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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

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Issue 122  
September  
2005

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# NEWS

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**THE YOUNG KNIVES** won themselves a coveted slot at V Festival last month after being picked by Channel 4 and Virgin Mobile from over 1,000 new bands to open the festival on the Channel 4 stage, alongside The Chemical Brothers, Doves, Kaiser Chiefs and The Magic Numbers. Their set was then broadcast by Channel 4. Meanwhile, the band are currently in the studio with producer Andy Gill, recording their new single, 'The Decision', due for release on Transgressive in November. The Knives have also signed a publishing deal with BMG. A new album will be released early in 2006.

**KTB** (aka Katy Bennett) returns with a new album this month. 'Bluebird', released on Tatinga Records, is Katy's second album, the follow-up to 2002's 'All Calm In Dreamland' debut. That album helped Katy reach the finals of Radio 2's Young Folk Musician of the Year in 2002. Although 'Bluebird' won't be officially released until November, she will be selling copies on her forthcoming national tour, which kicks off at The Zodiac on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September. Tickets are £5 in advance from the Zodiac box office (01865 420042). Support comes from Bristol's Rachel Dadd.

**MARK GARDENER** releases his debut solo album as a limited edition import this month. The former Ride frontman has made a limited number of copies of the album, entitled 'These Beautiful Ghosts', available exclusively on [oxfordmusic.net](http://oxfordmusic.net). The track listing for the album, recorded in the States with Goldrush, is: 'Snow In Mexico', 'Getting Out Of Your Own Way', 'To Get Me Through', 'Magdalen Sky', 'Rhapsody', 'Summer Turns To Fall', 'Flaws Of Perception', 'Beautiful Ghosts', 'The Story of the Eye', 'Where Are

You Now', 'Water and Wine' and 'Gravity Flow'. In addition, the CD comes with a bonus DVD which features a documentary following Mark over the past two years as he recorded the album, plus alternative versions of some tracks.

**THE DOWNLOAD** appears to have been given an indefinite extended run by the BBC. The local music show, which is broadcast on BBC Radio Oxford 95.2fm every Saturday from 6-7pm, has had a rolling monthly extension running through the summer, and with the positive response from listeners looks likely to continue. Tune in each week to hear new songs from Oxford artists, plus interviews, a gig and club guide as well as a local demo vote.

**DUNGEON STUDIO** has moved. Oxfordshire's longest-running recording studio has relocated to The Coldroom in Cumnor. Dungeon, run by engineer Rich Haines had run from Ascott House farm in north Oxfordshire for twenty years, becoming one of the most popular studios in the county. For studio bookings, call Rich on 07790 193 260.

**ELIZA CARTHY** and The Ratcatchers are the star attraction at this month's Wallingford Bunkfest, which takes place over the weekend of the Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September. The festival features folk and blues concerts, ceilidhs, workshops, dance displays and a beer festival across different venues around the town. Other acts appearing include The Oysterband, Patrick Street, John Spiers and Jon Boden and Pressgang. Full line-up and ticket information is available at [www.bunkfest.co.uk](http://www.bunkfest.co.uk)

**THE FINAL SUNDAY STEAMER** of the summer takes pace on Sunday

**FOUR TET** have been confirmed as headliners for this year's Audioscope festival, which runs for two days over the weekend of the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of October. Four tet will play on the Saturday night, along with Explosions in the Sky, Shooting at Unarmed Men, Ill Ease, Giddy Motors and Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element.

Sunday's headliner is Luke Vibert who will be supported by Scout Niblett, Billy Mahonie, Fell City Girl and Nought, amongst others. There will be a limited number of two-day tickets available for the festival, which raises money for homeless charity Shelter. For more information, go to [www.audioscope.co.uk](http://www.audioscope.co.uk)



**THE MAGIC NUMBERS** return to Oxford in November, leading an impressive list of big name acts coming to town in the next few months. After their triumphant Truck Festival headline set last month, The Magic Numbers (*pictured*) play at Brookes University on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October. The show is already sold out.

Also playing at Brookes are **The Subways** (Thur 27<sup>th</sup> Oct), **The Wedding Present** (Thur 10<sup>th</sup> Nov) and current best new metal band in the world, **Opeth** (Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec). Tickets for all these gigs are available from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com).

The Zodiac's autumn and winter line-up also includes some seriously good stuff. The line-up for October includes **Bellowhead** (1<sup>st</sup>), **Idiot Pilot** (3<sup>rd</sup>), a welcome return for **Queen Adreena** (6<sup>th</sup>), 60s rockers **Focus** (10<sup>th</sup>), Nightshift's favourite band in the world, **Ladytron** (11<sup>th</sup>), **Hawthorn Heights** (21<sup>st</sup>), the legendary **Fall** (27<sup>th</sup>), another chance to see Canadian emo heroes **Alexisonfire** (28<sup>th</sup>), and an evening with **Lacuna Coil** (29<sup>th</sup>). November sees the return once more of Britpop survivors **The Bluetones** (5<sup>th</sup>). Tickets for all gigs are on sale now from the Zodiac box office (01865 420042).

As well as The Magic Numbers show, gigs at the Zodiac by Editors (8<sup>th</sup> Oct) and Hard Fi (18<sup>th</sup> Oct), as well as this month's shows by Trivium and Elbow are now completely sold out.

The New Theatre too has an impressive list of live music coming in October and November. Gigs already announced include 60s chart stars **The Hollies** (1<sup>st</sup> Oct), The Kinks' **Ray Davies** (16<sup>th</sup> Oct), the mighty **Motorhead** (15<sup>th</sup> Nov), family favourite **Tony Christie** (16<sup>th</sup> Nov), 60s legends **The Everly Brothers** (17<sup>th</sup> Nov), the enduringly popular **Status Quo** (18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Nov), 80s rock'n'roller **Shakin' Stevens** (25<sup>th</sup> Nov) and master of pop mirth, **Paul Weller** (27<sup>th</sup> Nov). Tickets for all New Theatre gigs are available from the credit card hotline: 0870 606 3500.

4<sup>th</sup> September when The Evenings, The Family Machine and Fell City Girl will be taking to the water to play on a boat as it sails between Oxford and Abingdon. The boat leaves from Folly Bridge at 1pm and tickets are priced £10. The Evenings release a new EP at the beginning of October, followed by an album of remixes by fellow Oxford artists.

**OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC** are running a weekend of music and light concerts at the University of Oxford Botanical gardens this month. Powerplant runs from Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> to Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, from 8.30-10.30pm and features work from Mark Anderson as well as artists including Jony Easterby, Ray Lee, Anne Bean, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Pederson. Entrance is £3 advance. More info from [www.ocmevents.org](http://www.ocmevents.org)

**MASSIVE ATTACK's** Daddy G will be the special guest DJ at Skylarkin's

third birthday party at the Zodiac on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September. Club host Aidan Larkin as well as DJ Derek will also be playing a varied selection of ska, reggae, dub, Latin dance, Afrobeat and funky house. Tickets are on sale from the Zodiac box office (01865 420042), priced £8.

**PURE REASON REVOLUTION's** gig at the Zodiac, scheduled for Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September has been moved to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Tickets for the original date are still valid.

**THE CHILD BRAIN INJURY TRUST**, a UK charity based in Oxford, are looking for unsigned bands to contribute to a fund-raising compilation CD. Send demos to Stephanie Flower, Training and Information Officer, Child Brain Injury Trust, The Radcliffe Infirmary, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6HE. Alternatively, email Ruth Cooper at [ruthcooper@cbituk.org](mailto:ruthcooper@cbituk.org), or phone on 01865 552467.

# A Quiet Word With Supergrass

**FOR MOST PEOPLE, THE FIRST** reaction to hearing 'Road To Rouen' is surprise. This isn't quite the Supergrass they knew and loved. You know, the ebullient Supergrass of 'Sun Hits The Sky', the anthemic Supergrass of 'Going Out', or the magnificently belligerent Supergrass of 'Richard III'.

No, 'Road To Rouen', Supergrass's fifth studio album, is big, grown up, sensible, sometimes sombre and reflective Supergrass. Supergrass looking back on a life well lived and considering the road ahead. Of course the title alone suggests the band have lost none of their youthful exuberance, but the music within, if not at odds with its predecessors, treads a very distant path to the one they cycled along for 'Caught By The Fuzz' and TV jingle staple 'Alright' (a song they now, perhaps understandably, hate). 'Road To Rouen' is not, as some early reports suggested, an acoustic album, but Gaz, Mickey, Danny and Rob chose to promote its release with a short acoustic tour, including a sold-out date at the Oxford Playhouse. The reason for this became apparent when Nightshift meets up briefly with bassist Mickey Quinn, the only member of the band still resident in Oxford, before the Playhouse show.

## **LAST YEAR, WHEN**

Supergrass released their Greatest Hits collection, 'Supergrass is 10', press and public alike suddenly woke up to the realisation that here were the real stars of the phenomenon formerly known as Britpop. While the big players in that burst of creative pop energy have stagnated (Oasis), fallen into disarray (Blur) or simply disappeared (Pulp), and while most of the also-rans have scuttled back to where they belong, Supergrass have just got better, continued writing and releasing great pop music that's both commercially successful and creatively inventive. And, as with Super Furry Animals, the other band from that era who remain musically important, Supergrass are now recognised as one of the great festival bands of our time – that rare breed of band that everyone knows and can sing along to, but remain cool enough that people aren't embarrassed to admit to loving.



All of which makes 'Road To Rouen' more of a surprise. Here is a band going against (an albeit fluid) formula. But much has happened to them in the past year or so, as Mickey explains.

"It wasn't a direction as such, just a look in the wing mirror. Other factors influencing the record include personal loss, Gaz's new fatherhood and Danny thinking of leaving the band. Musically, the seeds are in the last album, 'Life On Other Planets'."

The most notable of these, of course, is the near-departure of Danny Goffey after twelve years with the band he formed with his best mates in Wheatley in the early-90s. While Gaz Coombes moved to Brighton and Mickey stayed in Oxford, Danny embraced London life and many of its showbiz trappings. The outcome of which was his involvement in lurid tabloid stories about wife-swapping parties with partner Pearl Lowe, Jude Law and Sadie Frost. Danny's departure would surely have spelled the end of Supergrass as a unit, but they've survived similar scares in the past, as far back as the recording of second album, 'In It For The Money'.

"The new album is not an acoustic record, but the acoustic tour was an idea that came about when Danny was considering his future in the band, but it works even better with him," continues Mickey, explaining the initial idea behind this tour. The band have always displayed a mellower side on certain album tracks, while their last tour, promoting 'Supergrass Is 10', involved an entire acoustic section of the show, with Gaz and Mickey reclined on a sofa knocking out

stripped-down versions of old hits.

## **MICKEY IS IN TIGERISH MOOD**

before the Playhouse gig. Reviews for 'Road To Rouen' have been mixed, veering from cautious optimism at the apparent new-found maturity of sound, to accusations that the band have either lost their way or are lost in muso indulgence, and there appears to be an eagerness to defend the new songs.

Certainly the album is less instant than 'Life on Other Planets', while the single, 'St Petersburg' hardly has Pop Anthem stamped all over it. Did recording the album in northern France have a mellowing effect on proceedings? How different would 'Road To Rouen' have turned out if you'd recorded it in London?

"French country life is particularly slow paced, where people take their time to savour the flavours of life. If we had recorded in London it would have been a different, perhaps more confused record."

Supergrass have all grown up and had kids now, do you still feel comfortable singing a song like 'Caught By The Fuzz', or are you still those same kids at heart? How would you feel in a few years if your kids got busted for smoking dope?

"We weren't those kids when we wrote the song; we still feel very comfortable playing 'Caught By The Fuzz'; it's 'Alright' that doesn't ring true. I think we'll cross that dope smoking bridge when it comes up!"

After 'Road To Rouen', where do you see yourselves going, musically? Any burning desires to do something completely off the wall?

"What, like Michael Jackson's 'Off the Wall'? We've not an inkling yet,

but recording in Greece would be nice."

## **LIKE OXFORD'S OTHER**

international rock stars, Radiohead, Supergrass were signed to Parlophone by manager Chris Hufford. Radiohead parted company with the label after 'Hail To The Thief', their contract having run its course. Assuming all continues to go well for Supergrass commercially, are they happy to stay with the label when their own contract runs out?

"I don't spend too long thinking about this, as long as we get to make the records we want. Which is never a simple matter in itself."

You've produced a string of strong albums, but 'Supergrass is 10' felt like your most complete album. Would you agree that Supergrass are strongest as a singles band, say in the tradition of Madness or The Buzzcocks?

"No. 'Supergrass is 10' is just a compilation of singles, not a proper album with light and shade. Singles are usually picked on commercial strength but they don't represent the whole, less commercial but more interesting and subtle Supergrass."

## **THE PLAYHOUSE GIG IS LESS**

of a shock than it might have been in the end. Less brash and spectacular than last year's New Theatre show, and less intimate than the band's more recent Zodiac gig, the concert is split into two hour-long sets, with the new songs from 'Road To Rouen' mixing in easily with the wide selection of hits from all of the previous albums. Supergrass themselves are typically good-natured, with no hint of the events that shaped the new album. As ever with local gigs by the band, there is a feeling of celebration and pride in the audience at the continuing success of one of Oxford's greatest ever exports.

How much of an Oxford band do Supergrass still feel?

"I'd be lying if I said we're an Oxford band, just a band from Oxford. I still live here and I'm proud to do so."

So, the feeling is mutual, and, for now at least, the success story looks likely to continue.

**'Road To Rouen' is out now on Parlophone.**



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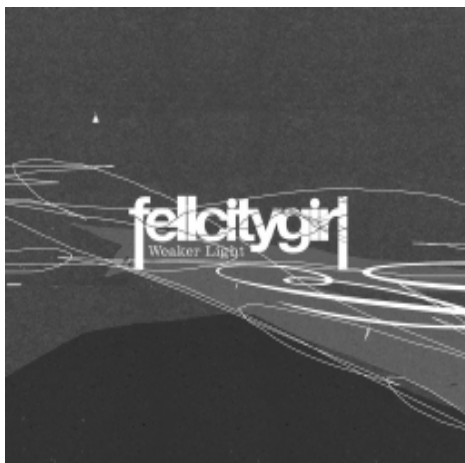
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## FELL CITY GIRL

### 'Weaker Light'

*(Nomadic Music)*

Last month's interview feature showed that Fell City Girl have the ambition and confidence – though crucially, lacking the arrogance – to make a success of themselves. This debut single, although modest in its presentation – a limited edition of 1,000 oh-so indie 7"s – is equally ambitious and confident, the sound of a band setting out their stall with a deftly-constructed, pocket-sized pop epic that's alternately fragile and explosive. Phil McMinn's vocals and lyrics hint at the same nervous tension and insecurity as Thom Yorke, while the sudden bursts of guitar energy might equally point to a Radiohead influence, but such things shouldn't be overplayed. Such an accomplished debut, with a tune that sounds destined to become an indie



anthem, suggest that Fell City Girl will eclipse any such comparisons very soon.

*Ian Chesterton*

## NATION

### 'Walk On'

*(Own label)*

Even in the rarefied atmosphere of internet bitchiness, no Oxford band has been on the receiving end of so much bile as Nation in recent times. Partly this is due to the music they play – middle of the road, chart-friendly power-pop that is so at odds with the local tendency towards the strange or heavy – but mostly it's down to their adopted role as shameless self-publicists. Whether they're booking the New Theatre for an extravagant album launch, or decorating every bridge over the ring road with their garish banners, Nation are determined they shall not be ignored.

What many of their critics forget is that such narcissistic tendencies are at the very heart of pop music. What Nation have achieved, from

tours of Bosnia and local schools, to that ambitious New Theatre show, is more than most bands would dare to dream of. This second album from Nation, however, suggests the music has a long way to go to match the eye-catching stunts. 'Walk On's predecessor, 'Today Is The First Day', released late last year, was a polished amalgam of classic rock influences (Beatles, Who) and slick modern pop (Robbie Williams, Elton John). This album moves on little from there but fails to reach for the glamour or high-tech production it needs to succeed in the unit-shifting, success-hungry big, bad real world of pop music.

'Walk On' is awash with Big Rock Anthems and power ballads. This allows for a surfeit of bombastic intros and Pete Townsend-inspired guitar workouts; extended, fiddly solos abound. It has its moments, notably headstrong opener 'The Start', and lightweight tub-thumping love song 'Walk On', while the sweet piano-led 'Stars and Stripes' is only let down by its cod philosophising. On the other hand, 'Keep Your Feet On The Ground' is a wannabe rock star's wet dream and it's all you can do to stuff your fist in your mouth to stop yourself laughing out loud at the lyrics. It's probably a bit churlish to mock both the selection of soft-focus posed photos in the sleeve, or the resolute lack of grammar in the lyric sheet, but the stifling cliché count can't be ignored. Nation have decided to take on the big boys from the start, which is admirable, but to do so they risk leaving their souls at the door.

*Sue Foreman*



## ASH VERJEE

### 'I'm Sorry, I'm Lost'

*(Own Label)*

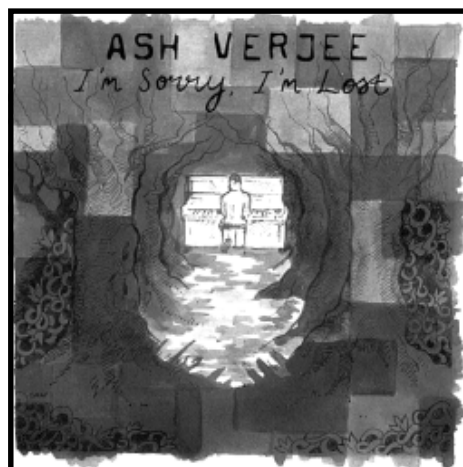
Composer and arranger Ashif Verjee's aim is to write soundtracks for films, something he's currently making some headway with, and this self-produced debut album shows enough promise to suggest his ambitions are more than idle dreams.

'I'm Sorry, I'm Lost' is an expansive album, thirteen tracks spread across 73 minutes, and given some of the nascent ideas brewing within its mix, it is overlong. Then again, the more you listen to it, the more defined its shape becomes. Given the premise that the music is intended ultimately for film, it's no surprise that the emphasis is on atmosphere, with a host of moody instrumental pieces mixing up piano, cello and brass with subtle electronic beats and washes of sound. But there are songs too: the woozy, spacious album opener 'Fall', with its Mercury Rev-style dreaminess; 'Is Magic Is Spaceship' with guest vocalist John Hyde's dry, deadpan vignette over Ash's minimal, sombre backing, and best of the lot, 'He's Her Cloud' with its Indian folk singing alternating with Vocoder-treated vocals that recalls Air in parts. Less successful is the sultry, soul-tinged pop of 'Spark', mainly because it lacks the atmosphere of so much of the rest of the album.

Ash's influences on his more cinematic set pieces are pretty obvious: Philip Glass, Vangelis and particularly Angelo Badalamenti. Best amongst them are 'Many Will Call', which underpins a graceful chamber music piece with trippy electronics, and the accordion and cello-led 'Love Theme II' with its sombre Gallic feel.

So, a little more brevity aside, a pretty impressive stab at a difficult premise. So many aspiring film score writers lose the plot in the first scene. Ash, on the other hand sounds like he could make it all the way to the closing credits.

*John Leeson*

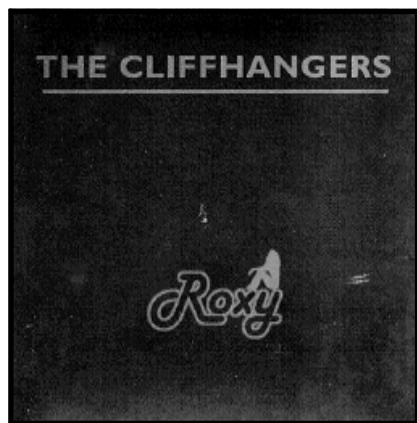


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## THE CLIFFHANGERS

### 'Roxy' (Squelch)

After witnessing The Schla La La's at Truck Festival last year, local singer Chantelle Pike decided to form her own all-girl band. First port of call naturally was former-Red

Star Cycle and Counter Zero drummer Jeremy Leggett. Who has at least been known to wear a dress on stage.

Still we shouldn't dwell on such trivialities. Not when there is so much silliness to contemplate. Not on the lead track, 'Roxy' with its shimmer of sleazy, faded glamour and gothic undercurrent, like a cocktail lounge Siouxsie and the Banshees, but 'Housemate', which seems to be dialoguing a full-on slanging match between two mutually-loathing house sharers. Jeremy whines or barks insults, while Chantelle screeches them back in mock operatic style. The premise might be interesting but the execution borders on excruciating (and anyway, Prolapse did it so much better on the brilliant, virulent 'Tina, This Is Matthew Stone').

Equally 'I Live Dangerously', with Chantelle whooping hysterically about killing someone's hamster in *Fatal Attraction* style.

Bands who try too hard to be eccentric rarely succeed, and The Cliffhangers show that when they play it straight, as on the opening track, they're so much better than this wacky façade suggests.

**Sue Foreman**

## ZAGU ZARR

### 'Welcome To England' (Shemesh)

"Out in the streets, they call it m-u-r-d-e-r!" Damian Marley's 'Welcome To Jamrock' has been inescapable this summer. With it's fiery political polemic and dread-heavy bassline (borrowed from Robbie Shakespeare, via Ini Kamoze's 'World Of Music'), it's by far the best record by someone called 'Marley' since Tuff Gong Senior strummed through 'Redemption Song' in 1980. But tune into Ras Kwame, 1Xtra, or any number of London pirates, and you're almost as likely to hear an Oxford-based production effort over the 'World Jam' rhythm. Zagu Zarr's anglicized response to the Jamaican anthem describes the culture shock of leaving the island for Heathrow ("Straight from the sunshine we touch the freezer") is

a promising enough effort over Seany B's largely faithful mix, but suddenly takes on extra relevance when the gruff Londoner's vocal gets wrung through Desta-Nation's drum & bass mangle. The production team behind Makating (with assistance from Digital Era) spit out a speed-fuelled roller; Zagu's ragga chat echoing the Jamaican toasters on early jungle.

The release is also notable for the inclusion of a stoned, strung-out hip-hop rub by young Blackbird Leys producer Lolo. It's quite a coup for the Solisai frontman to have found himself on this release, but his slow-mo effort, laced with noir-ish strings, prove that he's certainly here on merit.

**Aidan Larkin**

## SOBER DAVE

### 'Transmission #1' (Tiny Little Creatures)

Possibly so-called to differentiate himself from a less abstinent friend of the same name, Sober Dave was, apparently, guitarist in now-defunct local nu-metallers Centre Negative. The aim with this solo project, we're informed, was to avoid the usual singer-songwriter traps and be a one-man Mogwai or Explosions in the Sky. The usual singer-songwriter traps being, we'd guess, dreary acoustic strumming, mumbled angsty vocals and a general feeling in the listener that they'd much rather spend an evening down the pub in the company of Alan Shearer, Eugene from *Big Brother* and a bucket of slow-drying cement than the miserable sod whining pointlessly and seemingly endlessly on on the stereo. Sad to report, Sober Dave fails in his chosen quest.

Maybe if he got drunk a bit more often he could produce something less soul-sapping.

**Dale Kattack**





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Thu 15 <sup>th</sup>	Point Blank
Fri 16 <sup>th</sup>	Dirty Earth
Sat 17 <sup>th</sup>	Mofo
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup>	Kelly's Heroes
Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Pipedream
Sat 24 <sup>th</sup>	NBS
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup>	Cat & Fiddle

Opening times for the Barn -  
Fri & Sat: 10.45pm - 1.00am Sun: 5pm - 7pm  
Monday nights are karaoke 11pm - 1.00am  
Once a month on a Thursday is originals night: 9pm - 11pm. Details are available from our website or by phoning 01993 703149

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# GIG GUIDE

## THURSDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**KTB + RACHEL DADD + OLLIE WILLS:** *The Zodiac* – Local folkstress, and Truck Festival favourite Katy Bennett returns to action to promote her new album, 'Bluebird', following on from the success of debut outing, 'All Calm In Dreamland' and her strong showing in the Best Newcomer category of the Radio 2 Folk Awards. Bristolian folk singer Rachel Dadd joins her for a selection of traditional English and Appalachian-style songs. Epstein singer Ollie opens the show.  
**GWYN ASHTON + SARAH WILSON:** *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*  
**THE DHARMA:** *The Port Mahon* – Laid-back funky pop.

*Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>*

## STEPHEN FRETWELL: The Zodiac

Can the world ever tire of solemn, heartbroken young men with acoustic guitars? It seems not, since there will always be plenty of equally solemn, heartbroken young men and women to weep gently along to their quiet tales of being dumped. And so Stephen Fretwell has become this year's bright new acoustic pop hope, following in a pretty straight line from Tom McRae and Damien Rice, although he's closer in spirit to the likes of Counting Crows, Ben Folds and even Chris Martin. Hailing from Scunthorpe but having decamped to Manchester, Stephen has supported local heroes Elbow, as well as Keane, on tour and was voted best new act at In The City a couple of years back. Now signed to Fiction Records, constant gigging and massive radio support for recent single 'Emily' (from last year's 'Magpie' album) has found him on the verge of being a household name. So anyway, one for the sensitive of soul: sparse, sombre but strangely uplifting folk pop: bring a box of tissues with you and maybe give the fella a hug; he sounds like he needs it.



## SEPTEMBER

**DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES, JAZZ & FOLK BANDS NIGHT:** *Far From The Madding Crowd* – With special guest Tony Ioman, one of the UK's top Elvis impersonators.  
**POWERPLANT:** *University of Oxford Botanical Gardens* – OCM presents the first of three nights of sound and light installations in the tranquil setting of the University's gardens.  
**SKYLARKIN:** *The Brickworks* – Weekly club night playing a wide selection of soul, funky house, reggae, dub, Latin and Afrobeat sounds, with DJ Aidan Larkin and guests.  
**SABOTAGE:** *The Zodiac* – Weekly rock club night from The Club That Cannot Be Named, playing the latest metal, indie and alternative releases.

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** *The Half Moon*  
**FUSED:** *Izi's, Witney*

## FRIDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**BUNKFEST:** *Wallingford* – First night of the annual town music festival with concerts, celidhs, dance displays, workshops, open mic sessions and a beer festival.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SEXY BREAKFAST + CHEERYBOMBERS + MARY BENDY TOY:** *The Wheatsheaf* – First of many gigs this month for local electro-funk-glam-rock stars Sexy Breakfast, with support from former-Joybringer people Mary Bendy Toy.  
**BROKEN:** *The Zodiac* – With Caninesounds, Dylan Rhymes and Marty P.  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB:** *The Port Mahon*  
**WHO THE FOLK?:** *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** *The Victoria, Jericho*  
**POWERPLANT:** *University of Oxford Botanical Gardens*  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** *The Bullingdon* – Classic soul, funk and disco.

## SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**STEPHEN FRETWELL:** *The Zodiac* – Singer-songwriter on the rise with new single 'Emily' picking up plenty of airplay – *see main preview*  
**BUNKFEST:** *Wallingford* – Full day of folk and blues music.  
**GERRY GILLARD:** *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*  
**SIMPLE:** *The Bullingdon* – Funky house club night.  
**THIS AIN'T VEGAS + AND NO STAR:** *The Wheatsheaf* – Vacuous Pop return to live action after the summer break with a return visit from Sunderland's prickly DIY punkers This Ain't Vegas, displaying a keen grasp of DC hardcore dynamics and Gang of Four-style funk.  
**DEE:** *The Port Mahon*  
**POWERPLANT:** *University of Oxford Botanical Gardens*  
**UNFORGETTABLE FIRE:** *The Red Lion, Witney* – U2 tribute.  
**TRUE RUMOUR + LEE DAVIES + BEN DUGGARD + KOHOUTEK:** *Amplethorpe Arms, Risinghurst* – Acoustic night with mixed bag of local acts.

## SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**ELECTRIC JAM (5pm) / PETE FRYER AND THE HOT RATS (8.30):** *The Exeter Hall, Cowley* – Unorthodox blues and rock from Pete Fryer and chums.

**BUNKFEST:** *Wallingford* – Final day of the annual folk and blues music festival.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** *The Old School House*  
**THE FIGHT + GROWN AT HOME + CHINESE FINGERTRAP + EXP + FEI COMODO + THIS THEORY KILLS:** *52 Degrees North, Banbury* – New heavy rock and punk night at Banbury's Mill theatre.  
**SUEDE ALIEN:** *The Black Horse, Kidlington*  
**MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup>**

**ELBOW:** *The Zodiac* – Melancholic soul from Manchester's finest – *see main preview*  
**THE HAMILTON LOOMIS BAND:** *The Bullingdon* – A real treat at tonight's Monday night blues club with Texan guitar sensation Hamilton Loomis displaying his innovative funky blues roots, having been mentored by Bo Diddley as well as Albert Collins.

**PIGGEN with ALEX WARD & THE DEADENDS + PATSY DECLINE:** *The Elm Tree* – Wayward virtuoso night at tonight's Pigpen free party as one-time Camp Blackfoot fellow and all-round improv freak Alex teams up with Nought's James Sedwards and Suitable Case drummer Grieg. Support from madcap lo-fi pop genius and recent Nightshift Demo of the Month winner Patsy Decline.

**THE JOHN MCCUSKER BAND:** *Nettlebed Folk Club* – Scottish folk music singer and guitarist.

## TUESDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET:** *The Bullingdon*  
**SEXY BREAKFAST + NO FEET FUNK FIVE:** *The Cellar* – Spaced-out glam rock and electrofunking from the mighty Sexy B.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** *G Bar, St Ebbes*  
**CHIARINA:** *Café Rouge* – Weekly acoustic folk, jazz and pop residency.

## WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**SHOUT OUT LOUDS + THE FACTORY:** *The Zodiac* – Sweetly euphoric indie rocking out of Stockholm from Sweden's latest hotly-tipped young pop things, coming on like a Moog-driven hybrid of The Strokes and Bright Eyes. Support





comes from The Factory, back in action after parting company with singer Laima Bite in June. Heavy-duty drone-rock in the vein of Spacemen 3 and The Stooges.

**OXFORD IMPROVISORS: The Port Mahon JABERWOK + KING ADA + THE G's + WHERE I'M CALLING FROM: G Bar, St Ebbes** – Delicious Music bands night with 70s-styled funksters Jaberwok joined by promising teen popstrels Where I'm Calling From, in a countrified Belle and Sebastian style.

**IRISH FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**GIGSWAP UK NIGHT: The Wheatsheaf** – Local bands with unsigned out of town support.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall** – The all-comers open mic club returns after the summer break.

### **THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**

**THE MISSION: The Zodiac** – Wayne Hussey's less-than merry bunch of goffs return one more time in aid of their mortgage repayments, hacking out some of their old 80s hits like 'Tower of Strength' and 'Wasteland' as well as a load of turgid old sub-Led Zeppelin dross that no fucker cares about, least of all the band themselves.

**ALFIE: The Zodiac** – Lovely, lazy folk-pop, discreet baggy grooves and sweet 60s West Coast harmonies from Badly Drawn Boy's former backing band, promoting new album 'Crying at Teatime'.

**DENISE MARIE + DAVE LEECE: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**THE IN AND OUT BAND: The Port Mahon DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES, JAZZ & FOLK BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding Crowd** – With guests Mo'Funka.

**BOBBY BLACKBIRD AND THE BLUEJAYS: The Cellar** – Australian deep funk big band.

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

### **FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup>**

**HEADCOUNT + JUNKIE BRUSH: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Double bill of local punk rock, with Headcount's melodic but brutal punk-metal, inspired by Therapy? and Killing Joke, up against Junkie Brush's spindly, splenetic new wave sounds.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho SOURCE: The Zodiac** – Drum&bass club night with Vyper and Juicy, Mattrick and Chemical. **TINDERBOX + OLD BOY REUNION + MAI MAYO MAI: The Wheatsheaf** – Brooding, atmospheric electro-pop from Tinderbox, plus support from London emo crew Old Boy Reunion and math-rocking from Mai Mayo Mai.

**SLIGHTLY MAD: The Red Lion, Witney** – Queen tribute.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

### **SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup>**

**THE EPSTEIN + ANOTHER LOST LEADER + NICK CROXSON DESERT BAND: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Country rocking from The Epstein.

**THE JAZZ BUTCHER + JOE WOOLLEY + ANTON BARBEAU + THE NEW MOON: The Port Mahon** – Return visit to the intimate setting of the Port Mahon for cult star The Jazz Butcher, one-time Creation Records stalwart, tonight playing a completely acoustic set with support from 60s-inspired songwriters Joe Woolley and Canadian folk-pop minstrel Anton Barbeau, rapidly making Oxford his second home. Abingdon's acoustic pop duo The New Moon open.

**SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT + SEXY BREAKFAST + THE WALK OFF: The Mill, Banbury** – Kicking off a new live music night in Banbury with some considerable style are local favourites SC4T, with an ungodly mix of gospel

and proggy metal, Sexy Breakfast with their glammed-up space rock and the walking, talking soundtrack to warfare that is The Walk Off.

**SLYDE 350: The Red Lion, Witney**

**KELLY'S HEROES: Chipping Norton FC**

**JIMMY CROSSKEY + LOZ COLBERT &**

**BOB PROWSE + ADY DAVEY: The Winchester Acoustic Suite, Crown Street** – New weekly acoustic club.

### **SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup>**

**TRIVIUM + ALL THAT REMAINS: The Zodiac** – Florida's Trivium return to The Club That Cannot Be Named having established themselves as one of the hottest new metal bands on the planet on the recent Roadrage Tour. They followed that with an explosive set on the main stage at Download and look set to establish themselves fully with the release of new album, 'Ascendancy'. Ferocious and not afraid to go over the top when the occasions demands, in the grand tradition of 80s metal and thrash, they're set to follow in the footsteps of bands like Fear Factory, Machine Head and Killswitch Engage.

**TOM HINGLEY + SHIRLEY + CHANTELE**

**PIKE: The Bullingdon** – Former-Inspiral Carpets frontman Tom returns to the Bully with support from bubblegum popsters Shirley and local siren Chantelle Pike.

**THE DHARMA: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Laidback funky pop.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:**

**The Old School House**

**ADRENALINE: The Black Horse, Kidlington**

### **MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup>**

**CHAZ DE PAOLO & GROUNDHOG**

**RHYTHM: The Bullingdon** – American bluesman teams up with The Groundhogs old rhythm section.

**BILLY MITCHELL: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Weasly cousin of Phil and Grant serenades the folk club with a selection of top East End hits like old favourites, 'I Miss You, Little Mo' and 'Look At Me Now, I Ain't Got A Job'.

### **TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup>**

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**

**SKYNNY NYRDS: The Port Mahon** – Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:**

**G Bar, St Ebbes**

**CHIARINA: Café Rouge**

**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth club night.

### **WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>**

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:**

**Far From The Madding Crowd**

**IRISH FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall**

### **THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**

**MILLION DEAD + GAY FOR JOHNNY DEPP**

**+ CHINESE FINGERTRAP: The Zodiac** – Return of the UK emo faves, getting hard, heavy and hairy in a beardy hardcore kind of way, promoting new album 'Harmony No Harmony'.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES, JAZZ & FOLK**

**BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding**

**Crowd** – With guests Chico and the Man.

**HEATHER DALE + SOPHIE POLHILL +**

**POLLY AND LISA: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – A night of local female singer-songwriters.

**RICHARD WALTERS + ROSE KEMP + ELLIE: The Cellar** – Sweet and tender pop lullabies from the supremely talented Mr Walters, plus support from rising singer-songwriter Rose Kemp, treading a similarly dark path to Polly Harvey.

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**



### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup>**

## **ELBOW: The Zodiac**

The band about whom the phrase "quiet is the new loud" was coined. Manchester's premier torch bearers for all things melancholy return to live action after almost a year with this intimate show, one of only three UK gigs to support new album 'Leaders of the Free World', following on from appearances at the Carling Weekend. Unsurprisingly, then, it's already sold out and a rare chance for the faithful to see Guy Garvey and his less than merry men in such sweet surroundings. What the new album will reveal is anyone's guess. Its predecessor, 'Cast of Thousands', was quite a move on from Mercury-nominated debut, 'Asleep At the Back', taking on board jazz, psychedelia, tribal percussion and the full London Community Gospel Choir amid the dulcet ballads. In fact it had as much in common with Spiritualized and Four Tet as it did anything the like of Coldplay might produce. The best thing about Elbow is that they take a bit of listening to – if only to fully appreciate everything that's going on. There will be songs about loss, regret and anger to be sure, but plenty more besides. A very warm welcome back.

**SKYLARKIN 3<sup>rd</sup> BIRTHDAY PARTY with DJ**

**DADDY G: The Zodiac** – Massive Attack chap graces the Skylarkin celebrations with a DJ set of dub, reggae, funk and chilled beats.

**KOHOUTEK: The Port Mahon** – Local indie rockers.

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

### **FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**

**BIG SPEAKERS + THE EVENINGS + FLOODED HALLWAYS + ASHER DUST: The Zodiac** – Oxford's premier hip hop collective hit the Zodiac with some five-MC action, trading fluid raps in the style of The Beastie Boys and Blade, backed up with the able firepower of a full band. Electro-pop experimenters The Evenings support, along with local hip hop newcomers Flooded Hallways, plus electro-ragga narratives from Asher Dust.

**KRISSY'S BLUES BOYS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Live blues.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon DIRTY EARTH BAND: The Red Lion, Witney THIRTEEN + TONIGHT IS GOODNIGHT + RED DAWN: The Mill, Banbury** – Reading emo crew headline a new Banbury rock night.



*Monday 26<sup>th</sup>*

## CORROSION OF CONFORMITY: The Zodiac

A lesson in resilience here as, twenty years after their birth in the depths of North Carolina, punk-metal crossover pioneers Corrosion of Conformity find themselves considered one of the most influential heavy rock bands around. Formed in the early 80s by guitarist Woody Weatherman, and massively influenced by Black Flag, they were one of the first bands to cross-breed punk's speed and politicised aggression with metal riffs and melody. Despite quickly becoming favourites on the American underground scene, they never achieved their potential, mainly due to the internal instability of the band and the constant lineup changes that followed, but with a shift of sound through thrash and stoner-rock to today's slowed-down uber-metal with its southern rock grooves, they've managed to drag fashion back towards them, inspiring the likes of Kyuss in the process. Breakthrough album 'Deliverance' found them supporting Metallica on a world tour, while new album 'In The Arms Of God' finds their Sabbath-esque brand of heaviness very much the sound of the moment. So, a rare chance to catch a band who will one day be considered legends, in an intimate setting.

## SATURDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**CARLEEN ANDERSON: The Zodiac** – Former-Brand New Heavies singer Carleen brings some soul to the Zodiac, promoting new album 'Soul Providence', offering a more mature sound to her solo debut, 'Alberta's Granddaughter'. One of the best female soul singers around, having worked with everyone from Young Disciples, Paul Weller and Bryan Ferry. She's the daughter of James Brown's All Star Band's Vicki Anderson and Bobby Byrd, so we guess she never stood a chance. **ALL YOU MISS + IVY'S ITCH + THE CLIFFHANGERS + HARLETTE + LAST PROPOSAL: The Zodiac** – A night of all-female or female-led local rock bands. Headlining are grunge-pop trio All You Miss, with support from gothic grunge sirens Ivy's Itch, glam-popsters The Cliffhangers and Cure-inspired popstrels Harlette.

**CARUS & THE TRUE BELIEVERS + KOHOUTEK + LAIMA BITE & SARAH WILSON: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DON SMOOTH: The Wheatsheaf** – Hard-edged emo from band promoting their debut album.  
**MOFO: The Red Lion, Witney**  
**RICHARD WALTERS + OSPREY: The Winchester Acoustic Suite, Crown Street**  
**CHICKS WITH DECKS Vs ROLLERCOASTER: The Cellar** – Good mix of indie, punk, 80s trash and riot grrl.

## SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**ELECTRIC JAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Play along with the in-house rhythm section – all musicians welcome.  
**THE STICKS: The Bullingdon**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old School House**  
**BIG EYED FISH: The Black Horse, Kidlington**

## MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK: The Zodiac** – Minneapolis pop-punk of an energetic and uplifting if somewhat polished variety, with new album 'Commit This To Memory' produced by Mark Hoppus.  
**SAICHI SUGIYAMA: The Bullingdon** – Renowned Japanese blues guitarist.  
**OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Port Mahon**  
**THE POOZIES: Nettlebed Folk Club**

## TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: G Bar, St Ebbes**  
**CHIARINA: Café Rouge**

## WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**THE TURBULENCE + THE FORMLESS ABSORPTIONS + NOT MY DAY: G Bar, St Ebbes** – Delicious Music bands night.  
**IRISH FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall**

## THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES, JAZZ & FOLK BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding Crowd** – With Leeds' acclaimed singer-songwriter Benjamin Wetherill.  
**THE NEUTRINOS + FIGMENT: The Cellar** – Norwich's bolshy, industrial-grunge rockers.  
**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**  
**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

## FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**THE KEYBOARD CHOIR + ANONYMEN + THE THUMB QUINTET + SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT UNPLUGGED: The Zodiac** – Mixed bag of local talent, with the eight-piece Keyboard Choir taking synthetic soundscapes to a new level. Thumb Quintet mix up earthy acoustic folk with ambient electronics, while Suitable Case strip down to their acoustic undies.  
**KING B: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Live blues and rock'n'roll.  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**UNDER THE IGLOO + STRAFE: The Wheatsheaf** – Chilled-out ambient post-rock from the headliners.  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**  
**PIPEDREAM: The Red Lion, Witney**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**CODY: Marlborough Hotel, Witney**

## SATURDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**ISIS ALL-DAYER: The Isis Tavern, Iffley Lock (1pm)** – All-day live music festival at the picturesque riverside pub. On the main stage

there's rock action from Easy Tiger, The Cliffhangers, King Furnace, Toulouse, Bombshoe, Chinese Fingertrap, El Jaego, The Family Machine, Submerse, The Invisible, Veda Park and Mondo Cada, while the outdoor acoustic stage includes sets from Osprey, Fell City Girl's Phil McMinn, Mark Pavey, Davey Graham, Chantelle Pike, Jimmy Crosskey, The Kicks, Nick Brakespear, Rebecca Mosley, Laima Bite, Loz Colbert and Bob Prowse and Maria Ilett.

**DRAGONFORCE: The Zodiac** – Now that's what we call a proper metal band name. Even better, Dragonforce's new album is called 'Sonic Firestorm'. It's like the last fifteen years in heavy metal's evolution never happened. Which, when you consider the likes of Limp Bizkit, might not

*Friday 30<sup>th</sup>*

## TELESCOPES / FUXA with SONIC BOOM: The Wheatsheaf

It's drone rock heaven tonight at Oxfordbands.com's live music club night. Returning to Oxford after last year's Audioscope appearance, the revitalised Telescopes continue their dimly-lit journey into sound and texture. After a prolonged hiatus following their early releases for Creation Records, and having taken nine years to record 2002's 'Third Wave' Stephen Lawrie and Jo Doran have ditched their old narcotic groove rock, utilising assorted analogue wave generators, doctored instruments and heavily-treated guitars to create a cosmic hum bathed in static. Reads like a physics students' practical joke, sounds pretty incredible. Joining them on tonight's bill are Detroit's Fuxa, lo-fi electronics-heavy drone masters, like Telescopes, employing treated guitars and analogue synths to create a sparse but warm hypnotic sound. In the past they've supported Stereolab and tonight they team up with Sonic Boom, aka Pete Kember, co-founder of drone rock godfathers Spacemen 3, and latterly of Experimental Audio Research, who managed to push the idea of single-note music to its ultimate conclusion. You won't be able to dance tonight, but you are cordially compelled to nod your head along like an opiate-addled oil drill.



be such a bad thing. Here is the new face of classic melodic speed metal: expect lots of hair, hooks big enough to land blue whales and even more hair.

**OCEANSIZE: The Zodiac** – Grandiose, convoluted and occasionally awesome rocking from Manchester's least-hyped heroes. Having cut away some of the fat from their sonic explorations, they're now a pretty ferocious beast, but still capable of genre-bending trips into the ether. Kinda like Black Sabbath crossed with Tortoise, with all the power, intelligence and contradictions you might imagine.

**TRIBUTE TO PAUL WELLER: The Bullingdon** – Tribute to the former Jam and Style Council chappie, featuring such classics as 'The Laughing Policeman' and 'When Santa Got Stuck Up The Chimney'.

**ANOTHER LOST LEADER: The Port Mahon**  
**REDOX + THE NEW MOON + LAGRIMA: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Ska, funk and 70s cosmic pop from Redox, plus acoustic pop from The New Moon.  
**NBS: The Red Lion, Witney**  
**ENDLESS GROOVE: The Cellar** – 60s soul, ska and r'n'b from Sir Bald Diddle.

### SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**KING BISCUIT TIME: The Zodiac** – Beta Band frontman Steve Mason returns with his solo project, taking his old band's eclectic stance down a more sedate route, mixing up trippy, relaxed loops and grooves with subtle acoustic pop.

**GONE TO GROUND: The Bullingdon** – Local bands showcase night with Gone To Ground and supports to be announced.

**DAN AUSTIN: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old School House**  
**FUSED: The Black Horse, Kidlington**

### MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**MEMO GONZALEZ & THE BLUESCASTERS: The Bullingdon** – Return trip to the Monday night blues club for Dallas' Memo Gonzalez, mixing up blues, swing and rock'n'roll.

**CORROSION OF CONFORMITY: The Zodiac** – Gods of southern-fried metal – *see main preview*

**BATTLE: The Zodiac** – Canterbury's early-80s revivalists fresh from their packed-out appearance on the Barn stage at Truck this year, mixing up The Cure, Simple Minds and The Associates into a dark, melodic brew.

### TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**THE RAKES + LOUIS XIV + THE FIVE O'CLOCK HEROES: The Zodiac** – Quick return to town for skinny young East London things The Rakes, headlining this NME-sponsored tour and paying all due respect at the altar of Joy Division, while offering despondent diatribes against the tedium of modern living. Maybe they'd be happier living in caves. Rightly considered one of the best new live bands in the UK, debut album 'Capture / Release' looks set to catapult them into the big time at last.

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: G Bar, St Ebbes**

**REVENGE OF THE CORN DOLLY: The Cellar** – Live bands to be announced.  
**CHIARINA: Café Rouge**

### WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**IRISH FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: Far From The Madding Crowd**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall**

### THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**WHITE ROSE MOVEMENT + PROTOCOL: The Zodiac** – Ace synth-pop revivalism from White Rose Movement, recent tour support to The Killers and Rakes, with irresistible debut robo-pop single 'Love Is A Number' coming on like a cross between New Order and A Flock Of Seagulls. And they look smashing. Support from Protocol, similarly enamoured of all things 80s, but with a dash of punk and disco in the mix.

**SALMONELLA DUB: The Zodiac** – New Zealand's premier reggae stars make their Oxford debut after regularly selling out London's major venues.

**THE CHARRED HEARTS + THE GREEN: The Port Mahon**

**DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES, JAZZ & FOLK BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding Crowd** – With acoustic pop, folk and jazz from local singer Chiarina Darrah.

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

### FRIDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**THE TELESCOPES + FUXA featuring SONIC BOOM: The Wheatsheaf** – Experimental electro-rock night, courtesy of Oxfordbands.com – *see main preview*  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES presents HARRY ANGEL + TOUNSI + STEVE LARKIN: The Zodiac** – This month's GTI club night mixes up Harry Angel's gothabilly post-hardcore noise with Tounsi's North African drum&bass, plus Steve Larkin from Inflatable Buddha showing off his slam poetry skills. There's also a photography display from Zitu Joyce for your full multimedia enjoyment.

**REPUBLICA with LAB 4: The Zodiac** – Hard house and trance club night with a live set from Oxford's Lab 4, powering up their industrial-heavy trance noise once again, plus DJ Kutski.

**INFLATABLE BUDDHA: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Crazy, mixed-up world funk, folk and slam poetry from the oddball local collective.

**SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT + SEXY BREAKFAST + THE WALK OFF + 22 VISION + IVY: The Net, Abingdon** – Grand showcase of local maverick talents for the under-18s tonight with big ol' nasty gospel prog-metallars Suitable Case pitching their hellish guitars and mutant ska up against Sexy Breakfast's glammed-up space rock and dubby electronic pop. The Walk Off stamp on the smoking ruins with their digital hardcore riot.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: Port Mahon**  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**US-4: The Red Lion, Witney** – U2 tribute.

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 Fri 9th Headcount + Junkie Brush 8:30pm  
 Sat 10th The Epstein + Another Lost Leader, + Nick Croxson Desert Band. 7pm  
 Sun 11th The Dharma 8:30pm  
 Thu 15th Heather Dale + Sophie Polhill + Polly & Lisa  
 Fri 16th Krissy's Blues Boys 8:30pm  
 Sat 17th Carus Thompson & The True Believers + Kohoutek + Michael Myers 7:30 pm  
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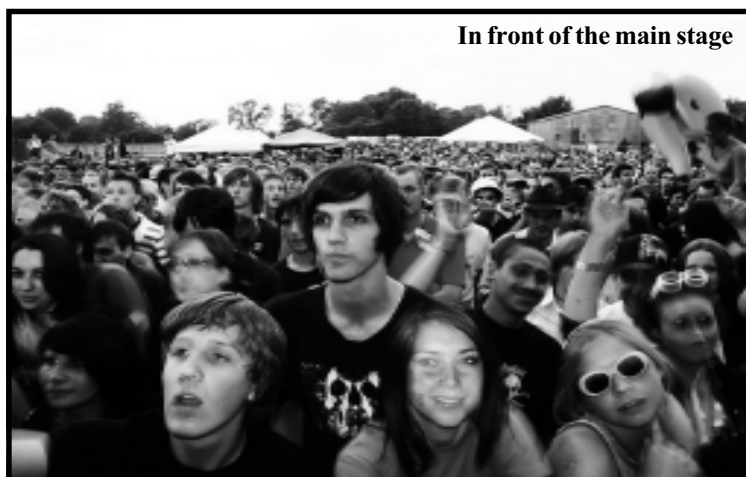
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*Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in the gig guide is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month - no exceptions. Call 01865 372255 (10am-6pm) or email listings to [Nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:Nightshift@oxfordmusic.net). This gig guide is copyright of Nightshift Magazine and may not be reproduced without permission.*

# TRUCK 2005



## SATURDAY

### THEY SAID IT WAS GOING TO RAIN.

It isn't. Fools. Don't they know it never rains at Truck Festival? Truck Festival is blessed.

One positive thing about this year's abominable spring is that it means there's no plague of wasps like that which blighted last year's Truck. Instead there are just billions of tiny beetle things which appear to be benign but have an annoying habit of crawling down the back of your t-shirt whenever you sit down in front of the main stage. Mind you, an hour after arriving at the festival, Nightshift has been bitten on the arm by something invisible and wholly evil.

If anyone was in any doubt that Truck is now a big, proper grown-up festival, just witness the queue to get in, one which snakes half the length of the car park. Hell, there's even a theatre and cabaret stage this year. There are still those cute little touches that make Truck so special of course, like the pine-scented walkway from the campsite to the main arena, and the carpet in the newly-expanded Trailerpark Tent. But it's the breadth of musical talent that's drawn everyone here. As ever the line-up, spread over six stages, features a host of unfamiliar names, interspersed with the usual Truck favourites, and it's Nightshift's mission this year to at least try and avoid the usual suspects in favour of so much new stuff.

### WHICH IS WHY THE FIRST BAND WE'RE

faced with is **ENERGICA**, who, as the name suggest, are half English, half America, but proof that a coming together of these two nations can produce something more worthwhile than a dodgy name and a controversial war. They take grunge's obsession with the seedier side of life and play it

out like old school Bay Area thrash, with plenty of energy and a real feel for great rock songs. So early in the day and already the bar is set high.

**SCARAMANGA SIX** are remarkable for two reasons. First, they are the only band who look less like rock stars than The Young Knives, and more like a teachers' union conference. Secondly, their keyboard player has the singularly worst mohican-beard combo you will ever see. That's when his keyboard actually works, anyway. Technical problems means he spends more time hitting a cymbal very hard and staring at the crowd even harder. Musically though the band are a searing racket - 'They Used To Call Me The Poison Man' sounds like The Damned's 'New Rose' being ripped apart by Talking Heads. Great stuff.

### AS IS TRADITIONAL AT TRUCK, WE BUMP

into assorted local musical luminaries and ask each other who we're most looking forward to seeing. We chat to Mark from The Evenings and eagerly proclaim enthusiasm for Clor on the Barn Stage. "They've pulled out", he informs us.

**ELECTRIC SOFT PARADE** are playing instead. We fleetingly feel like going home. We'd rather watch an empty stage than Electric Soft Parade. Damn and blast.

Instead we comfort ourselves with **THE SPIRALIST**, the band formed by former-Animalhouse people Jason King and Hari Teah, along with one-time Egg guitarist Mark Revell. Their pedigree serves them well, Hari looking like a particularly stern alien dominatrix but possessed with a sweet, old-fashioned jazz voice that wouldn't shame Billie Holliday. She plays off well against the slightly reserved backing vocalists, everyone gets a go at playing bass and if they can try and look a little less like an early-80s GLC-

funded funk workshop, they could be Oxford's dark horse success this year.

Another local act making quiet waves are **SOLISAI**, an expansive 12-piece hip hop collective, featuring three MCs and an elfin female vocalist. In keeping with the Truck spirit, theirs is a laidback, almost jazzy blend of rap, reggae and ragga that oozes a good-natured party vibe. We're urged to feel the love as condoms are thrown in to the Trailerpark Tent audience ("For later"), and the whole show is utterly infectious, provoking the first serious crowd movement of the day.

There's a strange reggae edge to **THE MYSTERY JETS** too. Winners of Nightshift's Demo Of The Month about three years ago, they're now considered one of the coolest bands on the London scene, and they're certainly a weird bunch - a dreadlocked teenage frontman leading a series of almost impenetrable prog-reggae jam sessions abetted by a silver-haired guitarist who can't be a day under 50. Still, if the London media tell us it's cool, it must be cool.

**THE CHERUBS** seem to have arrived late for Truck. By about two years. With their knocked-off Strokes chops and with little by way of enthusiasm, New Wave rarely sounded so old. Far better are **SEXY BREAKFAST**. They've come a long way over the years and today they're taking their main stage opportunity by the scruff of the neck. Joe Swarbrick has always been a natural showman and he really shines today. Sexy Breakfast's glam-rock may be draped in a velvet jacket much of the time, but there's plenty of menace too, while the frenzied set-closer finds Joe screaming "If you won't fuck me, the chemicals will", which promises to become a festival anthem; if not this year, then for many more to come.



MC Stamina



Biffy Clyro



65 Days of Static



Inside The Barn



DJ Tony Vegas

**UNDER THE IGLOO GIVE US THE FIRST** chance to sit down, ponder life and slow down of the afternoon. The first half of their set is incredibly quiet, punctuated only by odd bursts of typically post-rock noise, but with throbbing bass that strays into dub territory and the addition of a laptop which adds depth to their sound, we wonder whether we really need to stand up again at all. But it's standing room only in the Barn for **BATTLE**, and a chance to play Early 80s Pop Bingo. We've got a full house within the first song – The Associates, Kitchens of Distinction, Furniture and, most of all, The Cure. By the second number they're into Simple Minds territory, but Simple Minds before they got all bloated and bombastic, and we enjoy them a lot.

Up on the main stage **PATRICK WOLF** is moaning on and bleedin' on about something and we slip away to find a radio and check on the cricket. The news is almost as depressing as Wolf's winsome, *faux*-operatic power ballads. The following day he is arrested on suspicion of burglary. We don't know any more details but suspect that Bob Dylan's songbook has gone missing. In the Barn, **STONEY** is displaying a far better ear for a song. He's been compared to David Bowie and Super Furry Animals amongst others but his set suggests a far more expansive record collection, while, unusually for a singer-songwriter, he and his band manage to put on a show.

Spectacle of the day though, by some distance, are **MOTORMARK**. We're lured to their set purely on the basis of their write-up in the festival programme, which promises a vampire and a dominatrix, and delivers far more. There are two of them: both in black, he's covered in red lipstick, she's wearing a veil and looks like a sinister German nanny who's just butchered the

kids and is now dressed for the funeral. They sound like a rabid Lene Lovich fronting a Toytown Teenage Atari Riot, and if that concept don't grab you, you're as dead as them kids what the evil nanny just killed.

**WE SNEAK INTO THE BARN MOMENTS** before security are forced to declare it a lock-out, such is the demand to see **THE EDITORS**. Another chance to play Early 80s Pop Bingo. We hit the jackpot even quicker this time – Joy Division, Echo and the Bunnymen, Psychedelic Furs and, perhaps less predictably, The Wedding Present, although given they're from Leeds, it might be the accent that does it. They rise above their collective influences and manage to add a sparkle to their murky Joy Div atmospherics and you know that they're gonna be absolutely huge in six months and almost as certainly completely forgotten a year later.

**EDIBLE FIVE FOOT SMITHS** would doubtless have been forgotten too by everyone except the Truck Records crew, who have persuaded them to reform for today after they split a year ago. Pencil-thin frontman Matt Thompson leads us through a country rock journey that touches on Smashing Pumpkins and At The Drive-In along the way, and that all their songs appear to be about Canada only endears them to us further. The likes of 'Cycle Nova Scotia' only add to a feeling that when they split, we lost a genuinely loveable band.

It seems an age ago **65 DAYS OF STATIC** first cut their teeth supporting Part Chimp. It seems like everyone has squeezed into the Trailerpark Tent to see them and there's pandemonium down the front when they kick off. They sound absolutely enormous, their post-rock-gone-gabba defies pigeonholing, and probably explains their

appeal. They're a genuinely exciting band and theirs might just be the set of the day, only it's difficult to tell when your ears are bleeding this heavily.

**BY CONTRAST, HEADLINERS BIFFY CLYRO** are quiet tonight. Not in a musical sense – no, they're as loud as you like – but they barely utter a word to the rapt audience throughout their set. Their reception is astounding, welcomed like returning war heroes. War heroes with a massive PA system and a big bag of angular metal riffs, obviously. There is much to admire about Biffy Clyro, particularly the way they've got where they are on their own terms and free of press hype. When they hit a groove they're a formidable beast and there are clever tempo changes and a strong dynamic sound, but there's also a feeling they're trying too hard and when they sing "Once again, you've missed the point" on 'The Kids From Kibble', we wonder if perhaps we have.

Okay, so we wanted to give the usual Truck suspects a miss this year but reviewing Truck without mentioning **GOLDRUSH** would be like writing about Cropredy and not mentioning Fairport Convention. It's is, in essence, still their festival, tonight is their only UK date this year and they, as ever, fail to disappoint. They're genteel, pretty and slightly sombre, the gorgeous 'Same Picture' bringing warmth to a slowly cooling evening. They do seem to be morphing gradually into The Band, but maybe because they're such a gentle band musically, it's easy to forget they're also one of the best that Oxford has produced. A small child in a Tigger costume perched on his dad's shoulders punches the air in triumphant delight.

**Words: Dale Kattack and Allin Pratt**

# TRUCK '05



## SUNDAY

**IT'S RAINING. IT'S BEEN RAINING SINCE** 5am when one poor Nightshift scribe awoke to find his tent full of water and himself in desperate need of the toilet but unable to tie his ridiculously laced boots.

Still, it's a particularly Truck-like sort of rain. Almost polite for all its insistency. There will be no torrents of floodwater washing entire campsites into the sea here.

There's nothing polite about playing heavy metal at ten in the morning, which is what **MONDO CADA** are doing in the Barn. One of the many young bands in Oxfordshire following in the tyre tracks of Winnebago Deal, theirs is simple, supercharged fuzz-rock. Effective enough as long as its assaulting your eardrums. But it's 10am. We need banana smoothies more than we need heavy metal.

The gently nagging drizzle soon drives us back into the Barn, however. Here we find **BLOODROSES**. Something of a local supergroup, formed from the ashes of Days Of Grace and Marconi's Voodoo, they take the best bits from Iron Maiden, Korn and Helmet and throw them together to make a pleasing racket. It may be a bit one-paced throughout, but it's still good to see Snuffy Voodoo back on a stage and stomping around like Godzilla with rickets.

**COLONY** fair less well at such an early hour. Stooges-style garage rock cans sound very cool if it's done with wild-eyed abandon and ears finely tuned for a pop hook. Colony have bleary eyes and must have left their earplugs in, because they're totally uninspiring. A shame because they *look* like they should sound great.

It may be raining outside, but when a Fender Rhodes makes an appearance in the Lounge Tent and **TONIC** start their Corduroy-influenced acid jazz, you start to feel like the sun might just put in an appearance. Yesterday's stars Motormark might feel at home wandering around dressed in black plastic bags, but give us lime green acrylic

slacks any day. The smiles from Tonic are still with us – although the slacks are long gone – when we arrive at the Acoustic Tent for **MARTIN GRETCH**. They don't last long, huddled under a tree and peeking through a side flap in the tent to try and catch a glimpse. It says so much about an artist when people are prepared to stand in the rain, twenty-deep at the doors, just to hear him. Gretch's is the ideal music to mourn the loss of Truck's eight-year spell of perfect weather: yearning guitar with vocals snatched straight from the school of Jeff Buckley. Gretch is a major talent, but we still hate him. Why? Because he's nice and dry and he's bloody well smiling. Maybe he saw Tonic too.

**BAD NEWS. THE MAIN STAGE HAS BEEN** powered down. The roof is leaking and no-one wants an electrocuted musician on their hands. A toddler and his mum are throwing pebbles into the large puddle outside the Barn; they seem to be having the best time of everyone. A few yards away there's a queue of people waiting to order their sixth burger and chips feast of the weekend, while piles of healthy pasta salad go ignored on the next stall. Inside the Barn **TRADEMARK** are finishing their typically studious set with a synth-pop cover of 'Whisky in the Jar'.

**THE MAIN STAGE IS BACK UP AND** running and **THE DRUG SQUAD** are exactly what everyone needs right now – loose-limbed, slightly inebriated ska-punk that sounds like a grungy Bad Manners, with the odd polka excursion. A Big hurrah too for **EASY TIGER** in the Trailerpark Tent: a four-to-the-floor three-chord, down-home, unselfconscious mash-up of The Stones and Lynyrd Skynyrd that ranges from countrified barroom boogie to Farfisa-driven power rock. A Hint of cheese perhaps, but an even bigger hint of the sunshine soon to come.

Before that though, **EARNEST COX** are throwing their musical bath bomb into the nearest puddle and watching it fizz. Buzzing synths,

churning guitars and abstract lyrics barked out with nonchalant mania. They can be haphazard, but today, crammed onstage, and joined at the end by an over-enthusiastic drunk on tambourine, they show off what's best about them.

**FELL CITY GIRL**'s main stage set in the dying drizzle is inspirational and deserves an even bigger crowd than that gathered under umbrellas before them. They're already a stadium band with the anthems to prove it. Debut single 'Weaker Light' might just be *the* song of the festival; it's certainly the best single by an Oxford band so far this year.

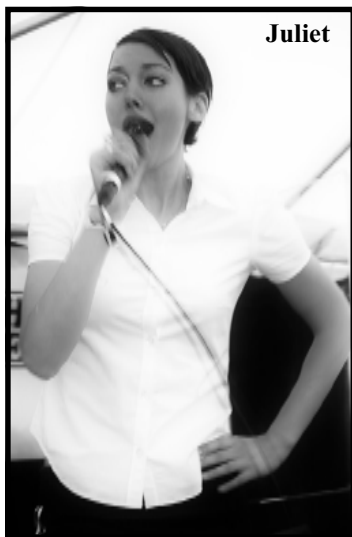
There's a plethora of co-called supergroups playing this weekend, but Brighton's **BRAKES** really live up to the title. Formed by various member of Electric Soft Parade, British Sea Power and The Tenderfoot, against all odds they're actually pretty good. Playing to a packed tent and belting out number likes 'All Night Disco Party', they make it easy to forget just how dreary ESP can be, while reminding you of just how good The Tenderfoot are.

**IN YEARS GONE BY THERE TENDS TO BE A** consensus amongst people you talk to on a Sunday afternoon as to who the best band of festival have been. This year for a change, everyone is agreed on who the worst band are.

**TOWERS OF LONDON**. Considered by a handful of quarter-wits in London media circles as ironically cool in a Darkness kind of way, they're simply rubbish. They believe they are The Sex Pistols. In reality they are a poor version of Wrathchild. Their music is fifth-rate Motley Crue, their attitude is cribbed from the punk movie *DOA* and they've stolen their haircuts from Mick Ronson's corpse. Listen you fuckers, *This Is Spinal Tap* was meant to be a joke, not an inspirational self-help manual. They try so hard to be dangerous but only serve to remind you just how dull rock and roll can be sometimes.

So, something beautiful instead and off to the Acoustic Tent for Portsmouth's **CRANES**, a band





Juliet



The Magic Numbers



Martin Gretch



SIKTH

we'd feared long-since dead (we meet several die-hard Cranes fans and not one of them seems to have bought a new record by the band for over ten years, although apparently they have never split up). They're gorgeous, as breathlessly desolate, delicate and haunting as ever, singer Alison Shaw's voice a wondrous almost unnatural baby-like coo, brother Jim's sparse electronic backing an unimposing but hypnotic spiral of sound. In its own quiet way, quite breathtaking.

**AT THIS STAGE OF THE WEEKEND, WE'VE** heard so many bands we're almost becoming numb. **YOURCODENAMEIS:MILO** are a perfect antidote to the retarded posturing of Towers of London, virulent, powerful heavy rock with brains. With their last album produced by Flood, it is always going to be difficult recreating such a sound live but they pull it off, occasionally missing the mark while trying to be clever but more often than not the songs twisting and turning like Shellac driving a steamroller down a slalom course and ending with a monstrous version of 'Rapt.dept'.

Inspired by the unexpectedly warm weather interlude we go a wandering, catching a few minutes of **LUX LUTHER**'s Keane-inspired keyboard-led balladry (and how they will loathe us for saying that), and a few more minutes of **A SCHOLAR AND A PHYSICIAN**'s retro-futurist synth mischief, the highlight of which, apart from sounding like the soundtrack to a rare Nintendo game, is a seemingly random counting game that involves the band and various confused members of the packed audience, none of whom seem to know exactly what the rules are, other than to shout out the next number. Hmm, maybe you had to be there.

The joke is falling a little flat for **ROBOCHRIST**, however, over on the theatre stage. Robochrist is a bloke covered in warpaint who mimes along to a tinny barrage of digital hardcore noise and random 'comedy' samples. We can tell you're not impressed and neither are we.

Maybe if they'd put him on in the Barn and turned the volume up to 11 it might make some kind of sense.

Considerably more pleasing to look at is **JULIET**, the weekend's most unadulterated pop act, a crop-haired party pixie with a neat line in energetic disco rock and dirty synths. Imagine a cross between Mel C and Alison Goldfrapp. But far, far prettier. And far, far prettier than **SIKTH**, who round the weekend's proceedings off in the Barn. Or more specifically, wipe out any remaining resistance with a double-barrelled vocal attack that recalls Extreme Noise Terror – rabid hyena goes head to head with guttural troll with toothache – and a disjointed twin guitar assault that twists and turns cleverly without ever going below 100mph. Just in case anyone had fallen asleep within a five-mile radius.

**AND SO TRUCK NUMBER EIGHT COMES** to a close on the main stage with **THE MAGIC NUMBERS**. That they are playing Truck either represents a major coup, and perfect timing, or it indicates the stature that the festival has now achieved. They, like Orbital and Glastonbury, are the perfect band for Truck. Ridiculously gorgeous close harmonies and a light countrified rock are exactly what we need at the end of a sodden but enjoyable day. Singer and vocalist Romeo doesn't stop smiling for one second throughout the entire set, something mirrored by the audience. Songs like 'Forever Lost' and 'Love Me Like You' ensure that the crowd are on full beam through the drizzle. The only break in the cheery proceedings is a spotless cover of The Smiths' 'There is a Light That Never Goes Out'; The Magic Numbers' version is so heartbreaking, it has grown men weeping into their cagoules. After that, it's back to business as usual, and The Magic Numbers extend their set for two encores, one of which catches the audience out as they head back to their tents. The Truck experience is obviously so good that even the bands can't get enough of it.

**Words: Sue Foreman and Allin Pratt**

*As ever, Truck wasn't all about guitars and bands who sound a bit like Echo & The Bunnymen. Aidan Larkin managed to dance from dusk til dawn...*

"So we're going at midday, yeah?"

Some hope. 5pm, and the only place these Truckers are camped is in Peepshow Paddy's back yard, waiting for our frazzled DJ friend (who's due on in the Lounge tent at nine o'clock) as he tries to re-equip body and mind after a messy evening at a South London warehouse party. John thinks that a spliff might help. Then a beer. Then some gin. At ten to nine, Peepshow Paddy is in a panic because he can't find his jeans. He's looking for them in someone else's tent.

Paddy's not the only one in a panic. At 1am, with DJ Marky lost near Wantage, Depth Charge promoter Dougie James is looking none too pleased. Happily he's also booked sometime Scratch Pervert Tony Vegas and Reprazent's Oxford ex-pat Suv to keep the Barn jumping. And Suv's shoved enough samba between his heavy-duty drum n' bass rollers to fool this crowd into thinking that not only has the headlining Brazilian arrived early, but he's playing a blinder. Winding things up with a flourish on Roots Manuva's 'Witness', it's already the best party Depth Charge have put on at Truckfest. And it's not even midnight.

John and Colin are looking somewhat beleaguered in Fresh Out The Box's Trailer Park tent. "It's alright in here mate, but everyone keeps asking us if we're selling drugs!" Alright it most definitely is - right about now the First Contact boys are shepherding a respectable crowd toward a waiting Meat Katie with an unpretentious set of breaks, basslines and unashamed party business. I'm just about to suggest that we stick around for a while when another kid in a tracksuit asks Colin if he's selling pills. One look at Colin should have told tracksuit that the bloke ain't got any pills left. Truckers - if you see two pork-pie hat-wearing West Indian guys in their forties at the festival next year, it'll be because I've managed to convince them that you're not all going to try and score smarties off them. Don't let me down.

We decide to go and look for Paddy. What a pro! Five minutes after we had to virtually scrape the geezer off the floor, Peepshow Paddy is ROCKING the Lounge! Never missing a beat, our mate steers a suddenly swollen tent through broken beat and house, before nearly taking the roof off the place with Richie Havens' climactic 'Back To My Roots'.

We catch up with Paddy again in the Trashy tent, having sidestepped Marky dashing from his car to deliver twenty minutes of the deftest scratching at 180bpm you're likely to hear this side of Sao Paulo. Something strange is happening. In between random reminders of current and eighties trash pop (courtesy of Zodiac residents Tommy Kneecaps and The Lady Fly Sox), Desta Nation Soundsystem are throwing in dub, reggae and dancehall. And, somehow, it works. Paddy decides to go and get the rest of that gin. And as the sun peeks it's way through the mist outside, we're all still smiling. I've had a blast. And with the exception of a couple of dozen kids in tracksuits, we've all got pretty much everything we needed from Truck 2005.



# LIVE

## **RICHARD WALTERS / LAIMA BITE**

### **The Cellar**

During her brief tenure with The Factory, Laima Bite was part of a band who got a fair few people excited pretty quickly, with the promise of something potentially-monumental just around the corner. She and the band might have gone their separate ways, but we still have Laima's solo work to be getting along with. With just an acoustic guitar as accompaniment, the scrutiny necessarily falls upon Laima's voice, which is remarkable. Compellingly plaintive, it's more than capable of carrying the occasional slightly weaker song in the set. And while some of the guitar lines are pretty much made up of the mix-'n'-match chord patterns, there are some fantastic songs here. Standout track, 'Did You Used To Love', is a belter – subtle and potent, it's already under your skin before you've heard it through. If she can pull an entire set together with songs of this quality, there will be great things ahead.

It feels like Richard Walters has been around in various bands forever – he's already a veteran of the local scene and still in his early twenties – but he's been quietly forging away on a majestic sweep of songs which are, at their strongest, quite breathtaking. His backing band tonight are a perfect complement – sparse guitar lines and washes of keyboard fill out the sound admirably. More importantly, they know when to ease back and let Richard's keening vocals take centre stage. Songs diverge from a stock lyrical trope, undercutting their own sense of gravity with a twist that brings them right back down to earth. There's a fine balance between a tone of voice that's sombre and contemplative, but which avoids self-indulgence or irritating earnestness, but it's effortlessly struck here, conjuring up a similar atmosphere to American Music Club's 'California', or the Red House Painters. A two for the price of one offer on resignation and celebration can't be bad.

*Stuart Fowkes*

## **NATION**

### **The New Theatre**

Nation have been playing the rock'n'roll game for all they're worth. Their debut album outsold Robbie Williams and U2 at Oxford's Virgin Megastore in the week of its release. Their jam-packed catalogue of gigs has included entertaining the British troops in Bosnia and a tour of local schools.

Tonight's gig, in promotion of their new album "Walk On", is a golden chance for the band, who tout themselves as "serious contenders to be the next Supergrass or Radiohead", to show what they're really made of.

The curtain rises in a slow strip-tease on a band manikin-still. Lead vocalist Terry Friday lounges indolently in a chair as he scrutinizes the audience through glinting binoculars. Eerie synths mate with the stuttering strobe to mesmerising effect. Suddenly, the guitar strikes up, the mirror cracks, and the lovely illusion is shattered.

If Nation are, as the Fox FM compere announces, to make history tonight, then it won't be because they are the "first independent band to play a theatre" but for their pioneering of the aural torture chamber. In these hellish middens, we are repeatedly bludgeoned by thuddingly monotonous bass, driven nigh-senseless by grindingly unimaginative drums and flagellated by flailing, wailing vocals. Particularly excruciating is a cover of Oasis' 'Rock'n'Roll Star', which they inject with all the hedonistic abandon of a Sunday School outing to a model village. The hideous 'Stars and Stripes', a celebration of America and Britain's response to terrorism, nails its uncomfortable sentiments to a bastardised version of 'Imagine' – rather ironic, given the disjunction in subject matter. 'The Beginning' comes on like a sucrose-laden Robbie heart-tugger. Nauseating though this is, it's a respite from the chug-along choons and Friday's vocals fare better here.

The disparity of the groups whose back catalogues Nation shamelessly rape (other casualties including Slade and Nirvana) reflect a band who, for all their posturing and self-promotion, have no idea of who they want to be. They flirt with rock'n'roll whilst remaining within the strict parameters of fun-for-all-the-family entertainment; they pursue critical acclaim, yet still want to make schoolgirls go wobbly at the knees.

Bunging all these ingredients in the same pot, Nation cook up a rancid bubble-and-squeak which, in trying to please all palates, pleases none.

*Emily Gray*

## **VENA CAVA / CHINESE**

### **FINGERTRAP / BOMBSHOE**

#### **The Bullingdon**

Featuring most of Near Life Experience and seemingly fronted by a drunken sociology lecturer, Bombshoe, opening tonight's three-band local metal bill, are an odd, often ill-fitting proposition, but not without a hefty armoury. The jagged riffs and funky bass runs, coupled with vocalist Mike's almost haphazard lyrical construction initially point to System Of A Down, the sound veering from barking hardcore to almost Balkan folk, but as the set progresses the energy of the twin guitarists takes over and things move further into strict hardcore. The execution is spot on but the slightly comic element, especially in the hectoring vocals and between-song jazz fills detracts from what might be a more serious metal proposition.

Nothing comic about Chinese Fingertrap, who are full-throttle from start to finish in a brief set that simmers with nervous energy and is most notable for frontman Dale's contorting, cavorting posturing and barking delivery, a little like a young Jimmy Pursey at times. They pack a visceral punch – each song is two minutes, bang, bang, bang and then gone and onto the next. It gets a little generic towards the end but Chinese Fingertrap simply don't give you time to get bored.

Recent Punt stars Vena Cava are the band with the broadest scope tonight. In singer Marco they've got the screaming hellbastard bit alright, but beyond that surface ferocity lies a strangely arty manner. The music broods and bursts forth but knows how and when to rein itself in for much of the set, leaving plenty of tension hanging in the air. Like Bombshoe there is a touch of System Of A Down about them at times, but equally some proggy moments and vocals that switch from squawks to incantations. It rarely gets too clever but keeps you guessing. Vena Cava have got so many more strings to their bow than most metal bands and with such a keen grasp on their own intensity, they're the ones to watch out for.

*Ian Chesterton*

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## SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT

### The Cellar

If words fail you, simply bark like a dog. It's a maxim that serves Liam Ings-Reeves well three minutes into tonight's opening number, a typically awkward sprawl of noise that lends a whole new dimension to the word disjointed.

I've given up trying to describe Suitable Case For Treatment to folks from outside of Oxford; it's too hard to fully convey everything they are, and tonight's gig, ahead of the release of their new album, 'Of Motets and Misdirection', offers no easy clues. The funkier non-funk band in town? Psychiatric ward disco metal? Prog-ska? Gospel punk? Seven shades of hell frozen onto a lollipop stick and served up with a side order of boiled rats? All these and a bit of something dark and queasy for good measure.

This is the beast that Suitable Case have become in the past year – less explosive, more considered but as mesmerising and

original as any band around at the moment. Tonight's set is a series of extended hypno-groove expeditions that one moment appear to be a comic fart joke in a lunatic jam session, the next a monolithic swathe of grade-A radioactive killer metal, swamped by Black Sabbath guitar riffs, stubborn bass lines and Liam's unnerving voice that switches from amphibian croak to Nick Cave yelp at the flick of a switch. They can be indulgent but at the end of each track you find yourself washed up on a completely different shore to the one you drifted off on.

What makes Suitable Case is their absolute mastery of the bizarre, indulgent and obtuse. Like an imagined soundtrack to Alan Moore's *The Black Freighter*, they're a gruesome, hypnotic and compelling harbinger of rock's mutant future, and they're here to claim your troubled soul.

**Dale Kattack**

## ARCTIC MONKEYS

### The Zodiac

It's impossible to go into tonight's gig with a completely open mind, such is the hype surrounding Huddersfield's Arctic Monkeys. Having released one limited-edition EP they've been the subject of a mad record company scramble, been frothed over in the national press and tonight's gig is long-since sold out. At least half the audience seem to know the words to most of the songs.

The cynic in me quickly starts to ask what all the fuss is about – they come onstage to strains of 'You've Got To Pick A Pocket Or Two', hopefully an ironic jibe at The Libertines' Artful Dodger imagery, a band who they've already been compared to, and immediately they look and sound like half a dozen other bands ploughing that early-80s new wave funk groove (except the bass player who looks like a Sontaron from Dr Who). They've

got some of the fizz and swagger of a young, amphetamine-fuelled Oasis too: chunky guitar riffs borrowed from Cream overpower the spindly, urgent white boy funk rhythms. So far, so... ordinary. But there's something else, something intangible, in the air – it's the heady combination of adrenaline, sweat and conviction; it's the feeling that you're at a gig that actually matters. Frontman Alex Turner's barbed lyrics might be almost completely lost in the fog of spunked-up pop-punk sound, but 'All You People Are Vampires' proves Arctic Monkeys have got the hooks to hang their coats on. They ultimately triumph against the burden of so much expectation – just. Arctic Monkeys will have to do their real growing up in full glare of the public. That's when the real battle starts.

**Sue Foreman**

## GRAVENHURST

### The Wheatsheaf

Reality versus expectation is the cause of as many disappointments in pop music as in anywhere in life, and so it is tonight. That tonight's gig happened at all is down to the heroic efforts of engineer Joal Shearing who solders, glues and sellotapes various bits of wiring back together after everything blows up during the soundcheck. A shame Gravenhurst couldn't replicate such heroism, although in fairness, their gorgeously timid studio sound would have stood little chance against an audience seemingly intent on yacking incessantly throughout each band.

Gravenhurst's CDs have an almost magical sadness about them; Bristol's Nick Talbot is one of the few people who could do such ample justice to Husker Du's haunting 'Diane', as he does on

recent album 'Black Holes In The Sand'. Tonight though, Gravenhurst opt for a wandering set of almost random atmospheric pieces that stretches from the doom-laden claustrophobia of The Cure circa-'Faith', to more proggy King Crimson-like intermissions. There's a wig-out cover of The Kinks' 'See My Friends' and plenty of apparently directionless jazz rock that could be culled from any of Tortoise's indulgent installations. But most importantly there's precious little indication of the twilight heartache and melancholy that makes Gravenhurst on album such a morose pleasure.

Some bands, it seems, are just not made for the live arena and must remain a solitary enjoyment.

**Victoria Waterfield**



Oxford University Department  
of Psychiatry, Warneford  
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# DEMOS

*If you do not supply us with a proper contact number and address as stated below, we will not review your demo.*

## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### LUX LUTHER

It's amazing how the quality of demos can vary from month to month. Last month's batch was very impressive and pretty much any of them would have breezed this month's demo of the month. Because, dear reader, this time round we have what we call in music journalist parlance, a right old pile of dog's arse. It's like all the very worst bands in the vicinity had decided we were enjoying the summer a bit too much and thought they'd bring a little bit of their rain and misery to bear on us. Which shouldn't demean Lux Luther too much, since they, almost alone this month, appear to have some vague idea of what it means to play music that doesn't make sane people want to gut you with a blunt pair of garden shears. Formed by former

Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia bassist and professional smoking beagle Ollie Cluet, plus a couple of blokes who used to be in Ben and Jason, Lux Luther play gentle piano-led indie pop with sweet, floaty harmonies and washes of melancholy and unimposing misery. Best song here is slow-burning ballad 'It's Not What You Are', with echoes of Keane and Athlete. Hardly original and quite timid really, they still have a bit of a sparkle about them, something just about every other band this month utterly lacks.

### IONICA

Another demo deserving of keeping its innards, although Ionica, as ever, sound like they'd be happy to eviscerate yours. Mindless, headstrong, full-throttle guttural heavy metal from possibly the least popular next door neighbours in Carterton. Lava-gargling Ork vocals are present and correct, as is the tin-pot, breakneck drumming and borrowed Iron Maiden riffs – the things that teenage metal dreams are made of. There's an admirable lack of subtlety about Ionica, with their indecipherable lyrics and no pausing for breath, and while they've got some way to go to equal Sextodecimo's levels of barbarism, they give it a fair old crack of Lucifer's whip.

### TINDERBOX

Okay, this lot just about escape the frenzied garden tool-related immolation

session, but only by the skin of their slightly soft teeth. It doesn't look good to start with – some fluffy, slightly trippy jazz-pop fronted by the sort of shrill female vocals that you normally only find in the very worst English folk bands, the sort of vocalist who spends entire songs practising her scales completely, blissfully, unaware of her limitations. Anyway, it all floats along in a semi-dreamlike state, perhaps suffering from a tinny overall sound, when this kind of cocktail lounge stuff needs to be lush and expansive with a rather more sultry and seductive front person. But Tinderbox redeem themselves towards the end with a change of direction that's more suited to their skills, like the lo-fi, strung-out 'Fairy Song', certainly the direction they should be heading in. And with each song clocking in around the five-minute mark, some sort of brevity might be in order.

### DIAKOTTONEY

Spellcheck-bothering blues-rock from Kennington, although with the emphasis on the rock as the whole thing bundles untidily along in a hurried slash'n'burn of hairy metal and frenzied pub-rock, the clatter and clutter of guitar, bass and drums all threatening to engulf each other, while the vocalist remains calm and slightly pedestrian amidst the carnage. So chaotic is the whole thing that the rest of the band appear oblivious to the guitarist wandering off into extreme axe solo masturbation frenzy a minute or two into each song. The singer, meanwhile, sings apocalyptic tales of doom and carnage and it's all extremely serious and histrionic. Here's a rockaboogie approximation of Whitesnake; there's a church fête rendition of Motorhead. If you were extremely drunk (and we're talking bottle of vodka washed down with jug of sangria drunk here) and your bus home wasn't due for another hour, you might feasibly headbang along to this lot of a Tuesday night. You'd regret it the following morning, though.

### ELLA CANAVAN

Get this: "The EP fluctuates between pulse-driven, self-effacing synth-pop and subdued, hazy lamentation, which leaves the wounded delivery of the lyrics to sustain the emotional cohesion of the work. Each song labours to approximate the interior history of the world through poignant vignettes that simultaneously establish a reality and demolish it before it sets." This guy should be a bleedin' music journalist with that kind of pretentious twaddle. We suddenly feel redundant. The

accompanying lyric sheet is even more scary and we wonder which immigration official allowed the man behind it, one James Wilkins, to settle in Oxford from Ohio, where he has doubtless left behind several corpses buried beneath his secluded log cabin. And the music? Sorry, yes. Odd, as you'd expect. Sludgy, accordion-led crawls that sound like The Arcade Fire or Black Heart Procession being very slowly suffocated. Seriously miserable stuff. 'Bodies and Brains' carries a strangled, almost carny atmosphere, while 'J Schneider' is a solemn Nick Cave-inspired impersonation. It doesn't half drag on, although there's a strange appeal to the whole thing that might become more apparent if you took a large quantity of heroin before tuning in.

## THE MILKMEN

Why can't anybody be bothered to sing properly this month? Here's another one where the vocals are barely decipherable. In fact the whole demo has an apologetic, mumbling feel to it. First track, 'Song Borrowed', lives up to its title by borrowing both the countrified lope from 'Walk On The Wild Side' and the stabbing synth intro to 'Summer In The City', but doesn't do much with either of them except create a vaguely Beta Band-like fug of noise. 'Juliet Bravo' is a random collage of distorted background guitar and vocal samples over bundling electro rhythms, again in a vaguely Beta Band-like way, but too random and laid-back to really work. By halfway through they're getting very formulaic, which is surely anathema to the apparent primary idea of creating odd, disorientating music.

## WHISKY A GO-GO

Hey, hey, hey, what's this? Do we have some budding superstars on our hands? Enstone's Whisky A Go-Go recently won a Battle Of The Bands in Leicester, judged by none-other than someone from the Leicester Mercury. Can you even begin to picture the tumultuous scenes that ensued that night? God only knows what the band who came second sounded like if this lot were the winners. Urgently feeble acoustic country pop that falls into that terrible trap of strumming harder and shouting a bit louder whenever it wants to deliver an extra quota of passion. It bumbles aimlessly along, considerably less interesting than it should be given that the vocalist trained as an opera singer for several years, until it reaches deep into its pockets for a bit of exotic fun in the form of a flurry of random Spanish guitar playing. Teenage dreams crushed in an instant. Still, they could always move to Leicester. They appreciate talent up there, apparently. And it's got a great crisp factory.

Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1ZU.

**IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact address and phone number (no email or mobile-only). No more than four tracks on a demo. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. Aw heck, you're not taking the slightest bit of notice of this are you?

## VAPOUR TRAIL

Possibly named after an old Ride classic, but equally probably so-named to reflect the band's abject lack of any kind of substance, Vapour Trail are one of those all too common heaps of wailing, blubbery, angst-ridden indie jelly that used to get The Smiths a bad name. Songs like 'Some Day My Prince Will Come' just sort of sit there crying and feeling sorry for themselves, the singer sounding like he's having his testicles removed with a rusty spoon, while hoping a pretty passing girl might suddenly fall in love with them. Because of course, pretty girls always fall in love with big cry babies. They've calmed down a bit by 'Safe House', a ray of hope shining through the tears. There's trembling talk of finding a safe house. Possibly where they can hold all-night Nick Drake-listening marathons away from the world and its cruel laughter. By the very end of this demo, which lasts ten minutes but seems so much longer, Vapour Trail have turned into a ramshackle approximation of Goldrush, which is at least some kind of an improvement.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### THE BRAVADO

There's absolutely no information about this lot, which might be a blessing since otherwise we'd be tempted to drive round to their house armed with a large jug of contempt and a claw hammer and rearrange their features. For starters, their demo is entitled 'Popular Culture... Discuss?', which might read like a pointless Media Studies essay title but actually has no meaning since it offers no argument to discuss; it's just idiotic sloganeering posing as intellectual provocation. And then there's the title of the first song: 'Your Only a Rebel From The Waist Down'. Learn to punctuate, you stupid fucking insects! It only gets worse if you bother to listen to it, which we did in a half-arsed sort of way. A rudimentary form of punk rock with excruciatingly irritating vocals that make the whole thing sound like Frank Spencer trying to impersonate Wreckless Eric, and lyrics like, "Culture is an illusion / We are all an illusion", which might sound like philosophy if you're 12 years old and have accidentally ingested a beaker of magic mushroom tea, but is really just infantile bumchat. So, The Bravado: they can't punctuate, they can't sing, they can't philosophise. They are only about one millionth as interesting as any of this review might make them sound. That's maths, that is – something else they're doubtless rubbish at.

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