary of flexis until this one appeared. For such a small unassuming piece of wafer thin bendable vinyl, the sound reproduction is quite something. Cambridge's Cherry Orchard have already notched up a string of pretty impressive gigs, and their packed support to the recent Wishing Stones affair at the late lamented Burleigh should have significantly swelled their already substantial following. If it hasn't swelled the following, it's certainly swelled the coffers sufficiently to finance this particular release - a brave and admirable move, and a snip at 50p. 'So Blind', a live favourite with students evrywhere (though I'm unsure why), has a full sound permeated by lilting harmonica. Guitars breeze happily along and Jason Smith struggles to shake off the inevitable Lloyd Cole comparisons. He fails abysmally, but it's not enough to detract from the song's wonderfully laidback presentation. 'Build It Up' is more MOR uptempo funk, but with added acoustic guitar, which is somewhat lost beneath a very awkward gated snare drum set-up. It's a well thought out little artefact, so buy a copy now, and make these guys rich. LW (Available from the band or from Rhythm, 172 Gwydir St., Cambridge CB1 2LW; alternatively, you may be one of the lucky people who found a free copy inside this magazine!)

haven't heard the good news, and dig deep.

(available from lots of shops in Huntingdon)

friends with names like 'Pip McCarthy'. On the third track, there is a chorus which owes something to the surf style of The Beach Boys, but it's not T-Birds and girlies that The Desmonds are concerned with, but drinking tea. Who else could do it? Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you The Desmonds..... CW (Available from the band at gigs)



Steph McNicholas
(Sound Assassins)

POSSESSION

Toxin Demo tape

'Possession' and 'Toxin' suggest a dubious Goth band, or a loud thrash metal noise. Not in this case (not of the latter, anyway). Possession seem to have an identity crisis at the moment: there's nothing wrong with that, especially if you're a relatively new band, trying to establish your own sound. I only hope they don't decide to divert too far from the sound on this tape. Mark Cowling's vocals have improved no end since his stint in the Melting Trees: he has a likeable voice that shows confidence (although as the tape progresses, his vocals became somewhat strained). Steve Gibbs on guitar is superb: he shows an excellent sense of versatility that adds to an all round atmosphere of swirling sound. Then you have the finishing touch of bass and drums which provide a strong undertone, and complement the guitar. In most bands, there is a weak link, be it bass or vocals or whatever; but in this case, there's none - everything fits together so well. To me, Possession are a glorious blend of prime-time Joy Division meeting a fragile Flock Of Seagulls vocal. Add to this a well produced tape of excellent quality, and you have possibly the best demo produced by a local band that I've heard in a long time. LS

GANGSTER

Build On Our Dreams/Heads You Win

Medical Records

Build On Our Dreams is a song that breathes life into words like 'good' and 'nice', not to say being bloody useful too. Written by Gangster, and performed with the help of the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital staff, the single is out to raise cash for the Scanner Appeal (see what I mean about being good?). It starts with a plucking guitar, like the music from Bagpuss, and goes on to express sentiments about helping each other, and making this a better world (that's what I call nice). It ends in true Feed The World fashion, with a resounding singalong of the words, Build On Our Dreams. The flipside, Heads You Win, has more of a sullen edge to it, and is set in a subtle Moody Blues style. Heads You Win complements the record perfectly, and proves that Gangster have agenuine knack for good tunes as well as a healthy conscience. This record makes people whose insights are parochial and leaden with deadweight cynicism look very silly indeed, so don't say you

THE DESMONDS

Four Track Demo tape

The Desmonds demo - four tracks that reek of fun, integrity, and better times in pop music altogether. Their music picks up the remnants of the post-punk generation, with familiar chord patterns, vital blasts of effacious guitar riffs (NOT solos), and a single solitary dose of feedback! Why? Because they are The Desmonds! They are led by Viscount Desmond, whose ranting and rapping voices the Desmond doctrine (?) with clarity and cool humour. Behind Viscount lie the multi-layered 'oohs' and 'aahs' and allsorts of Neon and Arable. Their vocal textures are a vital component in the Desmond 'wall of sound'. Picking on the most dubious subjects, The Desmonds turn them into three minute anecdotes with music, all about days in the life of a Desmond. They tell of German occupancies of campsite showers; infamous clothes shops; and old

THE SOUND ASSASSINS

Get Out Of My House

Cooltempo Records COOLX
173

'Get out of my house' is a fairly uninspired stab at House music, with the usual abundance of samples, voice-overs, chunky drum patterns and machines that go 'boing!'. Despite a delicious crispy piece of production by 'Hoax Incorporated' (?), the Sound Assassins would do best to quietly forget about this one. What was probably an OK song to start off with, has been sliced up and pounded into a monster mish-mash, taking 17 minutes to finish, on 'mutant', 'spectrum edit' and 'radio edit' versions. Fine, so it's for the dancefloor. But do you dance to it, or on it? CW (available from disco specialist record shops)



Mark Willson
(Blind Mice)



The Charlottes



Tim Whyley
(Sardines)



Boo
(The Bible)

**RAPEMAN
BAND OF SUSANS**

The Mean Fiddler, London
The name BAND OF SUSANS is a bit misleading: admittedly the two female members of this New York quintet are called Susan (in fact, there used to be three Susans in the band), but their driving force is singer/songwriter/guitarist Robert Poss. Although the Susans have been bracketed with US noise bands like Sonic Youth and Big Black, their music clearly has its roots in '60's American guitar rock. Most of Poss's conventionally structured melodies are drowned by the three guitarists' excessive use of feedback, the powerful bass playing of Susan Stenger, and Ron Spitzer's muscular drumming. I hope they prove me wrong, but I suspect that they will slip back into comfortable obscurity upon their return to the USA. No chance of this happening to RAPEMAN, the new band of Chicago's Steve Albini. I've got a sneaking feeling that the former Big Black frontman will prove to be a source of inspiration to future generations of rock musicians, in much the same way that Lou Reed/Velvet Underground have influenced rock groups of the '80's. Albini's choice of name for the band has upset a lot of people, but he remains unrepentant: he sardonically remarked at this gig that, due to the reaction to the band's name, he was going to change it... to Rapeperson! Rapeman take the stage, and Albini is in charge from the word go: tribby and glasses are carelessly discarded during the first song, and a wag in the audience who tried to engage Albini in conversation received the sharp end of his acid tongue - "I can't hear you: you've got somebody's dick in your mouth."

Anyone who turned up tonight expecting to hear Big Black Mark 2 would have been disappointed. This band is totally different, and the difference is basically down to Ray Washem's fluid and rhythmic drumming which, allied to the twangy basslines of his former Scratch Acid colleague, the amiable David Sims, gives Albini the opportunity to change the tempo of his choppy rhythms in a way that would not have been possible with the regimentation of Big Black's drum machine. Having worked the slamdancers into a frenzy, Rapeman climaxed (!) the evening with a moving version of the funereally paced 'Budd'; and when, in mid song, Albini belts out an anguished "Motherfucker!", you know he's been touched by the hand of God. Forget the name, feel the noise.
PHIL JOHNSON

**RUNRIG
PLUCK THIS!
CHARLIE PEACOCK**
Corn Exchange, Cambridge
Take at least three nationalities in a given situation, and you could normally conjure up a joke based on whatever subject that gives you a kick: not tonight though, where humour takes a backseat to a pot pourri of musical culture that proved that variety is the spice of life. To demonstrate this CHARLIE PEACOCK, an extremely talented, albeit unknown, American artist, took the stage, accompanied by an acoustic guitarist and a soulful backing vocalist, and served up infectious R'n'B, almost a cappella

style. Although coming direct from Greenbelt (the Christian Arts Festival) - as did many of the crowd - Charlie was never going to force sermons upon the masses; just taking time between numbers, expressing his pleasure at being on stage, performing. Looking a dead ringer for Mick 'Simply Red' Hucknell, with voice and wardrobe to match, but without the sexual innuendo, and bags more sincerity to boot, Charlie was inspiring and sincere to the last. With barely time for reflection, PLUCK THIS!, Cambridge's equivalent of a cajun/folk Blue Aeroplanes, in terms of visual phenomena, were upon us. Chaos reigns as frontman Demi whips up the sextet into a frenzy, best described as a fusion of harps, harmonicas, skins, strings and screams. Demi's vocal contortions make 'Clumsy lover' sound like a mass orgy at a farm animals' convention. Enough said. With the hall ringing to the sound of a bagpipe fanfare, and the dry ice akin to mist parting over the peat bogs of the Highlands, 'The Cutter', a true story of a Scotsman settled in Canada, returning 'home' to cut peat for his clan, is an appropriate opening for RUNRIG - not an untypical Runrig song, focussing on the land and the people of their home environment: family, human rights, injustice, love and work are rolled into every anthem-like song. Tonight, you didn't need to have whisky in your blood to hear, see and smell Scottish pride; just a hearty voice and an indisputable sense of right and wrong. Now signed to Chrysalis, 'Our earth was once green' and other 'Cutter' issues concerning our environment should be much more accessible. Runrig educated and entertained tonight.
STEVE GILLETT

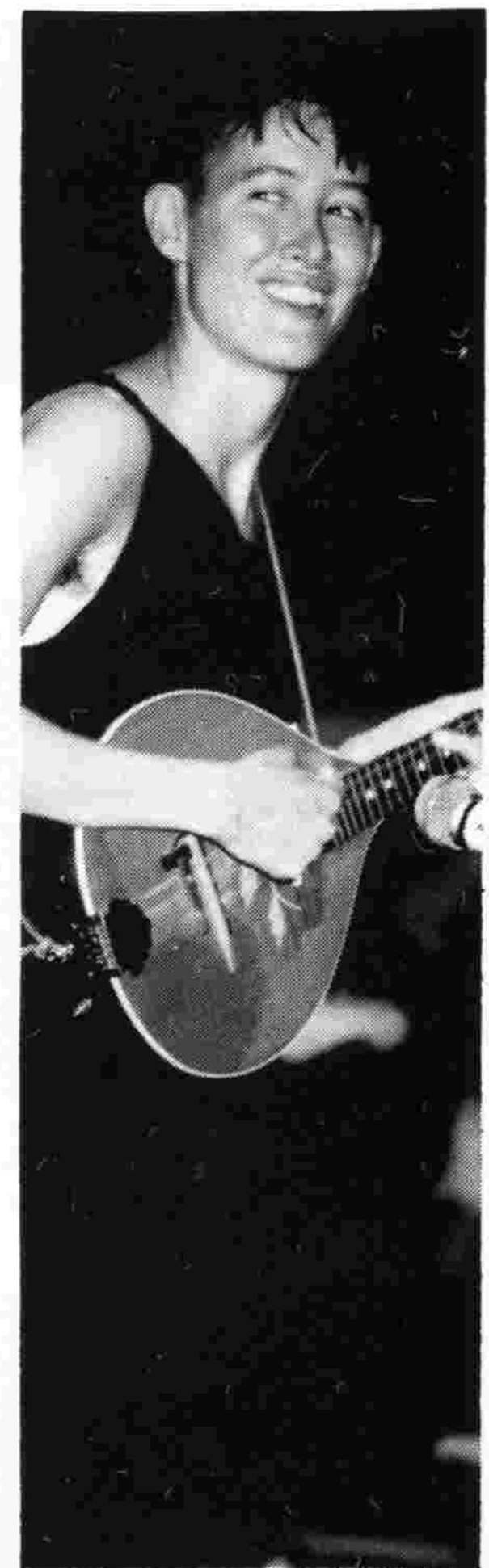


Photo: Steve Gillett

LIVE



MICHELLE SHOCKED
Corn Exchange, Cambridge
My first experience of Michelle Shocked was at last year's Cambridge Folk Festival, where she was being tipped as one of the up and coming talents, mainly on the basis of her debut album, recorded on a Sony portable in her native Texas. It was obvious from her performance then that she would be among those leading the folk revival. A year and an album later, Michelle Shocked returns to Cambridge, to sell out the Corn Exchange. Her familiar dress of black trousers, vest and cap was in complete contrast to the sense of fun she emitted, and this very quickly rubbed off onto the audience. The set contained what Ms. Shocked describes as "production numbers" with the band members, and songs where she stood alone with her acoustic guitar; a situation she now seems perfectly comfortable with, whatever the size of her audience. Of the solo performances, the current single 'Anchorage' was probably the highlight: as she pointed out, "some things are best kept simple". The moderate volume in the Corn Exchange was conducive to the often amusing tales of life in East Texas, and punchy songs about political and social injustices. An active campaigner, Michelle Shocked is, however, careful to present her views in a palatable form, and so

does not alienate sections of the audience. This was undoubtedly the best performance that I've seen this year, and what a change it makes to be able to stand near the front of a stage without fear of receiving a wayward fist in the face. Roll on November, when Michelle returns to Cambridge with Billy Bragg.
NEIL WILSON

**FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM
UNDERNEATH WHAT**
Corn Exchange, Cambridge
One of the few gigs where the support band was really good. UNDERNEATH WHAT are described by their manager as "power pop": really, they were what might be called Indie Hard Rock - no commercialism, pure aggression. Again, another one of those support acts who haven't been in the business too long: certainly, the self-confident mid-Atlantic tones more than coped with the material and a beer-throwing lout down at the front. THE NEPH, complete with flour-encrusted stetsans and a perpetual cloud of suitably ethereal

smoke, stalked the stage in an appropriately nightmarish fashion. Everything was there: the atmosphere, the sympathetic crowd, oh... and there was music, all very dark and powerful, with Carl McCoy barking out numbers such as 'Dust' and 'Moonchild'. Many complain and draw parallels about them and The Sisters... if it is a rip-off, then it's rather a good one.
MARK CURTIS

THE MOMENT

The Mean Fiddler, London

Amid embarrassing accusations of Bros lookalikes, The Moment took the stage, complete with cycling shorts, a dodgy lead guitar and enough "1,2,3,4's!" to satisfy even Bruce Springsteen's insatiable counting habit. I arrived in the hope of hearing material from their rather auspicious '85 album 'The Work Gets Done', but I was too late: The Moment had moved on. My initial disquiet was dispelled by gems like 'Poor Mr Diamond': 'Mr Diamond' has a word for some of the characters (and clans) who 'operate' in the pop industry. The Moment clearly have a message to give, but, having said that, they don't preach, and they certainly don't play to please: The Moment do what The Moment want for The Moment's own sake. Perhaps it is this pertinacious attitude which has denied them an even wider audience, but this hasn't embittered their aggression, or soured their sweet soul. The Moment are the hybrid of '60's soul and sophisticated '80's cynicism. The songs are strong rather than catchy, and lie somewhere between early Dexys and Billy Bragg with music. On either side of brief and blurry introductions came the sound of blasting horns, impudent guitar breaks, and a satisfying backbone of bass and drums. For 35 minutes it seemed that the current cultural hiccup in this year of the '88 remix never even happened... the work starts here.

CHRIS WILLIAMS

THAT PETROL EMOTION

HUGO LARGO

Corn Exchange, Cambridge

That Petrol Emotion are a band who enjoy challenging their audiences by producing support acts which defy categorisation. Previous tours have opened my eyes to the likes of Nyah Fearties, Slab and Yargo. HUGO LARGO were to be no exception. Violin, basses and a superb female singer combined to create hypnotic, ethereal music. Despite hailing from New York, theirs was the sound of remote, rain-soaked hills and distant, undisturbed coasts, peaceful and uncorrupted by mankind. The wistful nostalgia and arcadian dream of Hugo Largo's flowing music was a distinct contrast to the dynamics and anger of THAT PETROL EMOTION. This is the sound of brutal, corrupt Western World 1988. Agitate, educate, organise is the message - the tears, frustration and anger of Northern Ireland's troubles come out

in the Manic Pop Thrill they produce. The fact of the matter is that they are a very, very good live band: Steve Mack is an animated frontman, leading songs which bristle with energy, burying my disappointment in their latest album. A few mugs shout for 'Jimmy Jimmy', but the passion of this group for their homeland's politics is far removed from the wide-eyed innocence of the Undertones. As the set progresses, they increase the power with favourites such as 'Creeping to the cross', 'Fleshprint' and 'V2'. In the face of such an onslaught, I forget any problems of my own as the music becomes everything. If they play in Cambridge again, do not miss them under any circumstances!
BEN CAWDRY

HOUSE GRINDER

SPIRIT WALK

WONKA'S ALL STARS

Sea Cadets Hall, Cambridge

The saddest newspaper story I ever had to write reported the premature death of young House Grinder fan Paul Williams of Melbourn. Tonight's charity gig was a tribute to Paul, who died this year at the age of 16, after a severe asthma attack.

Due to a combination of heavy rain and a late taxi, I missed WONKA'S ALL STARS, a special one-off outfit who played, I'm informed, a rockin' good mixture of covers versions. But I managed to catch SPIRITWALK for the first time. Ezio seemed to enjoy playing the heart throb in the unlikely surroundings of the shabby Sea Cadet Hall; at least he seemed to get the biggest reaction from the women in the audience (Ezio, are you listening, beefcake?).

HOUSE GRINDER, last up, got a very mixed audience into the groove. But with House Grinder, that's just second nature. My fave-rave featured Chopper samples, and Chris Mann dedicated the song to the elusive 'fab four' of Cambridge hardcore. Chris and Crew managed to put a fresh, brave finish on what, for some of the audience, could have been a really sad evening. All credit must go to the man behind the scenes who organised the gig, Maurice McComb of Melbourn Rock Club.

Maurice's father died of a lung disease, so it's appropriate that proceeds from the benefit went jointly to the Papworth Lung Unit and The Paul Williams Asthma Fund.

STEPH McNICHOLAS

Postscript on the gig from Maurice's daughter, Clare McComb:

Thank you to the all-stars

Formed for dear Wonka

By good old Greg, the boys,

and Gary, the plonker!

To Spiritwalk

So brassy and bold

And poor old Ian

With his cold

To House Grinder

For hiping and hopping

For grooving and prancing

And body popping

And to everyone

Who participated

It was

Very much appreciated

You made

The 24th of September

A brilliant night

To remember
And to everyone else
Who was there
Love and kisses
Drina, Maurice and Clare.

JULIA FORDHAM

Corn Exchange, Cambridge

Coming direct from Soho - the jazz festival, not the peep shows - former Wilsation, Julia opens her wardrobe of worldly-wise emotional turmoil before our very eyes and ears. Not all suppressed feminist views, although she does admit to "screaming to be heard" in this man's world. Collectively, more of a mixture of endorsements of sincere



Photo: Steve Gillett

love, the pros and cons of three-way affairs, the niggling uncertainties between all couples, and the self assurance of the career woman of today, where there's not a man in sight - just the mind. Far from a solo account by JF: an accomplished group of musicians and backing singers played agony aunts and uncles before an audience restrained beyond enthusiastic applause only by the regulation green seats. Green the audience were not to Julia's often profound expressions, ideas and experiences, all carried off with the charm, magnetism and presence of a seasoned performer. This woman has the guile to sell you love as some by-product of hate, when walking the proverbial thin line between the two. Not just another lovely face.
STEVE GILLETT

THE CORN DOLLIES
THE LATE ROAD LUNATICS
THE BRIDES
TWO THE DARK
The Embankment,
Peterborough

Under strict instructions from Aunt Edwina, I'd wrapped up warm for this gig. With thermal underwear, woolly hat - bought by my grandchildren - and a bottle of Thunderbird (purely for medicinal purposes, you understand), I was well equipped to see wacky Anne Johnson and The Glasshouse crew go AWOL at the Embankment marquee.

First to take the dry ice-engulfed stage were TWO THE DARK, fresh from supporting Erasure and being given the toilets as a changing room! They had acquired a real drummer as opposed to a machine since I'd last seen them, and this made for a more energetic stage performance. It wasn't enough, however, to compensate for their lack of songs and originality. I mean, most bands do anything to get away from that Goth tag, but these boys were running head first into it - name, Missionesque sound, eerie intro tape, the works. They are all competent musicians, especially frontman Ian, and in 'Sleeping on a ghost train' they have one excellent song, but if this were a school report, it would read "must try harder".

Perhaps they could learn a few tricks from THE BRIDES, next band on. They have dumped their pretensions of Gothdom, play with a smile and have a set full of cracking pop songs. 'Veteran' of the local scene, Steve Crosby has an envious ability for infectious riffs, and in Jem Squires, The Brides have a

bassist with fiery energy. They are not quite the six-legged groove machine they could be, though: they sometimes evoke the "where have I heard that before" feeling, and singer Jamie always seems to take 3 or 4 songs before the enthusiasm of the event reaches his brain, and he begins to 'rock out', as you kids say. The Brides climaxed (ooh err!) their set with a storming version of the crowd pleaser 'Sexy', and a cover of the INXS song 'Guns in the sky'.

THE LATE ROAD LUNATICS followed. Lack of originality is a criticism you certainly couldn't aim at them: they have a unique fragmented sound which John Peel once described as "jazz punk". The kids however gave them the thumbs down, and I must admit I agreed. They looked like any old gig-weary pub band, and the singer's continuous between-song comments were just plain irritating.

Stars of the show, THE CORN DOLLIES, finally took the stage and played a relaxed, confident set of classy songs. Their presence was tinged with a camp arrogance, and their sound was refreshing, youthful and reminiscent of both Lloyd Cole and REM, without quite hitting the peaks of either. The violin was used to superb effect, adding a further dimension to the Corn Dollies' textured compositions. Old favourite 'Forever Stephen' brought cheers from the crowd, as did the new single, 'Map of the world' (good title, too). At times, I wished they would lean more towards the experimental, but this was a nimble criticism of a band who brought a superb end to an excellent night - nice one, Anne.

BAB BAB

WAR DANCE
The Glasshouse,
Peterborough

Tiptoeing through a sea of denim jacketed 15 year olds, I waited for War Dance to do their worst to my hangover. My first shock was actually seeing Andy Frantic for the first time: expecting the author of the vitriolic letter in the last issue of Scene & Heard to be some sort of fearful monster, I was delightfully surprised to find a nice looking young man in a cheeky pair of caribbean shorts, and sporting the haircut of a slightly rebellious insurance salesman. Having approached thrash metal from the more unusual punky route, I was slightly disappointed when War Dance swung into a set of pure heavy metal amalgamation. Gizz Butt's fingers spidered across the fretboard, but he was virtually inaudible, despite being dwarfed by a fridge-freezer sized stack, and any soloing was lost in the musical sludge oozing out of the P.A. With this musical genre so heavily reliant on technical virtuosity, it seemed a shame to have the booming drums and plodding bass overpowering the two guitarists. New addition to War Dance, James Lord, was having even

worse problems with his almost shoebox-sized amp. Although running through a reasonable set of fairly tight, tempo changing heavy metal songs of not inconsiderable length, I was soon tiring of War Dance's repetition. However, the biggest shock was still to come: the three guitarists came off stage, leaving the drummer on his own. Drum solo! Oh, shit. Flailing around like a stranded walrus, the drummer bashed about for a while in this pointless display of musical masturbation. This was followed by an unaccompanied guitar solo from Gizz Butt; followed by a more conventional but still flashy (and still unaccompanied) solo from James Lord; followed by yet another one from Gizz. With any semblance of gig continuity falling apart, I left as Gizz announced 'jam time': a 15 year old Metallica fan joined him and Frantic (on the drums) in a bassless version of 'Wild thing, you make my cock sting'. Bye bye.
WILLARD McCLENNAN

THE WEDDING PRESENT
THE HEART THROBS
Corn Exchange, Cambridge

There was a time when Indie fans were meant to be trendy students in long macs; non-sexist, non-racist and fraught with anxiety about the problems of adult life. Today's Indie fan is different: out to have a good time, and have a fondness of the beer they're too young to drink (I felt old, and I'm only 20!), but still worrying about the problems of teenage life. Indie songs seem to be mainly connected with love, sex, and the loss of them. It's a very male-dominated scene, hence the number of 'sex-symbol' girl singer around in bands like THE HEART THROBS. These bands will never be the next Blondie - the highest they can aspire is to The Primitives. Crappy guitar pop; pleasant enough, but hardly inspirational. However, the Indie scene is far removed from the bragging macho bullshit of heavy metal. Instead of making a pretence of 'manliness' (whatever the hell that is), bands such as THE WEDDING PRESENT lay their vulnerability and failures open for all to see. It is this approachability and humility, combined with the simplicity of the music, that is the essence of their appeal. The David Gedge 'understanding older brother' comparison is well-worn, but strikes me as being accurate. The effect is to help break down the rockstar/audience barriers and establishing a rapport: this is The Wedding Present's strength as a live act. Despite the absence of a couple of old favourites (Felicity; My Favourite Dress), this performance was enough to confirm their status as the best punk-pop band around. Fine new material, coupled with well-loved older stuff, and a nod to past influences with a cover of 'Don't dictate', made for an entertaining and energetic evening.
BEN CAWDRY

JULIAN COPE
Corn Exchange, Cambridge
Eighteen months on from St. Julian's last ear-bashing tour, and that cult hero fever, OK - fervour, hits town, his every gesticulation accompanied by screams of a thousand teens. With no time for acquainting oneself with the new album, half the set becomes an enigma, like the man himself. Fashion conscious to the last in leopard skin and leather, he leers

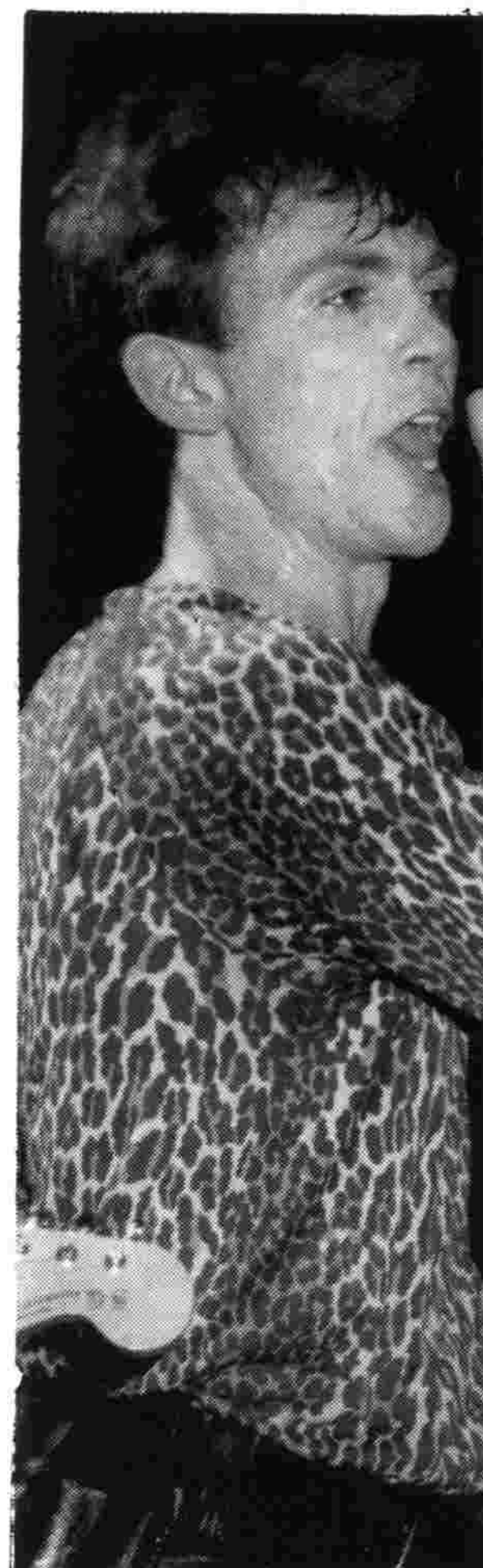


Photo: Steve Gillett

and leans over his infamous climbing frame, ready to pounce on those unsuspecting and unwilling to take to his 'Nation underground': another city or another planet, one wonders, when your thought patterns aren't on the same wavelength, and the lyrics go flying overhead. 'Charlotte Ann' was an early landmark in the set: witness Cope playing with words and charading as an imposter - oui, a charlatan posing as a femme fatale. 'Tis true that he forsores his demise or mutation into a deformed monster just around the corner, but until then, the horizon looks as bright as 'Sunspots' - a live favourite, along with the bouncing 'Trampoline' - and at the end of the day, our pay-off as conspirators in this fantasy is taken in the form of 'Reward'. A teardrop forms, to grow or burst: you, the record buying public, must decide.
STEVE GILLETT

STETSASONIC
EPMD

Corn Exchange, Cambridge
I enjoyed this. For the most part, the rather young crowd behaved well, were suitably rebuffed (as far as I could tell) when demanding alcohol, and bopped their way merrily through the evening. The lengthy disco precursor to the 'live' entertainment was interspersed by a group of local lads rapping and getting down', as they do, to the scatchers at a twin record deck. Early on at least, there was a definite feeling of 'oneness' about the place. EMPD didn't really seem to be doing anything that hadn't been done before in the hip hop sphere, but STETSASONIC had the charisma, and most importantly, they like drums and keyboards - that helps distinguish themselves from others of their ilk. As a postscript, I would like to say that House Grinder would have made an excellent support for Stetsasonic: I mentioned this at the time in the Weekly News, but, sadly, it was edited out... sorry lads.
MARK CURTIS

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As It Is - Market Deeping 342254
At Ten Paces - Newmarket 666727
Axis - Thetford 811801
The Bicycle Thieves - Cam. 355053
Black Candy - Newmkt. 664638
Blind Ambition - St. Ives 494004
Blind Mice - Saffron Walden 30645
Bogus Renegades - Cam. 835527
Boysdream - Peterborough 40950
The Brides - Peterborough 71139
Brotherhood - Histon 4253
Camera Shy - Histon 3816
Catholic Boys - Cambridge 328992
The Charlottes - Huntingdon 412390
The Cherry Orchard - Cam. 243316
Children Of Some Trad'n - Cam. 352370
Colonel Gomez - Ely 740900
The Crawthumpers - Cam. 65757
Cri De Coeur - Cambridge 833894
Curious - Chatteris 3010
Deja Vu - Newmarket 720090
The Desmonds - Cambridge 334394
The Fires In Arabia - Crafts Hill 80918
Floorshow - Cambridge 211068
The Freedom Faction - Cambridge 60733
The Fruit Bats - Fowlmere 578
Gangster - Huntingdon 52951
Geneva Convention - Cambridge 860470
House Grinder - Cambridge 872348
I Thought I Told You - Haverhill 704452
In Flight - Cambridge 65048
Jack The Bear - Royston 61295
Legend - Peterborough 61854
Les Cargo - Cambridge 311356
The Lonely - Cambridge 246670
Mad Hamster - Cambridge 62730
Mel's Kitchen - Cottenham 51255
The Melting Men - Histon 3450
The Moment - Ely 740244
Mr Meaner - Cambridge 834928
The Mullahs - 01-761-2092
Nutmeg - Ely 721761
On The Brink - Cambridge 263870
The Outworkers - Ashwell 2607
O-Zone - Cambridge 312482
Paradise Street - Cambridge 244825
The Pleasure Heads - Pboro 311376
Pluck This - Cambridge 64965
Possession - Haverhill 702345
The Principle - Swavesey 80150
Quiet Life - Royston 838448
Real Time - Cambridge 352237
Rhythm Method - Hitchin 37587
Rhythm Touch - Cambridge 845283
Sardines - Cambridge 240953
Session 57 - Newmarket 750724
Shades Of Indifference - St. Neots 72145
Shine - Kings Lynn 673760
Sound Advice - Crafts Hill 82330



Spin

Spin - Cottenham 50423
Spiritwalk - Cambridge 214852
Stormed - Cambridge 65449
Strike Force - Cambridge 246958
The Sullivans - Harlow 37048
Surfin' Druids - Cambridge 860665
This Replica - Ely 721761
Trux - Crafts Hill 31550
The Voice - Haverhill 705371
War Dance - Peterborough 314703
Woolly Mammoth - Cambridge 843211
909's - Cambridge 243144

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CCAT Batman - 460008
Corn Exchange - 357851
Man On The Moon - 350610 (Stan)
Midland Tavern - 311719
The Rock - 249292
Sea Cadets Hall - 352370 (Tim)

Huntingdon

Three Tuns - 53209
Waterloo - 57199

Newmarket

Rising Sun - 661873 (Paul)

Peterborough

Crown - 41366
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Glasshouse - Stamford 65776
Norfolk Inn - 62950
Oxcart - 267414
Peacock - 66293
Sanitarium - 230383 (Gizz)
Wirrina - 64861

St. Ives

Floods Tavern - 67773 (Stan)

St. Neots

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