

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 216
July
2013**

STAYING OUT FOR THE SUMMER

Oxfordshire goes festival crazy

Fourteen local summer festivals in the words of the organisers and bands.

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NEWS



A PHOTO EXHIBITION opens this month, documenting gigs at the old Jericho Tavern in the early 1990s and features never before seen images of Radiohead and Supergrass, as well as touring bands who went on to greater glories, and many local favourites. The exhibition is of photos by Dean Ryan, a regular at the Tavern before it closed in 1994 and runs from Thursday 4th July through to Saturday 3rd August at Art Jericho.

Dean explained the story behind the exhibition: “It’s really about the venue, the Jericho Tavern, which played a role in the success of bands from Oxford such as Radiohead and Supergrass. Other well-known bands such as Pulp, The Verve and The Cranberries also played there and feature in the exhibition, along with local favourites Death by Crimppers, Madamadam (*pictured*), ATL and Sevenchurch.

“Almost all of the images have never been seen, apart from by a few friends, so after twenty years it seemed like a good idea to show them as a collection.”

A NEW OXFORD CITY MUSIC FESTIVAL is being planned for the week of the **25th-30th November** this year. Aiming to span twenty venues and feature a host of local and out of town acts, the event is being organised by It’s All About The Music promoter Osprey. Acts confirmed to play so far include The

Goggenheim, Brickwork Lizards, Knights of Mentis, Headcount, Smilex and Komrad. Any acts wanting to play should check out the festival page on Facebook.

OXFORD DUPLICATION CENTRE in Kidlington are sponsoring local rapper and hip hop producer Rawz as he releases his debut album, ‘Spoken’. Cheryl Lee Foulsham, who has run ODC for five years, explained that she wants to work closely with and support independent local artists, from sponsorship to offering special rates for Oxford acts putting out their own CDs. “We’ve been involved with the Oxfordshire music scene for many years and welcome the opportunity to expand our network to support up and coming bands as well as the more established artists.” Rawz, the *nom de plume* of Rory Campbell, is making his album available as a pay-what-you-want download at Rawz.bandcamp.com as well as on CD. A further album, ‘Live From The Pantheon’ is also due soon, a collaboration with Flooded Hallways’ Nemrot.

For deals on CD duplication, call Cheryl on 01865 457000, or email info@theduplicationcentre.co.uk

THE MARSH HARRIER in Temple Cowley are looking for bands and solo acts to play the pub. Email info@themarshharrier.com or call 01865 718225.

AS EVER, don’t forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Saturday evening between 8-9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews, studio sessions, gig reviews and local music news. The show is available to stream or download as a podcast at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

Regularly updated local music news is available online at www.musicinoxford.co.uk.



MR SHAODOW AND ZUBY have been talking to Nightshift ahead of their return to Oxford this month. The rappers, both Oxford University graduates, made their names performing on the local scene before going on to sell over 25,000 CDs between them, mainly by busking around the UK. The pair will be playing together at the **O2 Academy** on **Saturday 13th July** alongside Adian Coker, Death Of Hi-Fi and other local hip hop acts, as part of the venue’s Upstairs showcase night.

“Because our personal goals and general ethos is so similar I think sharing a stage is quite an easy thing to do, even if our music isn’t exactly the same,” explained ShaoDow, who has been writing and recording his new album ‘Kung Fu Hustler’, the follow-up to ‘Cut The Bullspit’, as well as touring Thailand recently. “We’ve put together a massive 90-minute set featuring old and new material from us both, though for the O2 show we’ll be doing 60 minutes. It seemed crazy at the time but performing it feels natural and the audience has really responded well.

“Surprisingly we’ve only ever made two official songs together. The first, ‘Actin Up’, appeared on Zuby’s ‘Commercial Underground 2’ and ‘Cut The Bullspit’. The second is ‘Biggest Threat’; this one will be on my new album and even features a bit of singing from the two of us. Considering neither of us are singers, it sounds surprisingly good.”

Zuby, whose ‘Zubstep’ EP reached number 12 in the iTunes hip hop charts, is also keen to perform for an Oxford crowd again after touring around the country for the past few years. “I love going back to Oxford. I feel that it’s the city that birthed me as a musician. I often forget how much we achieved whilst at university so it’s always nice to go back there and see how many people are still following our careers. That’s Nightshift and BBC Introducing included who supported us from the beginning.”

As well as the Oxford show, ShaoDow and Zuby are looking forward to their respective new releases later this year. “For ‘Kung Fu Hustler’ I’ve taken everything I learnt from ‘Cut The Bullspit’ and refined it, says ShaoDow, “the album is 21 tracks and really pushes the boundaries in terms of what people expect from me and what I expect from myself. Lyrically, it’s far superior to anything I’ve made before. I’m enjoying my artistic freedom and the fact that I’m able to live and, more importantly, enjoy living as a full time rapper. I think this album really reflects that feeling.”

Zuby: “‘Zubstep’ was an extension of my usual ‘Commercial Underground’ sound, a fusion of hip hop and dubstep style production, something that just came naturally and plan to return to in the future. In general I feel it’s allowed my music to reach new audiences and it works very well live.”

Tickets for the Academy show, priced £6, are on sale now from Wegotickets.com or the venue box office. Check out www.ShaoDowMusic.com and www.ZubyMusic.com for more news on both rappers.

ALUNAGEORGE have been announced as one of the headline acts for this year’s Gathering Festival. Gathering takes place across a host of venues on and around Cowley Road, on **Saturday 19th October**, featuring some 40 acts playing over 12 hours. Last year’s event, featuring Dry The River and Bastille, sold out.

Other acts confirmed so far include Local Natives, London Grammar, Temples, Candy Says, Charlie Boyer & The New Voyeurs, Cheatahs, Chloe Howl, Kimberly Anne, The Ruen Brothers, Wolf Alice and Troumaca. Venues include the O2 Academy, the Bullingdon, East Oxford Community Centre, Cowley Road Methodist Church, the Port Mahon, Truck Store and St John the Evangelist.

Tickets for the event are on sale now, priced £20, from Truck Store or through www.gatheringfestival.co.uk.





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STAYING OUT FOR THE SUMMER....

Summer! Sun! Seaside! Cider! And festivals of course. Oxfordshire is home to a few. More than a few truth be told. Bloody loads of them in fact, from the timeless charm of Cropredy and the enduring intimate fun of Truck to the emerging leftfield pleasures of Supernormal and the exotic bucolic adventures of Wilderness, via Cornbury’s tenth birthday and a host of lovingly-crafted small-scale affairs in fields and pub gardens across the county. And of course Nightshift is always on hand to tell you all about them. But, hey, why not let the people who actually put these events together tell you what to expect? Over the next five pages we get the low-down on every festival that matters in Oxfordshire this summer from the promoters’ point of view. And then we ask some of the local acts playing the festivals what they think about it all. Just don’t mention rain, alright?

CORNBURY FESTIVAL

5th-7th July, Great Tew Estate.
Acts: Squeeze; Keane; Bellowhead; Van Morrison; Imelda May; Echo & The Bunnymen; Amy McDonald; Osibisa; Seth Lakeman.
www.cornburyfestival.com



HUGH PHILLIMORE (organiser)
“Cornbury offers a complete range of music for the whole family – this year from Van Morrison and Keane, to Lawson and James Arthur. A great children’s area featuring Dora The Explorer – a comedy line-up, a mini-literature festival and Qi. When we started in 2004, 1,500 people attended the festival, now it’s more like 12,000, so it’s a much bigger operation. Obviously moving sites was a huge change for us – we got very lucky – from one beautiful site to another more beautiful site.
“I’m a fan of modern country music and have followed Tift Merritt since the start of her career, so it will be good to see her back at the festival. She’s a really passionate and committed artist.
“I think the most memorable and emotional moment was Elvis Costello performing ‘Shipbuilding’ at the 2005 festival – dedicating the song to a fan who’d died in the London Tube bombings a few days earlier; the dead girl and her sister – who wrote to Costello – had seen a

Costello gig together the night before the attack. The worst was going through liquidation after the festival in 2010 and the sudden death of our lovely local PR lady Tracy Watkins. The funniest was negotiating with Robert Plant on his per-minute overtime rate when we needed him to extend his set after The Waterboys were prevented from getting to the festival in 2006.”

BRICKWORK LIZARDS (Riverside stage)
“Anyone who comes to see us can expect something unique and very entertaining; we had to create a genre to describe ourselves: ‘Turkabilly hip hop’. It’s a mix of Arabic and western music. Imagine a frenetic spaghetti western soundtrack played by Balkan gypsies - with a rapper!
“We’ve got a new song that will get its first airing, which at a big festival is like walking off the edge of a building blind-folded. We’ll also be joined by our occasional exotic dancer; something for all the family then!
“We debuted at Cornbury last year and it was a great experience. It’s a real West Oxfordshire affair, where the hoi polloi can rub shoulders with the Chipping Norton set over a free-range kebab. I love the range of performers - this year we’re playing on the Riverside Stage just before Lloyd Grossman (yes, *the* Lloyd Grossman) and his band; I’m really hoping he comes onstage through a massive polystyrene key hole!
“One of my favourite festival moments was at a sunny Glastonbury: I was high on magic mushrooms and saw a mob run through a hole in the fence at the green fields as a trumpet player blasted out the theme from chariots of fire.”



YARDFEST

Friday 5th July, Courtyard Youth Arts Centre, Bicester
Acts: Canterbury, Lostalone, Evarose, Broken Revolution, The Method.
www.bicestercourtyard.org.uk

JEREMY LEGGETT (co-ordinator)
“YardFest is the only music festival aimed squarely at teenagers in Oxfordshire that is also *organised* almost entirely by teenagers. We are perhaps the cheapest with tickets at £8. We offer a safe and alcohol-free environment for teenagers to

enjoy some of the best touring and local bands around, after their exams. We’re hoping to raise lots of money for Teenage Cancer Trust... and that YardFest is so successful that it can become an annual event. We expect lots of teenagers to come along and have a great time! There’s always the fear the weather will dampen the fun but our stages are indoors so even this is not much of an issue.
“I’m most looking forward to seeing Canterbury, because ‘Heavy in the Day’ is such a good record, they have a decent teenage following and because the teenage gig committee who organised YardFest, worked and lobbied so hard to secure their booking.”

THAMESFEST

19th-21st July, Talbot Inn, Eynsham
Acts: Steamroller, The Missing Persians, TOBI, Ian ‘The Pump’ Macintosh, Reckless Sleepers, The Tom Michell Trio, The Pete Fryer Band, 1000 Mile Highway.
thamesfest.co.uk

NICK CLACK (organiser)
“We never set out to be different with Thamesfest; it all kicked off as just giving people an extra bit of fun, but it turned out more popular than we imagined. Due to the success of last year, we decided to have a three-day festival this year and to bring in acts from other parts of Oxfordshire, as well as out of the county. All being well next year, we want to expand again in another location, which will allow us to have more than one stage and even more varied acts
“It’s difficult to be excited about just one act, but there are two I’m especially excited about: TOBI, who is going to be big. He is already recording and gigging with Andy Fraser, ex Free, plus he has also gigged with Mick Taylor (ex Rolling Stones). Ian ‘The Pump’ Macintosh is Oxford born, but now in an Aussie band called The Wheeze & Suck Band and is coming all the way from Sydney to play.”

LARRY REDDINGTON – STEAMROLLER (Saturday)
“Steamroller is a blues based rock trio somewhere between Cream, ZZ Top and Hendrix. Despite being Oxford’s most experienced – certainly oldest – band, we feel we lack nothing in terms of energy and attitude. We were all pros back in the 60s, sharing stages with wannabes like The Rolling Stones, Dusty Springfield, The Kinks and The Animals, and we haven’t forgotten how to do it. We even did some recording with Joe Meek in the early days. Our songs have been described as cynical, but we like to think they have an ironic humour which reflects the rock’n’roll life style we all lived to the full. We’ll just go on and make lots of noise, be rude to the audience and behave badly - same as usual, really. We played Thamesfest last year and it was fun: nice friendly atmosphere, lots of good bands, what’s not to like?
“There was an occasion many years ago when I was doing a festival in Plymouth with an Oxford guitarist called Percy [not his real name] who was in the same band as me at the time. Percy hardly ever drank alcohol, but he would sometimes have a glass of cider, just to be sociable. However, on this occasion we plied Percy with West Country Scrumpy and he was as ‘sociable’ as a newt by the time we went on stage. About two songs in, I noticed a rapidly spreading pool of liquid on the floor. I looked at Percy. ‘What’s that?’ I mouthed, pointing. ‘I pissed myself,’ he mouthed back. He had too! In front of about two thousand people. What a Star!”

TRUCK

19th-20th July, Hill Farm, Steventon
Acts: The Horrors; Spiritualized; Ash; Dan le Sac vs Scroobius Pip; Dry; The River; Gaz Coombes; The Joy Formidable; Patrick Wolf; Toy; Rolo Tomassi.
www.truckfestival.com

RALPH BROADBENT (organiser)
“I think what Truck does is couple great music with great value. Truck is a really special musical experience without breaking the bank: you can bring your own drinks and picnic, see really good acts and not worry about anything else. It almost feels like how festivals used to be.
“One of the most interesting things about Truck is its heritage. It has a 15-year history of ups and downs but having this experience helps to shape the event to become even more special. Last year we revamped Truck with a back-to- basics approach in a bid to focus on all the things that made Truck brilliant in its early years. In doing this we had the luxury of knowing what had worked and not worked over the years. For example, bringing the Barn back – people absolutely loved it. I know I’m biased, but I think it made for a great event.
“It’s an honour to have Spiritualized play, but for me personally, Dan le Sac, Lewis Watson and Royal Republic are absolute must-see bands. It’s very subjective though, the bill is pretty packed with fantastic artists.
“I only became festival director in 2012 but there’s no doubt that standing there on Saturday night with 5,000 Trucker waving their arms in the air to the headline act has got to be one of the most fulfilling feelings I’ve experienced. The floods in 2007, when it was cancelled, were of epic proportions; you can still see videos of it online. That’s a festival organiser’s nightmare – working



tirelessly all through the year to have to cancel at the last moment.
“There was a pretty funny thing last year with Tim Minchin’s rider; he required a really nice grand piano. We spent months working out the logistics of getting it to the site, looking after it to make sure it didn’t get muddy and then returning it from the field in pristine condition. Eventually we decided that the only way we could ensure this plan went smoothly was to dedicate a team to this task for the day. They had to leave at 5am to pick up the piano from London to get it to site on time and then drive it back to London through the night after Tim’s performance. Two of the team begrudgingly agreed and the plan was put into action. With piano on site, Tim finally arrived on site with a big lorry in tow. I happened to walk past and saw the lorry doors open; inside was

another grand piano. It turns out that Tim had been sponsored at the last minute but his management team hadn’t relayed to us that they were bringing another piano. They inevitably insisted on using their own piano. To this day, I haven’t had the heart to tell the two crew that it was never used. It will be quite interesting when they read this in Nightshift!”

GUNNING FOR TAMAR (Barn stage, Saturday)
“We try and play every show as though it’s the last one we’ll do, so we tend to push ourselves on stage to make it visually exciting for people watching. For me, it’s the worst thing watching a band who look like they’d prefer to be anywhere else but playing their songs. Unfortunately our budget at the moment won’t allow us to blow anything up mid-set or arrive on stage riding unicorns with laser eyes, but we’re going to definitely make it a show for people to remember in our own special way.
“We’ve been lucky enough to play Truck for the last two years, first time thanks to the awesome BBC Introducing guys and now with the label takeover stage. The line-up this year is the best part about it: so many bands I would happily put myself further into debt for to see over the two days.
“Our best festival experience was opening the main stage at 2000Trees last year, and playing to a packed Barn stage at Truck in the same summer. Our funniest and worst kind of combined together at an indoor festival we played in Poland in May. We’d just driven straight from a great show at the Great Escape to Luton Airport and flew direct to Poland, where we were the supposed ‘international guests’ at the top of this Polish ‘Rockstars’ competition. The whole 24 hour experience was a combination of music, lots of vodka, Polish celebrities, a guy running around with a knife and herring tapas. A wonderfully weird experience.”

CARNIVAL

7th July, Cowley Road
Artists: Bands and sound systems tbc
www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk



ZAHRA TEHRANI (co-ordinator Kate Garrett young musicians stage)
“We are providing a platform for young people to showcase their music with the help of the O2 Academy at this year’s Carnival. The focus is on encouraging more urban genres of music to be involved as well as promoting as many young female artists as possible. There is a real lack of live gig opportunities for young people, shows for people that make urban music and there is always a big difference in the male-to-female ratio at gigs, so this year BG Records and the Young Women’s Music Project decided to put together something that would provide an outlet for those young

people in memory of Kate Garrett.
“I have been working on different stages at Carnival since I was 16; they have all been youth orientated, this time around it’s going to mainly be operated by young people who are training up in various roles, plus Carnival is back on the road which is really exciting.
“I’d have to say Mary James is the act I’m most excited about. She’s only 14 years old, plays guitar and sings all her own material, which has quite an alternative style of indie and r’n’b. It’s been amazing watching her music and confidence grow so much over the past twelve months.”

CHUKIE (Kate Garrett Stage)
“I’m a rapper, which I guess is already something a bit different for Oxford. I have big ginger hair, I give a hard-hitting, energy-packed performance of angsty hip hop that has a lyrical message with alternative back tracks. Andy Hill of Death Of Hi-Fi will be DJ-ing for me, as well as providing some exclusive beats. I have planned a collaboration or two with other artists from BG Records, including some acoustic artists. We have also planned a cypher too, which is a group of rappers performing pre-written verses one after the other to any beat the DJ spins; this is a really fun, live and adrenalin-fuelled part of performances for us rappers. I’m going to be using Carnival as a platform to showcase my debut EP, which I have been keeping

under wraps for a while now as it’ll be my first official release on BG Records.
“I played Carnival before with BabyGravy Allstars but this year it’s back on the road so I’m looking forward to experiencing the full atmosphere of a passing crowd. The funniest experience was the last Cowley Road Carnival: apparently police were looking for me but no one knew me by my real name, so it made it quite hard for them to find me. Maybe they just wanted to watch me perform?
“I’m think my best festival experience will be this year, I am hoping I can play more gigs and local festivals off the back of this one.”



STAYING OUT FOR THE SUMMER...

CHARLBURY RIVERSIDE

27th-28th July, Mill Field, Charlbury
Acts: db Band, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, Death of Hi-Fi, Brickwork Lizards, The Epstein, Swindlestock, Tamara & The Martyrs, Dirty Royals, Flights of Helios, The August List.
www.riversidefestival.charlbury.com

ANDY PICKARD (organiser)
“What makes Riversideside unique is the fact that it’s completely free and in keeping with the old festival ethos. It’s nice to get something free now and then. Also it’s a platform for local up and coming bands and more established bands to play to a large audience and also for the audience to see Oxford’s finest playing at one of the loveliest locations in the county.
“The festival is 18 years old this year, so it has seen many changes. Starting with one home-made stage and a few hundred people, it now has three stages and a footfall of over 8,000 during the weekend. Having Truck Store booking the second stage is also a huge step in the right direction.
“Being an old Supergrass fan, I’m most excited about having The db Band headlining. The best Riverside moment was after rescheduling due to flooding at the last moment, seeing hundreds of people all walking through the entrance. The worst time was some years ago, policing the camp-site all night which resembled Baghdad by the morning... never again. The funniest moment was seeing a band member standing on stage going effing mad at the audience thinking his guitar had been stolen, only to turn around and see his little daughter holding it for him. Not so rock’n’roll that time!”



THE DB BAND (main stage, Saturday)
“I haven’t been to the Riverside festival before, and we were teed off when last year’s flooding rescheduled the event beyond our availability to play. Thanks British Summer. Have heard many good things about it, so we’re very pleased to be headlining this year.
“My worst festival experience was flying into Sweden at the crack of dawn to play the Hultsfred Festival with Supergrass and Danny getting caught by the fuzz in customs. After a quick wrist slap/fine/landing tax and a relatively disgruntled Danny, we found out that someone had messed up and we’d arrived on the wrong day. Luckily we all saw the funny side. Other memorable moments were playing Glastonbury in pouring rain and two feet of mud in 1997, not fun for anyone; full sunshine from the Pyramid stage: best place in the world; Roskilde in Denmark, watching Isaac Hayes from the side of the stage and then having to go on and follow him; drinking in the midnight sun at the Tromso festival, Norway, 2008 and meeting my hero, Ron Asheton. In fact, Scandinavian festivals in general always seem to have a great atmosphere. Unless you get there on the wrong day.”

WILDERNESS

9th-11th August, Cornbury Park
Acts: Empire Of The Sun, Noah & The Whale, Rodriguez, Martha Wainwright, Sam Lee & Friends, Ghostpoet, Michael Kiwanuka.
www.wildernessfestival.com



ELOISE MARKWELL BUTLER (festival co-ordinator)
“I genuinely think we’re different to any other festival out there. There’s an incredible balance of well-being with a lakeside spa, meditation sessions, yoga and wild swimming, coupled with after dark antics from Secret Garden Party, The Box, The Correspondents and then some of the

best cultural programming out there – English National Ballet, roaming opera, Shakespeare’s Globe, talks and debates with The School of Life and Intelligence Squared. There is nothing quite like Wilderness.
“Wilderness has just grown in every way; we’ve got more pop-up restaurants, more banquets, bigger Spa, new stages are added every year but we want to keep that same feel so our audience capacity has only grown a bit.
“I couldn’t pick one single act I’m most excited about this year, I’d have to have three: Rodriguez, because he’s a lost legend and *Searching For Sugarman* makes your heart ache. Empire of the Sun because we’re their only UK show this year; it’ll be a whole new stage show and those guys are perfect for Wilderness... all sunshine, glitter and feather headdresses. And Martha Wainwright is a personal favourite, I just love her honesty.
“My favourite Wilderness memory is sitting in a hot tub on Sunday night at 1am last year, looking at the stars with no one else around apart from my good friend, sipping champagne. The festival was nearly over and had gone beautifully. I’ll always remember that little piece of calm.
“The worst times usually have a comedic edge to them. Staying up for three days finishing the program, eating nothing but junk food; watching a tent get moved seventeen times until we found the right position. Just getting a site map finished is an endurance test in itself. Then there is always litter picking at the end. Picking up cigarette butts seems to be always how it all ends.”

BODFEST

Saturday 13th July, Bodicote village
Acts: Tiger Mendoza, The Cellar Family, Von Braun, X1, Headington Hillbillies, Mundane Sands, Half Decent, Peerless Pirates, Jordan O’Shea, Artclasssink, The Method.
www.bodfest.co.uk

CHRIS OAKES (music co-ordinator)
“The Bodicote Village Festival has been running every year since 2000. This year sees a brand new committee and a brand new format. Rebranded BodFest ‘13, we have 23 acts playing on two stages outside the Horse & Jockey and The Plough pubs. We also have a festival-style street market, food court and family activity arena.
“I wanted to include as many local, independent bands and musicians as possible who do not often have the opportunity to play in north Oxfordshire. The Banbury area is well known for folk music and bluesy covers bands, so I was keen to include a range of genres not often seen in these parts.
“As this is the first time in our new format and as a free event it’s difficult to predict how many people will turn up; we have based most estimates on 2,000-plus, which would be fantastic.
“As I have personally invited many of the bands, I am excited about seeing them all, but I always love to see The Cellar Family who are just great live. Also looking forward to Von Braun and X-1 who I caught recently at Wittstock; Peerless Pirates who will be playing at Glastonbury, and my son’s band Punch Drunk Monkey Club who are rapidly building a reputation in the Banbury area.”

Richard Walters (London Folk Guild stage)
“You can expect some sad songs in a field. I play gospel folk music; it works well outside. I’m a huge fan of Wilderness, it’s a unique festival; as a result I’ll probably be in a pretty good mood. So I’ve got a smile lined up. It’ll be me and my band, we might rock out a bit. I popped along last year and felt like I’d dropped down the rabbit hole. Beautiful, unexpected and well programmed. It’s more than just a music festival.
“I played at the much-missed Big Chill a few years back and ended up in hospital with a dislocated shoulder after our set. That was the end of my touring summer. All the paramedics were so kind, but festivals in a sling are no fun, so I was driven back to Oxford, missing Leonard Cohen’s set. Gutted.”



SUPERNORMAL

9th-11th August, Braziers Park, Ipsden
Acts: Clinic, Shit & Shine, Terminal Cheesecake, Hookworms, Thee Bald Knobbers Church of Chaos, Mugstar, Michael Chapman, Art of Burning Water, Coma Wall, Dethscalator.
www.supernormalfestival.co.uk



SAM FRANCIS (co-organiser)
“Supernormal is an experimental and alternative arts festival that is completely un-commercial and not-for-profit. It blurs the boundaries between art and music, performer and audience; you can discover underground music, alongside contemporary art, performance, artist-led workshops, film and discussion – it’s a bit like an eccentric village fete for the alternative crowd. The festival has increased in size from under 200

people in 2010 to an audience of 1,000 this year – our fourth year. We are a much bigger team now, and the programme has grown and developed each year with more and more exciting stuff happening all around the site.
“The very nature of Supernormal is to be inclusive and un-hierarchical in terms of importance on the bill, and where the art and all the other happenings are as important as the music, so it’s hard to pick one act I’m most excited about. We want everyone’s individual highlights to be surprising and unexpected!
“One of the most memorable experiences at Supernormal was Thee Bald Knobbers hooded cult leading a crowd of festival-goers through the woods for an free-improv freak out. As was a sunlit barn full of people life drawing on Saturday morning in complete silence and concentration. The worst moment was when the festival very nearly didn’t happen in 2011 due to slow ticket sales. But with the support and generosity of some wonderful people who stepped up at the last minute to help and offer their services we just about managed to pull it off.
“One of the bands last year invented a new game called Slap Log which rapidly spread throughout the festival and was nothing more than two people standing on a wooden log and trying to slap each other off it. And the Sunday night hay fight of 2011 for the smiles on everyone’s faces, although it wasn’t very much fun to clean up on Monday!”



COMA WALL (main stage, Friday)
“Contrary to our other band, Undersmile, Coma Wall play Americana-influenced doom-folk, so festival-goers can expect acoustic guitars, banjo, bass and forlorn vocal melodies. This will be one of the few times we’ve played as Coma Wall so it will be a rare chance to see us play more than anything. We’ll be dressed as Mexican bandits too.
“We played Supernormal last year as Undersmile – it’s a very cool little festival that really celebrates left-field and obscure bands. If you enjoy surprises and, for the most part, a lot of noise, then you should definitely come along. We’ve had many interesting experiences attending festivals, but our most memorable and most shambolic festival appearance was actually at Supernormal last year when all the equipment was buggered, Hel broke a string in the first minute, and we only managed to play one song in its entirety. Hoping for better luck this year; what could possibly go wrong, eh?”

FAIRPORT’S CONVENTION

8th-10th August, Cropredy village
Acts: Fairport Convention, Alice Cooper, 10cc, Nik Kershaw, The Levellers, Peatbog Faeries, Mediaeval Baebes.
www.fairportconvention.com

Gareth Williams (festival co-ordinator)
“I think the average Cropredy-goer would agree if I said that the unique thing Fairport’s festival offers is a sense of belonging. From the comments I receive I get the impression that the public consider Cropredy ‘their’ festival. I can’t think of any other festival of similar size which attracts the same level of repeat visitors annually. The people who come really do care about Cropredy which is why we take all suggestions and comments so seriously, taking the time to reply to everyone. Either that, or a bar that can be seen from space...
“There haven’t been too many changes in the last nine years to be honest. We have raised the bar in terms of the standard of bands we have on now. We’ve had to: there’s a lot of competition out there, which we can’t ignore. However, we have tried to do this in a gradual way so as not to upset our regular clientele. If we’d booked The Buzzcocks in 2005 there might have been a few words, but they went down really well in 2009. Contrary to popular belief, Fairport have never claimed that Cropredy is a ‘folk festival’. There is plenty of folk on the bill - of course there is - but I prefer to think of Cropredy as a music festival which tugs a very respectful forelock in the direction of folk and especially folk rock. There’s plenty of room on the bill for all types of music.
“I’m really excited about seeing Alice Cooper of course! I have been a fan since 1971 and to have him on at our festival is a

real thrill - a dream come true!
“I think the best feeling was in 2005, a particularly difficult year, when we managed to rescue the festival and keep it under Fairport’s protection; when Fairport hit the stage on the Saturday night to play their three-hour set. I remember hearing the crowd cheer as the band walked on and I think there was a collective sense of relief on stage, in the office and on the field that we’d done it. I remember the supervisor from the local licensing authority walking up to me and saying, ‘there you go, you can have a pint now!’ I was still four hours away from that pint to be honest, but it was a great feeling.
“Most funny incidents are unintentional. Compere Danny Thompson announcing Fairport on stage ten minutes before they were due in 2007 was pretty funny - for everyone backstage watching the band staring in disbelief from dressing rooms, half-dressed and panicking. And one year, during the site build, with a week to go before we opened to the public, I was standing at the deliveries gate chatting to security when a taxi rolled up and an extremely drunk woman fell out of the passenger door. There was a lot of swearing when we informed her she was a week early. The taxi and passenger returned to the train station. One lovely query we got was, ‘I plan to attend with two small children and a dog. If we sit at the back of the field, will we be able to hear?’ My reply was, ‘Well, your dog will...’”



D-FEST

Saturday 27th – Sunday 28th July, Red Lion, Drayton
Acts: The Epstein, Yellow Fever, The Scholars, Children of the Sun, Orange Vision, Lizzie Venninger, Vaguestworld, Mew, Wooster & Boon.



CRAIG EVANS (organiser)
“D fest offers a great line up in the intimate setting of a local village pub and gives people the chance to prolong the festive mood after Truck. We pride ourselves on showcasing Oxfordshire’s top new acts locals who wouldn’t necessarily get a chance to see how talented some of our homegrown acts are. We were lucky enough to have a brilliant response after the first few years, so there’s been no need to change anything. Oxjam will host a second stage again and we’ve had pretty much the same team of people helping out every year. This year we will also be adding an extra day with the Sunday afternoon showcasing a more chilled-out acoustic affair.
“The best has got to be seeing how much the attendance has grown each year and seeing the wide range of people come together. The worst, but possibly also the funniest, moment was when we had a guy from America to play while on tour; an environmental protestor went on stage to sing Band Aid and Britney Spears, which was surprisingly very entertaining. The general mix of young Drayton humour and middle-aged dancing is also very entertaining.”

STAYING OUT FOR THE SUMMER...

SIMPLE WEEKENDER

16th-18th August, Rookery Farm, Shabbington, near Thame
Acts: Simple residents, plus DJs from Peoples, Cratedigga, Flight Rhythm, Dub Politics, Bassmentality, Sonic.
tinyurl.com/simpleweekender

NICK GLADWIN (festival promoter)
“We’ve been working on piecing together a back-to-basics local event that focuses on impeccable music from some of Oxfordshire’s leading DJs and club promoters. The vision is to take the Simple party experience outside for three days, offering a very friendly no-frills music-centric festival. We have no sponsors, no corporateness, but aim to offer people a place for the weekend to have a jolly good time with friends.
“I’m really excited about the line-up; we’ve teamed up with six collectives who are really working hard to showcase what they are about. I’m looking forward to hearing Em Williams, a local producer and DJ and resident at Simple; she has the ability to create a special night whenever she plays and the festival will be the perfect setting.
“Our hopes this year are to lay a few foundations. We have had a couple of years off from the local festival scene, so we are refreshed and ready to go. After many meetings we decide to push local acts and not bring in national headline acts, this way we can offer a festival weekend ticket at a very reasonable price and it gives a great platform for growth in years to come.”

DJ EM WILLIAMS
“I mix between house, bass and techno but I’m still very much exploring the electronic world so I don’t have one agenda, as long as I’m playing music that gives me and everyone else listening that feeling in my chest, that hairs-standing-on-end feeling, I’m doing what I set out to do. I think there’s something about playing outside that will give it a whole different vibe too, so best to just go with the flow. I’m going to take a

lot of records and see where the night goes. This festival is going to be a great place for me to try out some recent productions I’ve been working on and I’m really excited about that.
“I hope to meet lots of old and new faces, I also hope that the festival grows, staying true to its original vision. I think a lot of people are shying away from larger corporate festivals and this will be perfect for those who are looking for that kind of weekend.
“I’ve been out to Burning Man festival the last two years and you get to see some pretty incredible sights out there, like dancing in the middle of the Nevada desert at sunrise; that was pretty special. I think Global Gathering about seven years ago was a pretty bad festival for me: waking up on the Monday feeling terrible and realising we were pretty much the only tent left; it was really bad weather too and tents were rolling past us. One of my funniest moments was probably at Secret Garden Party: my friend tried to go to the loo in the middle of the night but got trapped in her tent, the zip broke so we had to cut her out.”



THE BIG FEASTIVAL
31st August – 1st September, Alex James’s Farm, Kingham
Acts: Basement Jaxx, Rizzle Kicks, Lianne la Havas, The Feeling, KT Tunstall, Mark Owen
www.jamieoliver.com/thebigfestival

Justin Clarke (festival director)
“The Big Festival is the only festival headed by the world’s most inspiring chef and hosted at


a touring rock star’s farm, who also just happens to make cheese.
“It is the ultimate family-friendly music and food festival. Feastival first happened three years ago on Clapham Common, before Taste Festivals took over as the event organiser. The biggest change has been to move the event from central London to the Cotswolds. And in moving the event, we have also introduced camping and glamping.
“I’m most looking forward to Rizzle Kicks; they’re exactly what The Big Festival is all about: fabulous talent, appeal to young and old alike and you can be sure of having a great time.
“The two stand out moments from last year were Jamie Oliver playing drums with Alex James on bass as part of the Farm Loving Criminals: ‘Relax’ by Frankie Goes To Hollywood has never sounded so good! The other stand out moment was seeing the normally reserved Bamford family (the JCB locals) going crazy backstage to an electrifying Texas track. Just brilliant!”

TOWERSEY FESTIVAL
22nd-26th August, Towersey Playing Field
Artists: Show of Hands, The Blockheads, The Unthanks, Mama Rosin, Martin & Eliza Carthy, Orkestra del Sol, Spiers & Boden, Martin Simpson.
www.towerseyfestival.com

JOE HEAP (festival director)
“We pride ourselves on being safe, friendly and all about building a magical escape from real life. We are true to our roots, presenting the best acoustic music from around the world and mixing that up with other art forms like theatre, literature, film and dance. What makes us truly different cannot be written, it has to be experienced, and families come back year after year – for 49 years now – to get their yearly fix!
“Towersey has grown organically over the years. We’ve never consciously forced any change or growth but gone the way our visitors want to go. We have got bigger but people say year after year ‘Don’t change it, don’t get bigger, we love it the way it is,’ and yet every year it does change, just a bit, and it has got bigger and yet the customers don’t notice. It is still *their* festival.
“I think our world music double-header of Swiss Cajun punk outfit Mama Rosin and Italian dance masters Nidi d’Arac is what I’m most looking forward to this year. It will be one very big night and I think the audience are going to be blown away. We like to mix stuff that people know with stuff they might not, but we know they will love.
The funniest thing I’ve seen here has been all the grown men and fathers dressed as fairies, vegetables, Smurfs, Wombles and more on our themed nights.”

SAMUEL ZASADA (Saturday)
“People who haven’t seen us before can expect haunting vocal harmonies, intricate acoustic guitar patterns, melodic bass playing and the laziest drummer in town. We may also be one of the tallest bands in Oxfordshire so people can come and gawp at our tremendous heights. We’ve been out of action for a while but we’re really looking forward to a summer of playing our new songs to festival audiences. We may get a bit too excited and do really fast, punk renditions of our songs, but realistically, it’ll just be us playing songs from our upcoming ‘Winter’s End’ EP and a selection from our back catalogue. Luckily we have a few more uptempo tracks to pull out of the bag for the restless, fickle festival-goers.
“Dave and Luci played Towersey once before as part of Bethany Weimers’ backing band and they really enjoyed it; it’s a really cool, folky festival with a little of something for everyone, and good beer too.”





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RELEASED

RALFE BAND

‘Son Be Wise’

(Highline)
Musician, film maker and artist, Oly Ralfe seems to have been around the Oxford music scene forever without really imposing himself on the local consciousness. Maybe because aside from his occasional gigs and festival appearances he’s done his best-known work beyond the country, including working with *The Mighty Boosh*, while generally globetrotting.

‘Son Be Wise’ is Oly’s third album, the follow-up to 2008’s ‘Attic Thieves’, and still finds him ensconced in a languid world of slightly ramshackle rustic pop. This being Oxford, comparisons might occasionally be made to Stornoway’s early ruminations, but ‘folk-pop’ is too restrictive a term for an album that ranges from the carefree bucolic shuffle of ‘Ox’ to the lively bossanova of ‘Come On Go Wild’ via maudlin music hall crooning (‘Dead Souls’) and chilly slow waltz (‘Cold Chicago Morning’).

While the mood of ‘Son Be Wise’ rarely ventures too far beyond pastoral reflection, at each turn there’s some little trick or piano sparkle that marks each song out from the others, and even as the album wanders a little to casually towards the end, the sax-laden lament of ‘Boy With An Old Tin Whistle’ that provides its coda is so sweet and sad it’s impossible to brush it off.

Highlights amid an album of highlights are



‘England My Darling’ with its gentle pop flourish as fresh and unimposing as a summer breeze, and the more reflective and intimate ‘Oh My Father’, a song that rouses itself enough to waltz elegantly into a big wide ballroom of memories. If Ralfe reminds us of anyone it’s criminally overlooked pop subversive Momus, partly because the pair share a similarly hushed singing style, but also because they exist amid a loose tangle of styles and genres that while not challenging any great musical rules, mark them out just beyond any one of them.

An utterly charming album that’s just ripe for summer picking.

Dale Kattack



FLIGHTS OF HELIOS

‘Star’ / ‘Crows’

(Own label)
This double-A side from space-fixated collective Flights of Helios will be welcome to anyone who has caught one of their revelatory live shows in the past few years. The band balance minimalism and bombast to create an alternately airy and claustrophobic backdrop for singer Chris Beard’s lofty voice; no easy task were it not in the hands of electronic wunderkind Seb Reynolds, guitarist James Maund, and rhythm section Phil Oakley and James Currie.

‘Star’ is a lush and deceptively simple paean; synths and drums pulsate gently as layers of backwards guitars, keyboards, and Beard’s angelic

voice lift the song to a point of religious fervour worthy of Spiritualized, while maintaining a core earthiness akin to the Beta Band. ‘Crows’ initially recalls Elbow, with the sputtering, electronic drums and gently leading bassline, Beard sounding like a choirboy version of Guy Garvey, before the song takes a bit of a left-turn into what can only be described as a knees-up. Although initially an unwelcome jolt after such a delightfully downtrodden intro, the propulsive rhythm is infectious and the melodies and layers of droning synthesisers are beautiful.

Tom McKibbin

FAR//DUST

‘Keep You’

(Moving Hand)
Almost pathologically prolific, Asher Dust here teams up with Farjedi for a relatively mellow trip into spacier r’n’b, electro and reggae territory, the clatter and clutter of much of his recent solo work making way for breathing space between notes, chilled beats overlaid with skittering synths and AJ’s instantly recognisable broken soul lament. While ‘Keep You’ sounds like a blissed-out second cousin to Gnarls Barkley, perfect lost-small-hours in some backstreet basement club comedown, flipside ‘Looking For The Way’ stretches things even further, almost dubby in its pop and crackle of beats and electronics, a lurking, mildly disconcerting presence in the underlit background of what remains very much Asher Dust Land.

Dale Kattack

Sponsored by



TROPHY WIFE

‘Trophy Wife’

(Own label download)
“Only the good die young”; “the light that shines twice as bright burns half as long”. There are endless clichés regarding good things gone too soon, but the ephemeral world of music does seem to snuff out the best bands before their time while the dull and worthy go on forever. And so it is that Trophy Wife announced they were splitting on the same day they made their much-delayed debut album available online for free.

Ever since the band announced their existence with debut single ‘Microlite’, they’ve been one of, if not *the* local band most likely to follow Foals into the big time, with plenty of excited national press dispatches to go alongside the local acclaim. Music industry machinations, as is so often the case (see also Little Fish and Fixers among a host of others) have put paid to all that and these eleven songs will remain testament to all that promise denied.

‘Trophy Wife’ is all about subtle movements and patterns rather than grand pop gestures. Many of the tracks here feel as placid as the surface of lakes appear from a distance, only after a while do the currents and undulations become apparent. Opener ‘Absence’ rises from daydreaming beginnings to a chiming plateau of guitars and electronics while the electronic beats chitter and chatter throughout the album with understated industrial ambience.

The overall tone is one of indieified r’n’b and cushioned funk woven through with an airy electro-pop and occasional hip hop basslines, while oriental motifs pop up here and there, suggesting that, as with Wild Swim and Pet Moon, 80s experimentalists Japan are a growing influence on modern electronic pop.

One in a while it can fade into the background – the desolate soul balladry of ‘Surfacing’ for example, or the twinkling ‘High Windows’, but album high point ‘Like No Other’ is both airy and euphoric, while closer ‘Always Falling Away’ matches squelchy beats with rarefied vocals and drifts appropriately into the ether on a sombre cello line, dissipating much as the band have done.

Another fine artefact to add to the shelves of Oxford music history, then.

Dale Kattack



ROBERT DIGWEED COLLECTIVE

‘First Impressions’

(Dig For Victory)

We still call them demos, out of habit. Once upon a time artists made rough versions of tracks quickly, either as a calling card for the doorkeeper of the professional music world, or as a reference point to work on arrangements; nowadays anyone can rustle up a decent recording, and you just need a laptop, not a pressing plant, to release it on the world. In fact, the difference between the demos at the back of this magazine, and the “own label” releases on these pages is roughly the difference between terrorists and freedom fighters – it all depends on where you’re standing.

This debut album promises “fresh new ideas to jazz from a generation of new blood”, but sounds like a shiny promo to get juicy corporate gigs: it’s a demo, if ever we saw one. It matches their website, which is one giant ad brochure; everyone’s gotta make a buck, but it would be nice to see passion,



WE AERONAUTS

‘Don Valley EP’

(Own label)

We Aeronauts continue their run of valley-themed EP names with this four-tracker, following their debut ‘Chalon Valley EP’ from a couple of years ago. In that time the band has transformed from a dour, not entirely charming, ramshackle outfit into a sleeker, sharper guitar’n’synths pop group. That’s not entirely unconnected to the super vocals of Anna Wheatley, who on lead track ‘Through The Door’ inflects enough vigour and grit to turn a decent tune into a great piece. Like all the best pop music, it has a sweet core but builds around layers of chaos and muted anger, invoking the spirit of Heavenly and using a couple of tempo tricks to create a compelling urgency and forward motion. The pace is continued, the quality almost matched through ‘Chestnut Tree’, a similarly spritely jaunt that just about pulls off some right-side-of-annoying vocal tics by virtue of Maurice Deebank-style chiming guitar lines, but things rather dip with ‘Distance Learning’, which loses charm points with its more deliberate approach (trumpets, accordion and Wheatley replaced by James Cunning on vocals).

The video for ‘Through The Door’ is littered with many references to music gone by – records, t-shirts and posters – and We Aeronauts seem to be self-consciously battling with how to position themselves in the lineage of pop, indie, folk, alternative and an endless series of genres. If they

not testimonies from the Rotary Club of Beeston.

However, strip away the lifeless, wheedling vocal numbers (especially the Katy Perry cover) and the unconvincing dancefloor grooves, and there is something worthwhile hidden here. Robert Digweed has a relaxed sax style, with a very pure tone, exuding plenty of west coast Stan Getz warmth, and his trumpet player has an excellent high cholesterol Freddie Hubbard sound. They cover Hubbard’s ‘Red Clay’ with rich, cinnamon double-tracked horns and a Steely Dan heathaze guitar, and their take on ‘Comin’ Home Baby!’ is equally smooth and friendly: the languid cocktail quack of the wah-wah guitar isn’t to our taste, but it’s otherwise well-made, comfortable music. For all Bandcamp’s anaemic waffle about music “stylised with a jazz-funk fusion aesthetic”, or the frankly desperate tag “Instrumental hip hop” – twice, mind! - this band is at its best

stick to the breezy approach of ‘Through The Door’, and concentrate on its just-get-on-with-the-song attitude, they’re really going places. Probably places that include more valleys.

Simon Minter

DANCE À LA PLAGE

‘Electric Concentric’

(Own label)

Contrary to popular belief Nightshift does not expect every band to be a rampaging hoard of uber-metal Vikings or seething electro-pop demons. Ours is a broad church. But that doesn’t mean you can get away with sounding like a cross between Hanson and One Direction, however much you try and dress it up as something vaguely acceptable. Banbury’s Dance à la Plage describe themselves

RAWZ

‘Spoken’

(Own label)

A rapper-cum-poet inspired as much by The Beatles and Arctic Monkeys as he is by Wu Tang Clan, Rawz, aka Rory Campbell, treads a similarly woozy path through hip hop’s maze-like corridors as Ghostpoet at times, his rhyme style more spoken storyboard than rap, the hint of a half-awake stoner haze hanging over most tracks, something accentuated by the minimalist backing, beats from an array of producers, and the most slender slivers of piano and electronics imposing beneath the narratives, as on early album highlight ‘Asylum’, with its slightly paranoid edginess.

Among other highlights are the wayward, bluesy ‘Rattymen’ with its nasty, scraping violin and in particular album closer ‘If You Believe’, with local soulstress Jada Pearl adding a smooth but gutsy vocal foil to Rawz’s detached shuffle. The unrelentingly downbeat tone and pace of the album is perhaps its weakness – even as early on as ‘My Thoughts’ there’s a feeling Rawz is drifting too comfortably towards sleep. The stark burn of what sounds like distorted harpsichord on ‘Boycott The Banks’ is a welcome wake-up, while lyrically and vocally it finds Rawz more militant – something echoed on ‘Sinister Minister’.



making simple, unflustered music. We’d like to see them capitalise on this, and concentrate on an early Hancock/mid-60s Cannonball vibe, but we suppose Beeston Rotary have other ideas. And they’re paying the bills, right, Rob?

David Murphy

as “indie pop” (itself a virtually meaningless term in this day and age) but get beyond the initial wow and flutter of ‘Electric Concentric’’s afro-pop flavoured jangle and it’s a short and sorry trip into asinine, adenoidal boy band hell as they manage to rhyme flirtatious, contentious, outrageous and bodacious before the first verse is even up, the tune, such as it is, less than stealthily nicked from ‘Mmmhop’. ‘Time For Change’ is similarly character-free frippery, lab-produced to appeal to talent show panels or battle of the band judges. It’s not even fun, just leaden, any semblance of a tune struggling to peek through the fug of pop polish that’s been liberally sprayed all over it.

Nightshift wishes Dance à la Plage all the very best of luck with those talent shows in the future but now, if you’ll excuse us, we’re going to nail ourselves to a hungry alligator before anyone suggests we give them a second chance.

Dale Kattack

‘Apocalyptic Vision’ is purely spoken word, showing he’s a man of words more than music and breaks the album’s flow up nicely halfway through; a couple more diversions of this kind would have been welcome ahead a couple of the less imposing musical passages.

Still, such an extensive debut is always bound to harbour filler amid its more inspired moments, and with a second album seemingly already in the pipeline, Rawz is an interesting and already accomplished addition to a local hip hop scene that seems to be expanding faster now than ever before.

John Leeson



GIG GUIDE

MONDAY 1st

NORTHSYDE: The Bullingdon – Funk, rock, blues and soul from Newport Pagnell’s Northsyde at tonight’s Haven Club show.
BRASS KNUCKLE BLUES BAND: The Jericho Tavern – Brass-heavy swinging blues from the seven-piece Brass Knuckle outfit at the Famous Monday Blues.

Saturday 13th

UPSTAIRS with ADIAN COKER / MR SHAADOW & ZUBY / DEATH OF HI-FI / YUNGSTAR / BG RECORDS:

02 Academy

The Academy’s monthly Upstairs showcase goes hip hop this month with the arrival in town (for his local debut, we think) of London rhymesayer Adian Coker, bringing an old school 80s New York style up to date with 21st Century squelch and production. The likes of ‘Angels & Demons’ and ‘Airs & Graces’ mix introspective ire with all-out lyrical aggression (“If it’s war, I never forget faces”), nasty beats, dubstep clamour and the man’s steely delivery adding up to some serious urban claustrophobia. He’s joined tonight by returning local rap heroes Mr ShaoDow and Zuby, men who made their reputations solo but now performing together, each bringing their distinctive freestyling to play; ShaoDow rapid-fire and unmistakably British; Zuby assured and fluid and leaning more towards the big names of American hip hop. Witney’s rising production team Death Of Hi-Fi add their near-industrial, sci-fi referencing sound to proceedings, with a fair few local guest MCs sure to join them onstage. Bicester’s Eminem-inspired rapper YungStar comes to the O2 after making his name at the Courtyard Youth Centre, while the BG Records crew are on hand to provide between-sets entertainment.



JULY

TUESDAY 2nd

SIMONE FELICE: The Jericho Tavern – Country-soul from the former-Felice Brothers drummer, continuing to head out in his own right after years fronting The Duke & The King.
JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon
OPEN MIC CLUB: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 3rd

MOTHER CORONA + KOBOSH + KOMRAD: The Cellar – Titanic groove metal in the vein of Sabbath, Kyuss and Sleep from Mother Corona, with support from New Zealand’s warped and wobbly heavyweights, mixing up elements of Beefheart and Primus as well as a bit of klezmer into their Anthrax-heavy thrash. Technical hardcore twixt Dillinger and King Crimson from the mighty Komrad. Followed by Calligraphy, drum&bass, garage and hip hop club night with Rhymeskeemz, Liable and Slim.
CHARMS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE + LA PHOOKA: The Bullingdon – Psychedelic pop from Charms, plus mellow acoustic rock from La Phooka at tonight’s It’s All About The Music show.
ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil’s, Witney

THURSDAY 4th

THE RUTH MOODY BAND + THE GOOD LOVELIES: The Bullingdon – Canadian singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Ruth Moody tours her new solo album, ‘These Wilder Things’, having made her name firstly in Scruj MacDuhk and latterly in the Juno Award-winning trio Wailing Jennys – alongside Nicky Mehta and Cara Luft. Her tender, melancholic country folk makes room for covers of Springsteen’s ‘Dancing In The Dark’ along its emotive path.
ROB TOWNSEND: The Wheatsheaf – Spin jazz club with saxophonist Townsend who has played with Django Bates, Sam Rivers and Mark Lockheart.
KENT DUCHAINE: The Old Crown, Faringdon – Classic Delta blues from veteran guitarist Duchaine and his trusty Leadbessie, celebrating American Independence Day.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest-running and best open mic club night, showcasing local singers, musicians, storytellers, poets and performance artists every week.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf – Free unplugged set in the downstairs bar from the local swamp-blues stalwarts.
OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon
BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 5th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate –

First day of the annual big-name festival’s tenth anniversary. Squeeze headline, and are joined by Imelda May, Beverley Knight, King Charles and more – *see main preview*
FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND + MARMOZETS + STEM: 02 Academy – Rearranged from March, Bridgend’s emo heroes return to their youthful bloodletting musical roots after a years of stadium rock success and a revolving door approach to members, only guitarist Kris Coombs remaining from their original line-up.
FLUID: 02 Academy – The local club night celebrates its second birthday with turns from DJ Hazard, Lazcru, Masp, Ajust, Skibadee, IC3, Stormin and Rhymeskeemz.
YARDFEST: The Courtyard Youth Centre, Bicester – A special one-day festival for teenagers, organised by teenagers, with Bicester’s renowned youth arts centre’s regulars attracting a strong line-up over two stages that includes Farnham rockers Canterbury – previous tour support to Deaf Havana and Billy Talent – black-clad post-hardcore crew LostAlone, themselves tour support to My Chemical Romance, Paramore and Enter Shikari; Banbury’s alt.rockers Evarose and Towester’s Broken Revolution.

THE GRACEFUL SLICKS + THE HAWKHURST + STONE CONNECTION: The Wheatsheaf – Psychedelia and 60s garage rock in the vein of The Electric Prunes, Sonics et al from The Graceful Slicks at tonight’s reliably eclectic Klub Kak. They’re joined by folk-rockers The Hawkhurst.
SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Count Skylarkin’s party-hearty dose of reggae, dancehall and bass, tonight with a lives set from London’s rising reggae collective The Hempolic, recently returned from recording with Maxi Jazz in Jamaica and tonight helping Skylarkin and Indecision to warm up for Sunday’s Carnival.
SINKING WITCHES: The Bullingdon – Alt. rocking from Sinking Witches.
WONK UNIT + AGNESS PIKE + THE SIM BAND: The Port Mahon – Militant, blokishly bolshy post-punk from London’s Wonk Unit, alongside local theatrical thrash merchants and recent Punt stars Agness Pike.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: James Street Tavern – Americana, bluegrass and country music from the local gig regulars.
FUNK IT: The Bullingdon – Funk, disco and dancefloor faves every Friday.
DISCO MUTANTE: The Library – Cosmic funk, disco and acid house club session from the Disco Mutante crew, celebrating their third birthday.
WHO’S NEXT: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Who tribute.
SANCTUM: The Varsity Club – New metal club night, playing classics and new tracks from across the spectrum.

SATURDAY 6th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate – Keane top today’s bill at Cornbury’s Glorious Tenth and are joined by Echo & The Bunnymen, The Proclaimers, Osibisa and more – *see main preview*

THEA GILMORE: 02 Academy – English folk star Gilmore returns to Oxfordshire for the first time since her showing at WOOD Festival back in 2011, the Oxfordshire-born singer-songwriter retaining her critically-acclaimed cult status for her resolutely independent approach to her career, winning fans in Bruce Springsteen and Joan Baez along the way – duetting with the latter on her 2004 ‘Liejacker’ album and going out on tour with her. She’s also collaborated with Martha Wainwright, The Zuton’s David McCabe and members of The Waterboys, while retaining a singular musical ambition and lyrical prowess, leaning towards the Chrissie Hynde and Lucinda Williams school of things, updating traditional folk and blues sounds with a modern acoustic pop feel. She’s out on tour to promote her fourteenth studio album, ‘Regardless’.
ARTCLASSSINK + BLOOD RED SKY + THE METHOD: The Wheatsheaf
PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM
DJs: 02 Academy – Weekly three-clubs-in-one session with classic and contemporary indie at Propaganda; kitsch pop, glam and 80s at Trashy, plus dancefloor faves from Jack FM’s guest DJs.
RECKLESS SLEEPERS + PURPLE SKY + JOE CHAPMAN: James Street Tavern – Quirky psychedelic jangle-pop from Reckless Sleepers, plus erstwhile Neon Violets chap Joe Chapman.
THE TONY JACOBS DUO: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot (2pm) – Songs from Gershwin and Cole Porter to Irving Berlin and more.

SUNDAY 7th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate – Third and final day of the festival. Van Morrison is the main attraction, while Bellowhead round the weekend off in party style – *see main preview*
COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL: Cowley Road – The annual carnival returns to Cowley Road itself, spreading the music, food and good vibes from the Plain to Magdalen Road with live music stages, sound systems, dance displays and of course the carnival parade.
SUPERLOOSE + TONY BATEY + BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON RABBIT + ARTHUR: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free early evening session of acoustic music, including sets from folk-pop outfit Superloose and acoustic bluesman Beard Of Destiny as well as host Jeremy Hughes’ Moon Rabbit.

MONDAY 8th

GRAINNE DUFFY: The Jericho Tavern– Powerful blues and soul from the County Monaghan singer, whose debut album, ‘Out Of The Dark’, was recorded with members of Sharon Shannon and Van Morrison’s bands, her husky blues voice drawing comparisons to Bonnie Raitt. In her native Ireland she’s supported everyone from Little Feat to Ocean Colour Scene and returns to the Famous Monday Blues to promote her new ‘Test Of Time’ album.

TUESDAY 9th

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon
OPEN MIC CLUB: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 10th

EMILY BARKER: Truck Store – Instore from the Aussie singer and multi-instrumentalist ahead of her biggest tour to date in October to promote new album, ‘Dear River’.

Friday 5th – Sunday 7th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Park

That Cornbury Festival is celebrating its first decade under the banner The Glorious Tenth maybe tells you a little bit about the event’s background and target audience. Not that you’ll find grouse shooting on the bill but there remains a very English countryside ambience about the festival, set in what must be one of Oxfordshire’s most picturesque country estates.

Cornbury Festival moved to Great Tew in 2011 after it ran into serious financial troubles, so the fact it is even celebrating its tenth birthday is testament to both the dedication of organiser Hugh Phillimore and his team and the growing popularity of the event, which successfully marries the intimacy and politeness of a village fayre with big name acts with across the board appeal. As ever, this year’s bill mixes up enduring crowd pleasers, cult heroes and rising starlets with the odd TV talent show contender, the anniversary providing an opportunity to bring back some of the acts who have proved to be a big hit in previous years.

Among those returnees are Friday night’s headliners **SQUEEZE**, Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford’s quintessential post-punk English songsmiths armed with a giant basket full of hits, from ‘Cool For Cats’ and ‘Up The Junction’ to ‘Pulling Mussels (From The Shell)’ and ‘Labelled With Love’; darkly elegant indie legends **ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN**, whose bleakly romantic pop, inspired by The Doors and Scott Walker and shaped by Liverpool’s punk scene, has gone on to inspire further generations of bands, including Interpol and Editors, and of course the undisputed Queen of Cornbury, **IMELDA MAY (pictured)**, who has possibly played the festival more times than it’s actually taken place, but we’re not complaining, since her classic rockabilly never fails to hit the spot.

THE PROCLAIMERS, BELLOWHEAD and **SETH LAKEMAN** are also back after previous showings, each in their own very different ways bringing traditional folk music up to date and into the wider pop world. Identical twin brothers Charlie and Craig Reid scored their biggest hits in the 1980s and remained enduring cult heroes in their native Scotland before interest was revived by the use of ‘(I’m Gonna Be) 50 Miles’ for Comic Relief and hit the Number 1 spot. John Spiers and Jon Boden’s folk big band Bellowhead are now established festival favourites, having made their debut at the Oxford Folk Festival back in 2004. There are few bands their equal when it comes to getting an entire field of festival-goers dancing like utter loons, whether it’s Cropredy, Truck or Cornbury. Some music is just a universal pleasure, even when it’s an old Napoleonic dance tune. Lakeman too is no stranger to these parts, the singer, guitarist and fiddle player having played regularly in Oxfordshire since his Mercury-nominated debut, ‘Kitty Jay’, and always adding a virtuoso rock star quality to his tales of Dartmoor ghosts, civil war soldiers and Devonian artisans.



KEANE headline Saturday night’s proceedings, their soft-centred, piano-led pop providing an inclusive conclusion to a day that also features Anglo-Ghanaian afro-pop pioneers **OSIBISA**, 2012 *X-Factor* winner **JAMES ARTHUR**, country popsters **SADIE & THE HOTHEADS** and the loathsomely asinine **LAWSON**. Damn, we’d hoped to get through this preview without that name cropping up. Still, this being Great Tew, you can always take a trip down to the wonderful Falkland Arms in the village while they’re on. Come and say hello, that’s where Nightshift will be for that particular hour.

Sunday’s big name is of course **VAN MORRISON**, a man who needs no introduction, and generally offers none. Depending on what mood he’s in, the Irish soulmeister can be a convivial host with a repertoire that’s the envy of any singer with a love for classic folk and soul music, or a curmudgeonly old git who can’t wait to get off stage and back home and doesn’t mind if everyone notices. Hopefully the sun will shine, the ale will flow and it’ll be the former we witness on the day, but there’ll also be vintage soul on offer today from Cornbury regulars **STAXS** and guests, as well as great country-folk from North Carolina singer-songwriter **TIFT MERRITT** and Irish blues-rockers **THE RIPTIDE MOVEMENT**. Former-Stranglers chap **HUGH CORNWELL** will be reprising some of his finest moments in the afternoon, but the most poignant set of the entire weekend will be from **WILKO JOHNSON**, the legendary frontman of British r’n’b pioneers Dr Feelgood who may be playing his last ever show here, having been diagnosed with terminal cancer earlier this year. Having set the foundations for punk in the 1970s, he has seen his band’s reputation soar in recent times as their legacy has been fully recognised.

Beyond Cornbury’s two main music stages there is, as ever, the Charlbury Riverside stage, featuring a selection of local acts, including this year **THE BRICKWORK LIZARDS, THE INFLATABLES, DANCE A LA PLAG**, **SAMUEL ZASADA** and **SWINDLESTOCK**, and while the festival unabashedly leans towards the mainstream and family-friendly scheme of things, it is, unlike a growing number of festivals, very much about the music rather than “lifestyle choices” or some such, and remains, above all, one of the most relaxing festival weekends of the summer.



Monday 22nd

KARMA TO BURN / DESERT STORM / TRIPPY WICKED:

The Bullingdon

Beards. Hair. Marshall stacks. Riffs. These are the building blocks of West Virginia’s grizzled stoner rockers Karma To Burn. No frills, no prisoners, just... riffs. The band have been around as long as the mountains from which their instrumental opuses appear to be carved it seems, certainly since the mid- 90s, though there were a few years off in the middle while everyone seemingly went off to play for someone else. The trio’s granite-like sound is based on the steady bedrocks of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin and they share plenty of ground with Kyuss, with whom they have extensive connections (Scott Reeder produced their ‘Appalachian Incantation’ album, while John Garcia guested on vocals). Their last visit to Oxford was a suitably monolithic headline set at Audioscope back in 2011 and tonight’s Buried In Smoke show should be cut from equally heavy-duty cloth. Suitably heavyweight stoner support from Oxford’s leading metal warriors Desert Storm, whose recent ‘Horizontal Life’ album has earned them much overdue national press praise, alongside St Albans’ thundering groove metallers Trippy Wicked.

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT: 02 Academy – Hoary, hairy blues-rocking inspired by Free, The Faces and The Stones from the London-Glasgow outfit.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Marsh Harrier, Temple Cowley

THURSDAY 11th

SUPREMO + WALT FRISBEE + BIG TROPICS + ALIAS: The Bullingdon – It’s All About The Music bands night with 8-bit hip hop noisemakers Walt Frisbee.
COMPASSIONATE DICTATORSHIP: The Wheatsheaf – Free jazz and rock fusion at tonight’s Spin club.
VERY NICE HARRY + THE BLACK HATS + THE SCHOLARS: The Cellar – Local rockers VNH bow out with their final show, supported by post-punk power-pop trio Black Hats and dark’n’shiny new wavers The Scholars.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the veteran local bluesman.
OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon
BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 12th

ETHAN JOHNS: St. Albans Church – The BRIT Award-winning producer, who’s worked with The Vaccines, Kaiser Chiefs, Laura Marling,

Tom Jones and Kings of Leon among many, many others, as well as playing with Ryan Adams and Rufus Wainwright, tours his last album ‘If Not Now Then When’ – his first since 1992. Tonight’s show, promoted by the reliably excellent Beard Museum, brings Johns’ intimate form of campfire country and American folk music to the suitably ornate and intimate setting of St Albans church.
REEDS + FISH FROM A BOWL: The Bullingdon
BRICKWORK LIZARDS + THE HAWKHURST + LES CLOCHARDS: The Wheatsheaf – Exotic blues, Arabic, and Balkan fusion from self-styled Turkobilly faves Brickwork Lizards, with support from Oysterband-like folk-rockers The Hawkhurst and Francophile rock’n’rollers Les Clochards.
BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Dancefloor Latin, afrobeat, Balkan beats, global grooves and nu-jazz club night, with a live set from soul, jazz, dubstep and drum&bass eight-piece Antelope.
FUNK IT: The Bullingdon
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The James Street Tavern
STRANGE KIND OF PURPLE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Deep Purple tribute.

SATURDAY 13th

UPSTAIRS with ADIAN COKER + MR SHADOW & ZUBY + DEATH OF HI-FI + YUNGSTAR + BG RECORDS: 02 Academy – Hip hop night at the O2’s monthly showcase show – *see main preview*
IRREGULAR FOLK with WE AERONAUTS + BALLINA WHALERS + THE MAY BIRDS: The Perch, Binsey – Irregular Folk continues its summer residency in a giant Bedouin tent in the grounds of the Perch, tonight featuring expansive local jangly folk-pop faves We Aeronauts, fresh from the launch of their new ‘Don Valley’ EP on Beard Museum Records. They’re joined by London’s sweet shanty singers The Ballina Whalers and sombre, atmospheric folk-popsters The May Birds.
DECIMATE + DEDLOK + BLUDGER + BLACK SKIES BURN: The Wheatsheaf – Super-heavyweight metal, thrash and grindcore night.

BODFEST: The Horse & Jockey and The Plough, Bodicote – A new one-day mini-festival on the local calendar, featuring 23 bands across two stages between 11am-11pm. Among the acts confirmed are electro-hop hip crew Tiger Mendoza; warped hardcore types The Cellar Family; grunge-rockers Von Braun; molten hardcore veterans X-1; country-folksters The Headington Hillbillies; folk-rockers Mundane Sands; rapper and beat maker Half Decent; Smithsy indie rockers Peerless Pirates; lachrymose balladeer Jordan O’Shea, and rockers ArtClassSink, while there are also turns from The Method; The Drakes; Ioneye; Argos & Monster; Dance a la Plage; Punch Drunk Monkey Club; BushFieldSmith; Nijinxsy and Barney Beauregard. Visit www.bodfest.co.uk for full line-up details.

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: Said Business School Amphitheatre – Charity gig in aid of the JR Children’s Hospital with strong local cast of bands that includes sweet, summery Americana troupe The Dreaming Spires; folk-popsters Co-Pilgrim; lachrymose indie popsters The Family Machine; The Epstein’s Olly Wills; classic rockabilly, surf and garage rockers The Long Insiders; 60s-styled rockers The Shapes and folk-pop singer Jess Hall, plus others.
BOSSAPHONIK with THE DELE SOSIMI

AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA: East Oxford Community Centre – Latin dancefloor, afrobeat, Balkan beats, global grooves and nu-jazz club night, tonight with Dele Sosimi, keyboard player with afrobeat pioneer and political activist Fela Kuti between 1979-86, bringing his eight-piece band to town for some serious afrobeat partying. The gig is preceded by a four-hour afrobeat workshop in the Fusion arts centre behind East Oxford Community Centre.
BLUESWATER: The Cellar – Edinburgh blues, soul and rock’n’roll outfit keeping it raw and old-fashioned.
AFTER THE THOUGHT + ALICE REAM + MY CROOKED TEETH: Modern Art Oxford – Ambient shoegazey electronic soundscaping from recent Oxford Punt stars After The Thought at tonight’s Pindrop show.
OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS: The James Street Tavern
PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM DJs: 02 Academy

SUNDAY 14th

RICH STICKS + RAGDOLL + PUPPET MECHANIC + SIOBHAN MCCLUSKEY + ANDY PICKARD + THE AUGUST LIST: The Wheatsheaf (2.30pm) – Free afternoon of unplugged acts hosted by Klub Kakofanny.
HIPSHAKIN!: The Library – Monthly dose of

Thursday 25th

THE STRYPES:

02 Academy

Young people playing old people’s music is nothing new, and there’s plenty of it about these days, and not just Jake Bugg, but Ireland’s The Strypes possibly roll back the years furthest from their age (band average: 16) and the music they’re harking back to (mostly somewhere around 1962 but then back further to the original blues greats). As far back as when they were just hitting their teens the quartet released an EP of blues covers, led by a take on Bo Diddley’s ‘You Can’t Judge A Book By Its Cover’, just for fun, but quickly found it becoming a radio hit in their home country. Cue a record company bidding war, including Elton John’s Rocket label, John declaring the young whippersnappers knew more about the blues than he did. Dave Grohl, Noel Gallagher and Jeff Beck have similarly fallen for their charms and already this year the band’s singles ‘Blue Collar Jane’ and ‘Hometown Girls’ have been getting rave reviews. And why such excitement? Well, hearing such young hands recalling the nascent thrill of The Beatles and The Stones is never going to go out of fashion, but as much as anything, guitarist Josh McClorey could be the natural heir to Wilko Johnson, The Strypes sticking an electric cattle prod up the backside of the blues in much the same way that Dr Feelgood did in the 1970s.



50s and 60s rhythm’n’blues, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul.

MONDAY 15th

BILL KIRCHEN & TOO MUCH FUN: The Jericho Tavern – The “Titan of the Telecaster” returns to the Famous Monday Blues, showing no sign of giving up any time soon as he continues to tour, some 45 years after the success of ‘Lincoln Hotrod’, the hit he led as guitarist with Commander Cody’s Lost Planet Airmen. Versatile enough to cover everything from rockabilly and blues-rock to country, swing and boogie woogie, a hybrid style he’s dubbed ‘Dieselbilly’. Kirchen has played alongside Nick Lowe, Elvis Costello and Emmylou Harris among others and still gives that old favourite an ironic outing alongside his extensive back catalogue, with a tendency to play it in the style of any, and every, guitar great over the years.

TUESDAY 16th

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon
OPEN MIC CLUB: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 17th

CALLIGRAPHY: The Cellar – Drum&bass, dubstep, garage and jungle club night with Worthington, Masp and Ajust.
IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC BANDS NIGHT: The Bullingdon
SPARKY’S JAM: James Street Tavern – Open jam session.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Fat Lil’s, Witney

THURSDAY 18th

TWO GALLANTS: 02 Academy – Raw melodic blues and folk racket from San Francisco singer-guitarist Adam Stephens and drummer Tyson Vogel, sort of the Delta counterpart to White Stripes’ Chicago blues sound, back in action after the release of their ‘The Bloom & The Blight’ album, their first in five years.
NOT TOO SHABBY + GEMMA MOSS: The Bullingdon – Bluesy rocking from Not Too Shabby.
ROSS STANLEY: The Wheatsheaf – Spin jazz club with pianist and organ player Stanley.
HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: The Wheatsheaf – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the local country/Americana troupe.
FRANCIS PUGH & THE WHISKY SINGERS + LEWIS NEWCOMBE-JONES: The Port Mahon – Boozy blues and Americana from Francis Pugh and chums, plus airy 60s-styled folk in the vein of Nick Drake and Donovan from Lewis.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon
BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 19th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – First day of the local festival centrepiece, with Spiritualized, Ash and The Joy Formidable – *see main preview*
THAMESFEST: The Talbot Inn, Eynsham – Opening session of the three-day festival, with a set from Missing Persians.
THE BIG TEN INCH: The Cellar – Jump blues, rock’n’roll and vintage sounds club night, tonight with a live set from London’s

The Shoestring, harking back to early Stones and Small Faces. Count Skylarkin and Jason King spin a goodly mix of old-time jazz, gospel, Americana, swing, rhythm’n’blues, jump jive, calypso, soul, rocksteady and more.
ONE WING LEFT: The Bullingdon
FUNK IT: The Bullingdon
STRANGE DOORS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to The Doors.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Red Lion, Eynsham

SATURDAY 20th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – The Horrors headline the second day of the festival, alongside The Subways, Gaz Coombes and Dan le Sac vs Scroobius Pip – *see main preview*
THAMESFEST: The Talbot Inn, Eynsham (1-11pm) – Full day and evening of live music, with a headline set from veteran local blues-rockers Steamroller, plus Missing Persians, Ian ‘The Pump’ MacIntosh, Crayfish, Reckless Sleepers and more.
PUNKOLYMPICS III: The Cellar (5pm) – Various shades of punk through the afternoon and evening, with bulldozing heavyweight Headcount bringing their Killing Joke-inspired *sturm und drang* along with full force, plus Banbury’s ska-punks Great Big Bargain, Cheltenham’s two-piece punk-pop outfit Gag Reflex, gothic steampunk outfit Mary Bendytoy, Nottingham’s gothic metallers Headstone Horrors, protest punks Big Society and more.
AGNESS PIKE + SAMUEL ZASADA + SUPREMIS + GEMMA MOSS: The Hollybush – One gig closer to Wittstock fundraiser for the annual free festival with theatrical thrash merchants Agness Pike, darkly melancholic folksters Samuel Zasada and more.
FRESH OUT THE BOX: The Cellar – Wonky disco, house and breaks with Discotty and Loudat.
PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM DJs: 02 Academy
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Swan, Wantage

SUNDAY 21st

HEADBANGERS BALL with AETHARA + REIGN OF FURY + DIVINE CHAOS + FURYBORN: 02 Academy – Heavyweight goings on with a quartet of metal acts leaning towards the thrash side of things. Local noisemongers Aethara go in for some serious Pantera-styled thrash-core, while Reign in Fury hark back to classic 80s thrash bands like Nuclear Assault and Megadeth. Slough’s Divine Chaos look to Testament and Pantera for inspiration, while Bournemouth’s Furyborn mix up death and tech metal into a suitably unholy brew. A little something to help you unwind at the end of the weekend.
THAMESFEST: The Talbot Inn, Eynsham (12-5pm) – The Tom Mitchell Trio, The Pete Fryer Band, 1000 Mile Highway and Adam & Johnson are among the acts playing the final session of the festival.

MONDAY 22nd

KARMA TO BURN + DESERT STORM + TRIPPY WICKED: The Bullingdon – Marshall stacks. Riffs. Beards. Go! – *see main preview*
VOODOO ROOM: The Jericho Tavern – Tribute to Hendrix and Cream at the Famous Monday Blues from new blues-rock power trio.



Saturday 27th-Sunday 28th

RIVERSIDE

FESTIVAL:

Mill Field, Charlbury

As with seemingly all of Oxfordshire’s main summer festivals Charlbury Riverside has endured its hardships but come back stronger. In their case it was having to postpone the event at short notice last year and move it back a month to July. Instead of scuppering every well-laid plan, the move meant an even bigger crowd for the county’s premier free music festival, set (as the name might subtly suggest) next to the river in Charlbury – about five minutes walk from the railway station which links to Oxford. An almost exclusively locally-sourced bill plays across two stages, with Saturday’s attractions on the main stage including Mick Quinn’s **DB BAND**, mining a scuzzy 60s-styled garage rock sound; 30s-style hot jazz party starters **THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND**; sci-fi obsessed industrial-strength hip hop crew **DEATH OF HI-FI (pictured)**; self-styled ‘Turkobilly’ collective **BRICKWORK LIZARDS** and epic alt. country soundscapists **THE EPSTEIN**. On the Truck Store-curated second stage, there’s southern gothic acoustic folk-pop from **WELCOME TO PEEPWORLD**; spaced-out psychedelia from **FLIGHTS OF HELIOS** and joyous Americana from **THE DREAMING SPIRES**.

Moving on to Sunday and Witney’s stadium rockers **MILLION FACES** head the main stage, where they’re joined by country hoe-down crew **SWINDLESTOCK**; gothic folk-pop siren **TAMARA & THE MARTYRS**; harmony-heavy pop-punkers **THE DIRTY ROYALS** and swamp-blues stalwarts **THE MIGHTY REDOX. BAND OF HOPE, THE AUGUST LIST, SALVATION BILL, EMPTY WHITE CIRCLES, DALLAS DON’T, WE AERONAUTS** and **DEER CHICAGO** are on the second stage, and when you consider you get all this absolutely gratis, we’re surprised you’re still reading this and not off booking your train tickets *RIGHT NOW*.

TUESDAY 23rd

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon
OPEN MIC CLUB: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 24th

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Marsh Harrier, Temple Cowley

THURSDAY 25th

THE STRYPES: 02 Academy – Irish teens inherit the mantle of Wilko Johnson’s electric blues – *see main preview*



Saturday 27th

GESAMPTKUNSTWERK MEMETICS: The Old Fire Station

If the very title of tonight's event hasn't got you lost around the fifth syllable, welcome to the world of the strange. As you should expect from any concert organised by Jack Goldstein from Fixers, this is a night of music that veers towards the challenging side of experimental. His last event was a night of music by John Cage – including the notorious ambient piece '4.33' – performed by himself and various local improv luminaries. Tonight goes a few steps further, featuring three sets of three to four musicians simultaneously playing pieces of their own composition without any pre-arrangement with their onstage compatriots. Sound like a recipe for disaster? Maybe it is but it's also a potential recipe for something genuinely new and exciting, and with a cast that includes veteran free-improv composer and arranger Steve Beresford; absurdist comedian Adam Larter; Visual artist Gloria Lin; performance poet Rachel Victoria Allen; free jazz trumpeter and vocalist Phil Minton; Red Square luminary Ian Staples; jazz pianist and electronic wiz Pat Thomas as well as Jack himself, quality and the unexpected are guaranteed, not least for the performers themselves. Here at Nightshift we're just referring to it as "Jack's gig". Our spellchecker, meanwhile, just went on strike.

STEVE RILEY & THE MAMOU PLAYBOYS: The Bullingdon – More quality cult American roots music courtesy of Empty Room Promotions, tonight featuring Louisiana Cajun outfit Steve Riley & The Mamou Playboys to the Bully. Cajun accordionist Riley is widely recognised as one of the modern-day masters of the instrument, receiving a Grammy nomination for his playing, while the band's fiddle player and singer Kevin Wimmer brings a raw Creole edge to the music.

OLIVER WILDE + BETHANY WEIMERS + THE AUGUST LIST: The Wheatshaeaf – Melancholic, delicate and introspective gloom-pop from Bristol's rising cult star Oliver Wilde, taking downbeat acoustic pop informed by Nick Drake, Mark Linkous and Elliot Smith and augmenting it with multi-layered vocals, 8-bit tape loops, sampled drums, strings and lap steel to make for an emotionally and musically turbulent journey, with the man's debut album, 'A Brief Introduction To Unnatural Lightyears already highly anticipated. He's joined at

tonight's Tertium Quid show by gothic acoustic folk-pop siren Bethany Weimers and garage-rock-tinged porch folk duo The August List, inspired by Carter-Cash and The Handsome Family.

OLIVER WILDE: Truck Store – Early evening warm-up set from Wilde ahead of his Wheatshaeaf show.

OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS: The Wheatshaeaf – Free gig in the downstairs bar.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

VOODOO VODOO: The Library – 50s and 60s vinyl trash, surf, rock'n'roll, mambo and garage session.

FRIDAY 26th

COME BACK HARRIET + THE GRACEFUL SLICKS: The Cellar – Shimmering shoegaze noise in the vein of Chapterhouse, Ride and Slowdive from Munich's Come Back Harriet, previous support to Mark Gardener and The Horrors, with groove-heavy psych-rock support from The Graceful Slicks.

TOM RUSSELL: St. John the Evangelist – Tex-Mex and traditional Texan country music from the el Paso-resident veteran, whose been covered by the likes of Johnny Cash, Nanci Griffith, Guy Clark and kd lang among many others, tonight playing songs from his extensive back catalogue, including most recent album 'Mesabi'.

SWINDLESTOCK + HOT HOOVES + THE OTHER DRAMAS + NUDY BRONQUE: The Wheatshaeaf – Rootsy Americana and roadhouse alt.country from Swindlestock, alongside fuzzed-up punk-pop heroes Hot Hooves, coming in between Husker Du, Guided By Voices and Teenage Fanclub, and Swindon's elegantly wasted indie popsters Nudy Bronque, mixing up elements of Pulp, Edwyn Collins and Lloyd Cole.

FUNK IT: The Bullingdon

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Red Lion, Eynsham

SATURDAY 27th

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Charlbury – First day of the annual free festival with a strong local cast that includes The DB Band, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, Death Of Hi-Fi and more – *see main preview*

D-FEST: The Red Lion, Drayton – The annual one-day festival returns for its fourth outing, this year featuring alt.country faves The Epstein, gothic indie rockers The Scholars and afro-pop tinged popstrels Yellow Fever, alongside sets from Orange Vision, My Grey Horse, Children Of The Sun, Duchess, Vagueworld, Artclasssink, Lizzie Wenninger, Jay Redfern, Mew, Wooster & Boon, and James Pagett.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with X-1 + PARTLY FAITHFUL + JORDAN O'SHEA: The Wheatshaeaf – Righteous, rollicking hardcore from X-1 at tonight's GTI. Support comes from Bauhaus-inspired gothsters Partly Faithful and wistfully melancholic acoustic

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in the gig guide is 6pm on the 20th of each month - no exceptions. Call 01865 372255 (10am-6pm), or email listings to nightshift@oxfordmusic.net. Gig listings are copyright of Nightshift and may not be reproduced without permission.

balladeer Jordan O'Shea.

GESAMPTKUNSTWERK MEMETICS: The Old Fire Station – Improv in extremis courtesy of Jack Goldstein and chums, as composers go head to head to head with no pre-peeking at each other's notes – *see main preview*

SKELETOR with ANNERO + FLEISCH + TWISTED STATE OF MIND: O2 Academy – Skeletor's monthly metal extravaganza with local faves Annero, industrial-metallers Fleisch and teenage heavyweights Twisted State Of Mind.

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK: The Bullingdon PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM DJs: O2 Academy

SUNDAY 28th

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Charlbury – Second day of the free festival. Tamara & The Martyrs, The Mighty Redox and Samuel Zasada are among the acts playing – *see main preview*

HYPER 14+ TOUR with CHARLIE SLOTH + THE HARRY SHOTTER SHOW + MATRIX + MIC RIGHTEOUS: O2 Academy – Under-18s package tour with Anglo-Iranian rapper Mic Righteous back in town after supporting Black The Ripper here, and previously opening for The Game, Wretch 32 ad Devlin, the Margate-based rhymer armed with a global political outlook that takes pot-shots at American foreign policy and life as an asylum seeker. He's joined by Camden's DIY MC Charlie Sloth and versatile drum&bass MC Harry Shotta, among others.

BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm)

MONDAY 29th

BLUES'N'TROUBLE: The Bullingdon – Lively blues and boogie from Scotland's much-travelled Blues'n'Trouble, veterans of 30 years of touring, led by singer and harmonica player Tim Elliot.

MISSING PERSIANS: The Jericho Tavern – Blues-rock from the local newcomers at tonight's Famous Monday Blues show.

LEWIS NEWCOMBE-JONES: The Marsh Harrier

TUESDAY 30th

MIKE HERON + TREMBLING BELLS: St John the Evangelist – Former-Incredible String Band singer teams back up with Trembling Bells for tonight's Pindrop show, the founding father of psych-folk back in the 60s rejuvenated and critically rehabilitated in recent times as much by the Bells' updating of his music for their own folk-rock sound. Expect plenty of classic ISB songs along the way, while Trembling Bells return to town having played with Will Oldham last year.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon

OPEN MIC CLUB: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 31st

OXFORD ACOUSTIC CLUB: The Bullingdon – Unplugged sets from Directors of Space, Jack Rhys Davies, Hannah Bruce, Purple May and more.

Friday 19th-Saturday 20th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon

After returning revitalised under new management last year, 2013's Truck Festival line-up might just its best ever. The quality of its big name acts is easily matched by the event's strength in depth, which pitches almost perfectly between established underground faves; rising stars and local bands.

To the headliners first and both **SPIRITUALIZED** and **THE HORRORS** are both 24-carat rock quality. The former, topping Friday night's main stage bill, have supreme festival-playing pedigree, providing some of Glastonbury's most memorable moments over the years, particularly in the 90s when their psych-rock spectacles promised and delivered spaceward escapism. Jason Pierce's ever-changing line-up has never strayed too far from the staples of devotional psychedelia, with its odes to drugs, death and Jesus, but with subjects as big as these, and songs of a scale to match, theirs could well be one of the great Truck sets in its 15 year history.

There's a different shade of darkness from Southend's The Horrors, not least in the quintet's non-more-black attire, which perfectly matches the scuzzy, neo-gothic density of their music. Layering influences like Joy Division, Can, PiL, The Cramps and The Chameleons atop each other, the band's 2009 'Primary Colours' is a modern day masterpiece, worthy of every accolade afforded it, while follow-up 'Skying' polished that prime rock grime to a fine burnished steel.

Joining these two on the main stage over the weekend will be former Truck headliners **ASH**,



Tim Wheeler's pop-punk warriors showing no sign of slowing their charge two decades on from their first single, 'Jack Names The Planets' and timeless indie hits 'Angel Interceptor', '1977' and 'Kung Fu', the band having ditched the idea of releasing albums back in 2007 in favour of a series of singles.

Even more raucous rock fun in the shape of **THE JOY FORMIDABLE (pictured)**, whose local gigs to date have been rapid, cathartic celebrations of a band who know how to behave exactly like rock stars on stage, make a ferocious racket *and* write more than their fair share of cracking pop songs. The three-piece, led by Welsh childhood sweethearts Ritzy Bryan and Rhydian Dafydd tend to sound like a motorway pile-up involving Sonic Youth, Kate Bush, The Breeders and The Ting Tings, all chiming guitars, furious distortion and the sort of thunderous drumming that wouldn't seem out of place in a death metal band. Amid all this the diminutive Roxy more than holds her own, her voice apparently delicate but equal to the huge, fizzing grunge-goth pop noise the band create, while she's not averse to throwing herself into the moshpit either.

Welwyn Garden City's post-grunge trio **THE SUBWAYS** take to the stage on the Saturday, where they're joined by local hero **GAZ COOMBES** who will undoubtedly be dropping a few old Supergrass hits into his set of Krautrock, post-punk, glam and funk-inspired tunes. There's also instrumental post and math-rocking from Belfast's **AND SO I WATCH YOU FROM AFAR** and epic stadium-sized rock wonder from the reformed and just-as-great-as-ever **ULTRASOUND**.

Away from the main stage is where Truck really holds its own this year. On the market stage **DRY THE RIVER** bring grandiose alt.country rocking, while **PATRICK WOLF** brings lupine elegance and poetic wit and romance. **DAN LE SAC vs SCROOBIUS PIP** will bring the electronically-altered slam poetry and rap, while local lad making good **LEWIS WATSON** brings heartfelt pop and acoustic

soul. **TOY** – big mates with The Horrors – bring scuffed-up psychedelia, Krautrock and gothic pop, while **HISTORY OF APPLE PIE** provide not just fruit-based pudding refreshment but sweet-natured indie jangle into the bargain. But it's the mighty – yes, **MIGHTY** – **PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING** that we'll be crowding to the very, very front for, the oddball pair that is J Willgoose and Wigglesworth already having made potentially the album of 2013 in 'Inform, Educate, Entertain', managing to bring something fantastically fresh and exhilarating to the table with their idiosyncratic blend of ancient movie and public information samples and cinematic instrumental collages that veer from motorik electronics to orchestral scores and whimsical folk. A genuinely awesome band. See them and love them unreservedly as we do.

Onward into The Barn stage (go on, you missed the smell of cow dung when it was closed for a year, didn't you?) and the likes of Essex's alt.rockers **WE ARE THE OCEAN**; garage-rockers **THE COMPUTERS**; mathsy pop starlets **TALL SHIPS**, and feisty, cutesy lo-fi synth-popsters **FIGHT LIKE APES**, although here the twin highlights of the weekend are likely to be monstrous Japanese acid-punk noise manglers **BO NINGEN (pictured)** who are wired and freaky enough to blow all-comers off stage (including The Cult who they are due to support on tour in October), and the irrepressibly brutal and unmistakably classy **ROLO TOMASSI**, long-standing Nightshift favourites whose bruising, convoluted blend of math-rock and full-on hellbastard hardcore comes fronted by the wonderfully terrifying Eva Spence.

Much, much more – too much to tell truth be told – to tell you about, including an excellent local band contingent that includes **GUNNING FOR TAMAR**; **WILD SWIM**; **BETA BLOCKER & THE BODY CLOCK**; **AGS CONNOLLY**; **TRAPS**; **JORDAN O'SHEA**; **KING OF CATS**; **VON BRAUN** and **DUCHESS**, but you'll discover it all for yourself when you get there, along with possibly the most affordable festival bar of the summer (and hey, bring your own beers and picnics why don't you – such craziness is allowed at Truck). Seriously, it's easy for folks in Oxfordshire to take Truck for granted, even after nearly losing it all two years ago, but the event is a true pioneer in the small festival stakes and with a line-up as strong as this year's, there really is no excuse at all not to make the most of something very, very special indeed.



NAAM / CARAVAN OF WHORES / BLACK SUNRISE

The Wheatsheaf

We only catch the last two numbers of Black Sunrise’s opening set, but while the first of these feels a little ponderous, their finale is a right beast of a song, a huge, growling psychedelic wave that simply builds and builds til it fair bursts at its titanic climax; stick an obscene amount of reverb on the vocals and

victory is assured. The track sets the tone for tonight’s gig with super-heavyweight stoner grooves very much the order of the day. It’s a good couple of years since we last saw Caravan of Whores and either we’ve forgotten just how bloody great they are, or they’ve reached a

whole new level of awesomeness. They’re easily Oxford’s hairiest band – drummer Jamie Gillett’s beard alone could keep an entire orphanage warm in the winter, while singer and bassist Pete Smith is a silver-haired, mad-eyed cross between Ian Anderson and 1970s kids TV character Catweazle.

Musically they’re more often than not phenomenal, monolithic psychedelic spirals that drift purposely between Black Sabbath, Sleep, Hawkwind and even Loop, relentless and downtuned but capable of epic flights of fancy into deep space. The comedown from their set involves a visit to the bar where they’re selling Olde Trip ale. Oh yes they are. The first half of Brooklyn quartet Naam’s set is something of a letdown in as much as the band don’t seem willing to soar to the heights their supports did or their new album suggests they easily can. The swirling, slow-build set opener promises a supernova to come but for the next twenty minutes it’s all about denied gratification as they ebb and flow but never breach the dam that would allow their songs to carry all before them. There’s strangely comic relief from the gnomish bass player and his oddly rustic backing vocals, but while their proggy tendencies never tip into self-indulgence it’s frustratingly tame. Then something clicks. The final three numbers crank everything up several notches, the band cuts loose and the result is triumphant, all flanged guitars and John Lord-like organ riffs, ‘Vow’ and ‘Beyond’ simply bulldozing all memory of that earlier uncertainty. It took a while but by the end, ladies and gentlemen, we are floating in space. *Dale Kattack*

WOOD FESTIVAL
Braziers Park

After a year’s break, WOOD is back as green as spring itself, powered by solar panels and wood burning stoves, with compost toilets, locally-produced organic beer, cider and food, and a strong recycling ethic. WOOD has a way of creating a happy chilled atmosphere which for many is as important as the music. The setting is beautiful, the festival is small scale, the site is intimate and safe for kids to roam free, the slope opposite the main stage inviting people to stretch out and de-stress, and from dusk there’s the festival campfire to sit round. For the more active there are eco talks, a full programme for kids and about 30 different workshops, ranging from learning hula hooping and Indian head massage to getting close to nature by making DIY wormeries. There’s always a contended buzz from the workshop village and wandering through we can’t help but smile passing by those learning to play spoons and be impressed by the hammering and chiselling of those making their own totem pole. Alongside all this, with about fifty acts (plus open mic sessions), music remains very much the heartbeat of WOOD. On a bitterly cold Friday, which plays havoc with the August List’s harmonium and freezes Jess Hall’s fingers, **DANNY AND THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD** heat everyone up with a great set. The current line-up’s take on Americana is more rock influenced than earlier incarnations but the main focus remained Danny’s rich, warm vocals which thaw us out nicely. On Saturday they’re matched by the acoustic roots music from Nashville’s **WOOD BROTHERS**. They get people up off the slope and round the main stage with their tight singing and playing, and Chris Wood’s gloriously propulsive double bass lines are just outstanding. The WOOD Saturday night party is kept going by the very danceable **LA MORT**

SUBITE’s Balkan, Turkish and gypsy sounds. Earlier on Saturday Canterbury’s **SYD ARTHUR** pay their respects to 60s and early 70s psych-rock while distilling their own fine blend of guitar riffs, mandolin picking, grungy bass, powerfully innovative drumming and Jeff Buckley-style vocals. Equally adept at both epic and intimate, any slight prog excesses are quickly forgiven because of the adrenalin rush from their high-energy performance. Completely different is the largely acoustic line-up and delicious pitch-perfect harmonies of Brighton-based **HOUSE OF HATS**. Other bands we hear for the first time and make a mental note to remember for the future, include London-based Irish singer **JULIE HAWK**; Aberdeen’s folk-noise band **WASHINGTON IRVING**, and the multi-instrumental **UNTIL THE BIRD**. Good too that local stalwart Matt Sage’s latest band **ART THEEFE** make such a promising debut. Sunday’s highlights mostly came from the second stage, run for the day by the alt-country and roots folks from Clubhouse records. We particularly like **THE CEDARS**’ soaring vocals and bluesy slide guitar, and the high-energy synergy of the duo of Canadian singer-songwriter **DUSTIN BENTALL** and fiddler **KENDEL CARSON**. Both bands are powerful storytellers and transform songs about bad luck and worse into something uplifting. The same sort of transformation, only more so, features in the late night Sunday performance of Springsteen’s ‘Nebraska’ by a roster of bands. The album is so very bleak we’re reluctant to re-visit it, but this live version is compelling. It’s as if the original becomes a thing of beauty by being touched by that special WOOD atmosphere. *Colin May*

PUBLIC IMAGE Ltd / THE WONDERSTUFF
O2 Academy

The Wonderstuff’s profile may have been low of late, but they still seem to be active and releasing albums. Singer Miles Hunt is the only one still sporting flowing locks and he’s not lost his permanent smile, in fact there’s no real sign of any progression from their early-90s heyday. Undemanding, swears but cheerful indie remains the order of the day and the shouts from the audience suggest they still command a loyal following. Public Image Ltd return to town three years after their last triumphant show, soon after John Lydon re-formed the band who most defined post-punk in the late 70s after quitting The Sex Pistols. Though the steep ticket price has produced a smaller and less excited crowd than previously we’re treated to a far more intense and accomplished performance. Where the backing musicians previously appeared a little tentative and unsure, tonight they attack the set with a focus that makes them sound at last like a solid unit. Guitarist Lu Edmonds and bassist Scott Firth seem more confident, takings chances with their playing and stamping more of their mark on the songs. Experimentation and pushing boundaries were always hallmarks of PiL, particularly in the early days, and Lydon has always chosen his musicians carefully. The biggest change comes from Bruce

Smith, once the drummer for The Pop Group, possibly the most incendiary and unpredictable band of early 80s. Aided by some backing rhythm tracks he attacks his kit with a newfound energy, becoming a more successful counterpoint to Lydon’s huge voice, still as confrontational and proclamatory as ever. Ian Dury once said “there’s only ever been two English rock’n’roll singers: Johnny Rotten and Billy Fury,” and there may be some truth in there. Last year’s ‘This Is PiL’ album proved to be a touch disappointing, with too many songs sounding like aimless jams. Only a few of the better tracks get aired tonight: a superb ‘Out Of The Woods’, and ‘One Drop’ with its familiar reggae feel. Of the old songs ‘Memories’ still sends a tingle up the spine while a triumphant and bombastic ‘Flowers Of Romance’ sees Edmonds playing an electric banjo with a bow. The only disappointment lies in the lack of ‘Poptones’ or much else from ‘Metal Box’, other than ‘Albatross’. Towards the end Lydon shows he’s still capable of articulate and very English aggression: He spots a bouncer trying to eject a punter and launches into a vicious but measured tirade that leads to a reprieve for the lucky fan. One thing’s for sure; John Lydon still isn’t out to make friends. *Art Lagun*

MICHAEL KATON
The Jericho Tavern

Seasoned road hound Michael Katon surveys the enthusiastic audience and exclaims, “Last time I was here was 15 years ago... you guys have got even uglier.” Katon is in particularly good form tonight: joking with the band and the audience, he’s clearly relaxed and happy to be back at the Famous Monday Blues. For those who haven’t been acquainted with his brand of amped-up firebrand boogie, Katon is a virtuoso guitarist whose playing is equal parts Freddie King, Jimi Hendrix and Rory Gallagher, backed by a powerhouse ZZ Top-esque rhythm section. Hailing from Hell in Michigan (yes, really), Katon has cut his teeth in countless roadhouses across the States, as well as stages across Europe over the past few decades. His accessible blend of powerful blues and boogie from a time when men were men and sheep were nervous has the ability to appeal to blues fans as well as bikers and rockers; although the Marshall’s turned up to 11, the spirit of Freddie King and John Lee Hooker is never far away. Katon’s band are very young and, refreshingly, not completely male (though the lass in question plays some seriously badass macho boogie); whether or not

they’re his regular US band, they ably back Katon’s heavily syncopated boogie without missing a beat. Tonight we’re treated to a smorgasbord of songs from his impressive back catalogue. Highlights include ‘No More Whiskey’ and ‘Fried Jalapenos’ from the ‘Rip it Hard!’ album; ‘Boogie Man’ and ‘Tight White Pants’ from ‘Proud to be Loud’ and ‘Red Moon Rising’ from ‘Bad Machine’, the last of which Katon readily admits to stealing from Freddie King’s ‘Going Down’. Katon is in the mood for the blues; his version of ‘Lucky Lucky Lucky’ is very representative of his tongue-in-cheek slow blues lyrics, although alas we don’t get my personal favourite, with its opening line, “If I have a heart attack baby, it’ll be on account of you”. However, the standout slow blues for many here is his version of Muddy Waters’ ‘Catfish Blues’. Singing unamplified and with the volume turned uncharacteristically down, Katon is consumed by the song – background chatter stops and the room is completely transfixed while he conjures up Muddy’s spirit with his eerie slide playing. Spellbinding. This is blues and boogie at its very best; please don’t make us wait another 15 years for another appearance. *Paul Morris*

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Agh! 3am on deadline day and we've got a blank space. Quick, find a picture of a kitten.



Phew, that’s better.

photo: Marc West



BRIAN MAY & KERRY ELLIS **St John The Evangelist**

Most people know three things about Brian May: he was a founder-member of Queen; he has a PhD in astrophysics, and he’s mad about badgers. So mad in fact, particularly about the proposed cull, that he begins his live show with three badger-themed music videos, featuring Brian Blessed and starring The Artful Badger. This tiny Oxford audience, mostly die-hard Queen fans, is in for a very strange show.

Between May’s animal rights message, his endearing shyness and the sometimes shambolic acoustic performance on display, the evening feels like a cross between a charity gig, a family party and an open mic night. Most of the singing is done by Kerry Ellis, a Broadway singer with a powerful and impressive voice, though she tackles the wide range of songs with about as much variety of tone as the speaking clock.

Obviously it’s the Queen songs that go down best. ‘Somebody To Love’ and ‘Crazy Little Thing Called Love’ are ragged sing-alongs and ‘We Will Rock You’ is strange without live drums, but

the more obscure ‘39’ and ‘Life Is Real’ are surprisingly emotional. There are also songs written for Ellis, which showcase her vocal gymnastics but sadly don’t linger in the memory. And there is a curious selection of covers. ‘Born Free’ and The Beatles’ ‘Bungalow Bill’ fit the animal theme, but the latter is a weird choice and this performance would be awkward even on a bad day at the Catweazle Club.

But that kind of criticism misses the point of the show. May’s apparent nerves and obvious delight at the generous audience reaction is hugely endearing. Queen fans may have found it heavy on torch songs and lacking in depth, but then it’s not a Queen show, and Ellis is not replacing Freddie Mercury. There is a new album being plugged but Queen and the badgers get more audience attention. What the show lacks in ambition it more than makes up in intimacy. It may not have been exciting, and it won’t win any new fans, but for the old ones it’s been very strange and very special.

Mark Wilden

MUTAGENOCIDE / ZAOS / VISIONFALL / I CRIED WOLF

The Wheatsheaf

Local metalcore crew I Cried Wolf are generating plenty of interest as a relatively new local band that are fast climbing up the bill on metal lineups, and watching them tonight, it’s not hard to understand why; the whole band, especially vocalist Harry Davies, manage to fill the Wheatsheaf with buckets of attitude and energy, fully utilizing the open space made available to them by a relatively small crowd. On the other hand, Davies would do well to attempt to diversify his vocals, which are almost exclusively high-pitched screams, but this set is ultimately entertaining, if slightly derivative of already established bands like Bring Me the Horizon and Parkway Drive.

Up next are Visionfall, another very energetic local metalcore band whose breakdown-friendly style should be familiar to veterans of the scene from a slew of gigs between 2006 and 2010. Unfortunately, the fantastic heavy riffs in their set are let down by slightly boring and uninventive lead guitar work, and moments could definitely be tighter.

Saying that, it’s very difficult for a live band of any caliber to come across as tight when they’re on before the unstoppable brute-force of Zaos, who seem almost mechanically locked in to the groove of their death-metal riffing. Interesting experimentations with syncopation and dissonance, as well as some truly brutal ‘tone faces’ from guitarist/vocalist Mikey Goodson definitely make theirs the standout set for the night. Interestingly, those songs best received by the crowd tonight seem to be predominantly new, which bodes well for the band’s upcoming EP release.

Tonight’s headliners Mutagenocide launch with gusto into a set of heavily Pantera-inspired modern thrash, with an enjoyably vintage image and attitude that has much of the crowd (myself included) headbanging away from the off. The best way to describe a Mutagenocide set is an onslaught, interrupted only by a few fleeting moments of peace in the form of clean, ominous, chorus-laden intro riffs. If you like your metal fast, heavy and longhaired, these guys are here for you.

Tal Fineman

WOLF ALICE **The Jericho Tavern**

There are some things in life which are slightly mysterious, and then there are things which are completely baffling. Wolf Alice seem to fall towards the latter. Sadly, not because they are able to astound me with their brilliance, but because they seem to have garnered a reputation that promises something special, and ultimately leaves you hanging for something that never arrives. Despite the comparisons to Mazzy Star and Hole, though they move from more rock sounds to grungy ones with ease, they never quite deliver it with the panache of the 90s. Instead it falls flat, the music promising a crescendo that never materialises and just as I expect it to peak, they announce the end of the set. That’s not to say what they offer isn’t enticing, but it’s when it’s pulled back towards a slightly softer sound that it manages to command my attention.

Though the musical interludes in ‘Leaving You’ are interesting, it’s when it’s stripped to focus on Ellie’s vocals that it’s most appealing. Meanwhile ‘Jack’ has hints of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and suggests



photo: Jo Cox

that they carry more power when they’re not attempting to recreate the sounds of yesteryear. ‘Fluffy’ seems to highlight this and sounds like they’ve attempted to fuse a PJ Harvey song with a Garbage one. While on the recorded version of

the song it hangs together, live it loses its integrity. Perhaps the biggest issue is the band’s apparent lack of interest in the whole event. They fail to command the stage, and there’s a distinct lack of passion in their

delivery, as if they’d rather be somewhere else. Either tonight is an off night, or I’ve missed a memo which says apathy is the new cool, in which case Wolf Alice are top of their game.
Lisa Ward

MASIRO / PARASTATIC / SWEETBREAD

The Wheatsheaf

There’s a moment during Sweet Bread’s twinkling, electro guitar picking that I think it would be handy to have a bunch of woodland creatures, even Bambi, to throw on stage to frolic and graze amongst the beards and bucolic ruminations. As it is, I am transported back to the delicate noodling of Steve Hackett-era Genesis or a free festival Bolan, as Geoff Glees, from The Dead Letters, along with another guitarist and a bassist, dapples the Wheatsheaf glade, like some latter day Alan-a-Dale, with tracks from their album ‘Kaerlud’s Raedan’, which they recorded in the eminently suitable surroundings of St. Michael’s Church in Cumnor with local producer Sven Alfred.

A more urban 70s echo is to be seen through a glass darkly, in Parastatic’s heady re-birth of Neu! and Spaceman 3 into a formidably danceable six-legged krautadelic beast. The lights are off, the projections and strobes are on, and a giant Novation

synth acts as a speeding vehicle on a night-time motorway ride in the fast lane. Indeed, with Parastatic coming so far, from Newcastle, you sense that much of their album, ‘The Lost Highway’, must be informed by the endless miles along the A1, and as such the wonderfully fresh set sounds like in-car music for F1 drivers.

Masiro, a three piece from Thame, are described as experimental mathcore and instrumental techcore, and if this gives you visions of ten thousand, black, geometric-edged, titanic-sized boulders slamming down off a mountain and razing an episode of *Springwatch* to the ground, then you’ve got it about right. It’s brilliantly executed, if a little scary, and lies in its pugnacious world somewhere between Nought and The Human Abstract, and can best be summed up by someone in the crowd shouting, “that 9/8 riff fucking rocks!” Well, quite.

Paul Carrera

An advertisement for Evolution Recording Studios. At the top, there is a logo featuring a silhouette of an evolutionary sequence from an ape to a modern human, with the word 'EVOLUTION' in large, bold, white letters below it, and 'RECORDING STUDIOS' in smaller letters underneath. The background of the ad is a dark, moody photo of a recording studio with various pieces of equipment. The text is white and arranged in a clean, professional layout. It describes the studio's facilities, including a 1000 sq. ft. recording and mixing facility, a refurbished Trident Series 80B console, and experienced engineers and session musicians. It also lists services offered, such as recording, mixing, voice-overs, and producing. Contact information, including a phone number and email address, is provided at the bottom.

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An advertisement for OxJam Oxford's Big Music Quiz. The ad features a dark background with white and yellow text. At the top left, there is a logo for '2013 OXFORD TAKEOVER' with a silhouette of a castle. To the right of this is the 'OXJAM MUSIC FESTIVAL' logo with the website 'OXJAMOXFORD.CO.UK' and 'WWW.WEGOTTICKETS.COM'. The main title 'OXJAM OXFORD'S BIG MUSIC QUIZ' is written in large, bold, white letters. Below this, the date and location 'SUNDAY JULY 28TH BIG SOCIETY, COWLEY RD OXFORD' are listed. The ticket price '£3 PER PERSON - MAX 6 PER TEAM' and the prize information 'FANTASTIC PRIZES TO BE WON' are also included. At the bottom right, there is a small logo for Oxfam and the text 'ALL PROCEEDS TO OXFAM'.

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DR SHOTOVER: Modernity Leave

Coo-ee, I’m ba-ack! [Dr S smiles winningly at the camera as various East Indies Club drunks applaud feebly, then turns away with a scowl and pushes a new-bie off his favourite bar-stool]. That’s. MY. Place. Now bugger off, junior, and play with the General Knowledge Quiz Machine. Where were we? Ah yes, you were on the point of buying me a pint of Old Swillings, then we were going to discuss the Modern World. [Turns back to skulking newbie]. Tell me if there’s anything useful on that quiz machine, whelp face... if it’s anything like the Club jukebox, there’s been nothing new on there since 1983. Not dissimilar to the Cornbury Festival, ha haaarghh [wheezy laugh mutates into coughing fit]. Actually, I rather DIG Osibisa, so who’s complaining? I remember staring at the Woyaya album cover for several hours in 1972, after some particularly spectacular elephant grass. Meanwhile, shame that poor old Echo and The Bunnymen seem to have got marooned in Chipping Norton for so many, many years. S’pose they keep missing the bus back to Liverpool... then, there they are again at Cornbury [more wheezy laughter, followed by a long draught of Old Swillings]. Aah, that’s better. So, update me on what’s Groovy, New and Happening in the wunnerful sunshine-y world of Oxford Pop? Simple Minds, you say...? OMD and John Foxx, you say...? PiL, you say...? So far so good. Lee Christian to be KNIGHTED?!? About time too. This is going rather well. Hang on... what’s that? Secret Rivals have split up??? NOOOOOOO! Life is too cruel some-times. Buy me another beer. I need to cry into it.

Next month:
Dr S ‘Briefly Possessed by the Sarcastic Tones of Mal-colm McLaren at Séance’ Shock



OSIBISA: ‘Try some of THIS stuff, Dr S!’

INTRODUCING.... FLIGHTS OF HELIOS

Who are they?
Cosmic electro-psychedelic collective Flights of Helios are Chris Beard, James Currie, Phil Oakley, Sebastian Reynolds and James Maund. While living in London a few years ago Seb put together a house band for the club night run by Brainlove Records, aiming to warm up the crowd with abrasive jazz-drones. When Seb moved back to Oxford he decided to repeat the experiment, attracting local oddball musos like Jimmy and Greig from Suitable Case For Treatment, Bruce from Brickwork Lizards, Rob St John, and former members of The Evenings, We Aeronauts and Harry Angel. As the line-up and set coalesced they became Flights of Helios in Summer 2011, since when they’ve played Truck, Wilderness and Wood festivals, as well as numerous London and Oxford gigs. A double a-side single, ‘Star’ / ‘Crows’ is released this summer.
What do they sound like?
They describe themselves as “grief-wave” and “the sound of buildings collapsing and ice caps melting,” which are both accurate to a degree. Live the band’s spacious electronic psychedelia takes flight in a gentle blizzard of rarefied vocals, bleepy keys, blurts of harsh noise, intricate, off-kilter drumming and chiming or fuzzed-up guitars that touch bases with Pink Floyd, Mercury Rev and the more spectral moments of Spacemen 3 and Radiohead.
What inspires them?
“We’re a pretty voracious bunch for culture but James Joyce; Greek and other mythology; Ted Hughes; The Third Man; Biutiful; Holy Mountain; Spacemen 3; King Crimson; Fairport Convention, and more generally, trying to make sense out of the bewildering nature of life and love.”
Their career highlight so far:
“Playing the Barn stage at Truck in 2012. It felt like we’d started to get somewhere with making sense of our dilettantish leanings, and cranked it up to something intense and cleansing.”
And the lowlight:
“Luckily the worst has been humdrum stuff like empty gigs and technical hitches, or gigs where we afterwards we just felt we hadn’t been on it enough.”



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“Radiohead. Every album is different, every album a journey.”
If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“‘Untitled’ by Sigur Ros is a near-religious experience. A mammoth, glacial thing built of tender violence and wordless trouble; cosmic blues of the highest order.”
When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?
“Charlbury Riverside Festival on the 27th July. When possible we drop the house lights and use our astronomy-themed projections, which sadly doesn’t work at a festival, and we play in a horseshoe formation, to wash off our egos.”
Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“Favourite: the variety; ‘Oxford music’ covers classical, thrash, sludge, pop, hip hop, folk, doom, jazz, live techno, Weimar cabaret, afrobeat fun and more. Due to its size Oxford feeds and merges these into each other as musicians drink/study/work together, and totally unexpected stuff emerges like Foals and Suitable Case. Least favourite: hearing about the troubles some venues have with the pubs they’re residing in. Strong as the scene is, the hole left by The Point has never really been filled again.”
You might love them if you love:
Radiohead, Mercury Rev, early Pink Floyd, Spacemen 3, Wild Beasts, Beta Band, Elbow.
Hear them here:
[www.soundcloud.com/flights-of-helios](#)

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

“We used to play six gigs a week and we’d get booed off every night. Sometimes we had to leave through the back doors because the audience hated us so much. We used to shout at them as well to really get them wound up. I’m surprised we never actually got beaten up.” Thus spoke Jon Seagroatt of local ambient-electro-classical-industrial-psychedelic-jazz experimentalists **B So Global** in the duo’s interview with *Curfew* magazine in July 1993. He, along with co-conspirator in sonic architecture Ian Staples, was talking about their previous band **Red Square**, whose take on jazz in the 1970s and 80s was confrontational to say the least. B So Global saw Jon and Ian creating dense, soporific soundtracks for art installations that had us under its spell as they released their debut four-track album ‘Moilike’ this month. “This is quite sensible compared to what we were doing before. Well, you can’t be a loon all your life.” The pair went on to name check Captain Beefheart, Pink Floyd, Rage Against the Machine and some obscure Polish composers among their influences, as well as extolling the integration of aural and visual stimulation that raves brought to music and railing against the way music is taught in schools (“it squeezes the experimentation out of people. As soon as I joined a band I had to learn all over again”). Still pushing musical boundaries together twenty years on, Jon and Ian’s Red Square play at Supernormal Festival this August, a suitably open environment for their music. No chance of being booed offstage this time, though whether they’ll see that as a success is anyone’s guess.

10 YEARS AGO

Psychid appeared on the cover of July 2003’s Nightshift, as they prepared to release their eponymous debut album on db Records. In typical music industry fashion, the label had just been cast adrift by its parent company BMG, leaving the band financially compromised and the world at large unable to experience their particular pleasures. Also out this month was **Dive Dive**’s ‘Good Show’ single, the band having, since their time as Dustball, becoming figureheads for a whole new wave of local bands. In more recent times three-quarters of the band have played at the Olympic opening ceremony at Wembley Stadium and on the Letterman Show as part of **Frank Turner**’s band, proving that sometimes good things do come to those who deserve it. Elsewhere this month we looked forward to **Truck Festival**, with a line-up that boasted **Electric Soft Parade**; **Mark Gardener**; **British Sea Power** and **Youthmovie Soundtrack Strategies**. **Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element** were Demo of the Month for their “confusing patterns of electronic pulses, chitter-chatter rhythms and angular, misshapen guitar lines that sound like the engine of some huge starship being overhauled,” and a marked improvement on their previously Demo Dumped offering. Enjoying that particular dishonour this month were a band called **The Jeeps**, who claimed to be “prog, but not as you know it,” but sounded more like “gruff, windswept pub-rock that sounds like a poor man’s Boston.” We said something rude about Marillion fans too, which we still stand by.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

Proving that not everything in local music is fleeting and ephemeral, **The Epstein** graced the cover of July 2008’s Nightshift, looking wistful and rustic beside a lake. Which suited their intimately epic country rocking. “We were in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by mountains and arid grasslands. On a clear day you could see over 100 miles and at night the sky was massive and heavy with stars,” said frontman Olly Wills, “The love of making music and playing in a band started there for me.” The band were just about the release their debut album, ‘Last Of The Charanguistas’, the follow up to which, ‘Murmurations’, was released just last month. In local news, local pop legends **The Candyskins** were set to reform for a one-off Music For Life gig in aid of cancer research at the Academy, joined by **Dodgy** and a certain **Frank Turner**. Former-Unbelievable Truth frontman **Andy Yorke** released his solo debut album, ‘Simple’, having moved to Russia to work as a translator for Greenpeace and sworn never to write music again. “The songs were therapy for me; I was writing in spite of myself,” he told Nightshift. This year’s **Truck Festival** boasted headline turns from **The Lemonheads** and former-Small Faces keyboard man **Ian MacLagan**, alongside sets from **Emmy The Great**, **Camera Obscura** and **Altern-8**, while Cornbury had **Paul Simon** and **Crowded House** topping its two-day bill, joined by **The Bangles**, **Beverley Knight**, **Toots and the Maytals**, plus **Half Man Half Biscuit**, whose set remains the festival’s finest hour.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

THE GWLADYS END

A band who have recently relocated to Abingdon from Berlin (now there's a culture shock waiting to explode in blood-drenched violence), The Gwladys End describe their music as "generally pop songs, performed in a clumsy, noisy, darkly anti-pop manner," and admit they tend to slip out of tune and time quite regularly but they don't mind since it makes for "pleasant imperfection". How this manifests itself is in a somewhat ghostly shadow world of semi-Gregorian vocals that hover in the near distance, thrumming guitars and somnambulating industrial beats. Together they could have come perfectly formed from 4AD's mid-80s catalogue, gothic without being goth. Their promise that they tend to let things slip a bit is born out on 'Noising On', but the slightly narcotic drift feels naturally part of the whole shifting landscape thing going on. 'The Ones You Seek' is similarly clumsy in an endearing way, vocally so far off the mark it's bordering on comical but somehow held together with sticky tape, a strong will and an almost ethereal onward tread. We guess such lo-fi meandering would have gone down rather better in any one of Berlin's many subterranean musical hideaways than a pub in Abingdon on a Saturday night, when it's more likely to provoke a good beating, if not an outright lynching, but we're all for more career-oblivious weirdoes in our midst, so welcome to Oxfordshire, laddie.

THE DUBLINGS

Despite the chill brought on by The Gwladys End, it is officially summer, which means it's time to listen to reggae. We think it's some kind of law in fact – bit of sunshine and everyone from Cumnor to Cowley opens their windows and sticks on Bob Marley's 'Legend', possibly while getting biblically stoned. So anyway, good timing to receive a rare reggae demo in the pile. This has all the requisite sunshiny feelgood factor with its laidback soulful feel, the smooth female vocals gliding over lightweight dub and ska grooves (we'd been to see PiL the night before whose dub comes from a far darker, deeper mine). Sax plays idly atop an easy-going duet as choppy guitar squelches sleepy-eyed in the middle distance. In fact 'Come On Over' sounds so laidback we're

Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Silver Street Studios in Reading, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift

surprised it ever made it out of the studio and into the wider world at all. It's the sort of song you'd hope/expect to hear bubbling away in the corner of festival campsite around about sundown before everyone gets down to some serious partying. 'Acoustic Jam' tries to hip hop everything up a bit but sounds shrill and inconsequential and The Dublings are far more at home playing it sweeter and safer as on the hazy jam 'Dubnation' and.... sorry.... what? Pizza? Yeah, go on then. What time did you say it was? Shit, The Roots are on the One World Stage in half an hour. No, we can't stand up either. Come on, who spiked the chocolate brownies?

THE OMNIVIBES

Weirdly we were listening to the new Queens of the Stone-Age album just before we started on the office and halfway through The Omnivibes' opening number, 'Stars Collide', we absent-mindedly thought we were still partway through 'Like Clockwork'. The band have the same feeling of muscle-bound musical solidity, in the case of both bands solid in the sense of they sound like they're made of granite and teak rather than solid in the sense of dull and worthy. We remember The Omnivibes' previous demo a year or so back being more psychedelic than this transatlantic blues-grunge tear-up but it does its job well enough, rollicking bullishly into Foo Fighters territory on 'Tell Me', while 'Perfect Innuendo' is lighter on its pins but no less sturdy. There is, we have to say, a lack of any real guile or star quality about the whole affair, but it does its job. Its job being to rock loudly and with a decent enough sense of intent. A brick wall rather than an ornamental minaret of a band.

REFUGEES OF CULTURE

Only one song here from Refugees of Culture but it does at least sound like it's trying to channel the volume, intensity and histrionics of an entire double concept album into its four minutes. We imagine a strategically-placed fan blowing singer Clea De Sebrock's voluminous hair as she ratchets up the emotional drama of 'Crow', Tom Pilsworth's guitar churning malignantly in that 90s industrial metal fashion, the combination of the pair of them suggesting an unholy union of Lita Ford and Nine Inch Nails. Which makes it sound worse than it actually is. Sure the band sound like they should be soundtrack monster truck demolition derbies in front of whooping hicks with mullets and faded Megadeth t-shirts but like The Omnivibes, Refugees of Culture make

a pretty decent fist of pumping out their billowing gothic metal as if the word irony had never even been invented.

PERCEPTION

Sorry, we take all that niceness about the previous two demos back. This is how you rock. Perception describe themselves as a tech-metal band from Wantage and opening track 'Realisations' feels like being smacked in the face with a cast iron frying pan. The band then keep on battering you about the head with it even after you're lying on the floor with blood and snot leaking out of various orifices. It's like being savaged by an irate troll armed with a giant treble button. Grah, grah grrrrg AAAAAAAGGGH! That's how it goes. Give it a listen, you'll like it. 'With.Without' is similarly beastly and starts off like it's in the middle of the world's most epic guitar solo. Seriously, no quarter is spared to concepts of subtlety, with even the token melodic vocal segment subsumed by the guitarist's ongoing quest to fit more notes into three minutes than there are ants in the Brazilian rainforest. Ah, here comes the breakdown. Boo! Get on with it! They get back on with it. Hurray! Yes, hurray for metal. And hurray for being battered to a pudding pulp by guitars played by madmen in a hurry. They finish with a song called 'Hatchets' by which time there's something resembling radioactive bile oozing from the speakers. Now that's not very summery, is it?

SWEET'N'SOUR SWING

Back to summery vibes again and something of an oddity for the demo pile, a trad jazz duo recording a track entitled 'Suki Yaki' in memory of the late Kenny Ball, who died earlier this year and who had a hit with the piece back in the 1960s. The pair between them play steel guitar and erhu, a type of Chinese violin, so they're hardly traditional trad jazz. In fact there's a strange kind of Sino-Hawaiian fusion thing going on here, which takes Ball's version out of the dancehall onto some sundrenched beach, stripping it down and lightening it up while retaining its essential swing. And in just under three minutes we've learned two new things – the name of a Chinese violin and the title of one of Kenny Ball's hits. Not the sort of knowledge you acquire watching *Britain's Got Egg All Down Its Vest* or whatever it's called.

THE SHAPES

We saw The Shapes at the Wheatshaf last month and against all our better judgement we quite liked them, plying a good-naturedly woozy brand of soulful pop with hints of Van Morrison, 60s folk-pop and even a hint of 80s indie. Take away their live charm and they're a bit too soft-centred to really fall for, though they're never unpleasant. 'New Train' is

freewheeling Stax-infused kitchen sink pop in the mould of The Beautiful South – Anthony Kelly in particular does a convincing Paul Heaton impression. Steph Pirrie is the band's key ingredient, her sparkling, understated backing vocals lifting the songs out of the doldrums at each turn as The Shapes threaten to become an anonymous wedding party turn, particularly on 'Find Peace (Mary)'. The horns and chiming organ are back for the jaunty 'Facebook Song', though it can't escape its own self-imparted whimsy. Best of the lot is 'The Heavens Will Be Ours', the carefree nature of the song sounding more natural as The Beautiful South take King Harvest's 'Walking In The Moonlight' for a few pints at a country pub with Van Morrison's 'Brown Eyed Girl', but really, The Shapes are probably a band best appreciated in good-naturedly boozy company in a packed live venue.

THE DEMO DUMPER

LITTLE BROTHER ELI

Those of you who break out in a rash at the mere thought of *Later... With Jools Holland* with its parade of overly-earnest, reverentially rootsy journeymen, look away now. We did. The premise of Cassington's Little Brother Eli should be vaguely intriguing, offering a mixture of classic blues and old skool hip hop, but the reality, sadly, fails to live up to anything close, instead sounding like the desperate contortions of people who want to capture the spirit of the Mississippi Delta but are actually Jamiroquai's kids brothers. Demo opener 'Animal Fair' is the old nursery rhyme rendered as an intense soul workout that just makes us think of a particularly cynical comedian poking fun at Sting's attempts at being Robert Johnson. And Jamiroquai. It's inadvisable to remind us of Jamiroquai, particularly when we've been drinking. Sorry, excuse us for a few minutes.... Right, we've had some gin and we're up for a fight. Which of yous fuckers mentioned Jamiroquai, eh? Moving on, Little Brother Eli get all 70s rock histrionic on us with 'Awkward Positions', essentially the ploddy bits of 'Stairway To Heaven' filtered through Chris Isaak's surf shimmer, but actually less fun than that sounds. Did it sound fun? We're trying to be enthusiastic, really we are, like harassed parents telling the kids just how much fun the local history museum will be when the kids wanted to go to the skate park but it's pissing it down. It's raining earnest endeavour in here, meanwhile. When they're up on stage with Mr Holland in front of a studio audience of chin-stroking *Q* readers Little Brother Eli can smugly reflect that Nightshift is probably sat at home wondering whether it can afford another bottle of value brand Pinot Noir but you know what, deep in our hearts, we'll still be right.

Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to nightshift@oxfordmusic.net, clearly marked Demos. IMPORTANT: no review without a contact address and phone number; no more than four tracks on a demo please. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo.

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