

# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month  
Issue 218  
September  
2013

Get the party started, it's...

# The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band

Oxford's hot jazz steppers talk witches,  
ice cream parlours and jazz riots.

Also in this issue:

**WILDERNESS** and **SUPERNORMAL**  
reviewed

Introducing **TRAPS**  
plus

Local music news, reviews, previews and  
four pages of gigs.

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# NEWS

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**WILD SWIM** preview songs from their forthcoming debut album at a show at **the North Wall** this month. The local electro-pop band are set to enter the studio with producer Steve Osborne throughout September but will be playing the one-off show at the Summertown arts centre on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>**.

Guitarist and keyboard player Jamie Jay spoke to Nightshift about the band's recent activities and plans: "We've been writing our debut album for the last two months and are going into the studio in early September to record with Steve. The writing period has given us the opportunity to experiment with different sounds and explore the widest range of our influences, from Jeff Buckley to Marcel Dettman. As a result the new material seems to be much more groovy than our previous offerings and (singer) Richard is discovering his inner James Brown. The North Wall show will be an opportunity for us to give the new tracks an outing for the first time, gauge audience reactions and Richard's even toying with the idea of a stage dive to mark the occasion. Fingers crossed. As for the future, we have our third single out in October and will be playing a string of shows to accompany that release as well."

The new album is pencilled in for an early 2014 release. Tickets for the North Wall gig are on sale now, priced £10, from [www.thenorthwall.org](http://www.thenorthwall.org). Kill Murray are support for the night.

**THE JERICHO TAVERN** is looking for bands for gigs on Fridays and Saturdays at the venue. In-house engineer Andy Nichol wants to hear from any local band looking for a show. Email him at [oxfordpahire@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:oxfordpahire@hotmail.co.uk)

**THE JAMES STREET TAVERN** hosts a free music and ale\* festival over the weekend of the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September. Fall Festival features sets from The Cellar Family, Bright Works, The Gees, The Dublings, Move Somethin' Soundsystem and Simon Batten on the Saturday, and Grudle Bay, Matt Sage, Hannah Bruce, Swindlestock, Huck, Aps Connolly and Ragdoll on the Sunday.

(\* - the music's free, the ale isn't, sadly)

**AETHARA** bow out with a headline set at Skeletor's monthly metal show at the O2 Academy this month. The band, who formed in 2010 and have consistently been described as one of the brightest young talents on the local metal scene, announced their split on their Facebook with the message, "We are sad to announce that after four years, we are calling time on Aethara. From day one, we aimed to write, record and perform the music that we all love, and we have made the unanimous decision that the best way to continue is to move on to new musical pastures. We would like to thank every promoter who has given us a show, every band we've shared the stage with, and everyone who has come to a gig or bought our music, and in doing so, made the last four years absolutely fucking brilliant".

The Skeletor show is on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September. Aethara are supported by Mask of Judas, Fleisch, Lest We Forget and Demask Thyself. Tickets are on sale from the Academy box office.

**ADAM BARNES**, Black Hats, Dance a la Plage, Deer Chicago, Sweet William, Toliesel, Empty White Circles, The Scholars, Listing Ships and Duchess are the first acts to be confirmed for this year's Oxjam Takeover. The annual city-wide festival, which raises money for Oxfam, takes place on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October, from 3pm to 3am, at The Cellar, The Wheatsheaf, Purple Turtle, Turl Street Kitchen, St Michael of the Northgate Church and New Road Baptist Church. Visit [www.oxjamoxford.co.uk](http://www.oxjamoxford.co.uk)

**YOU CAN NOW RELIVE THIS SUMMER'S CORNBURY FESTIVAL** in the comfort of your own home from this month with the release of 'Live At The Original Cornbury Music Festival 2013' album. The double album features 32 tracks recorded live at the event, including virtually ever act performing on the two main stages, from headliners Squeeze and Keane to local starlets Candy Says. Proceeds from the CD sales will go to Helen & Douglas House hospice. Visit [www.cornburyfestival.com](http://www.cornburyfestival.com) for more details.

**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 the best 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](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

Regularly updated local music news is available online at [www.musicinxford.co.uk](http://www.musicinxford.co.uk). The site also features interactive reviews, a gig guide, photo gallery and more.

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A quiet word with

# The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band



photo: Andrew Ogilvy

“I LOVE THIS RECORD. ‘Year of the Rabbit’ led to a few fallings out among the band whereas making ‘Party Seven’ has ruined friendships and even broken up marriages. It’s been a full-blooded album experience and it will outlast the best of us, even if it only becomes an object for our great-grandchildren to sneer at. Most importantly ‘Party Seven’ is exactly the record the band needed to make right now.”

**STUART MACBETH, SINGER,** pianist and party-starter-in-chief of The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band is explaining to Nightshift the turbulent story behind the making of his band’s second album, ‘Party Seven’. It’s coming up to four years since Nightshift first featured The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band on its front cover, and even longer ago that they tore up the Oxford Punt with their riotous hot jazz down at the Cellar, and a lot has changed in Rabbit Foot Land in that time. Some of those changes have involved fists. Most have, inevitably, involved some

kind of alcoholic beverage. But diplomatically Stuart is avoiding getting into too many gory details, preferring to stick to the purely musical side of the story. “We’ve had three personnel changes since we last featured in Nightshift,” explains Stuart, recalling those bits of the past few years he can remember, “Carlo’s come in on guitar and he’s a self-taught expert on both blues and gypsy music. We brought in Red on tenor sax, who is classically trained so that adds a whole other element. The most recent addition is Chuck Lloyd from Arizona on baritone sax. With Martin switching from trombone to trumpet we now have four incredible soloists on the front line. I’m not too sure about who’s gone or about any upheaval. Despite our reputation for retro mayhem we’re definitely a band who don’t look back.”

**OF COURSE, THE BIGGEST** change that’s happened to TORFSB since we first interviewed them is their popularity. Back in 2009 the seven-strong collective,

who even then had a slightly fluid line-up, were an emerging cult act on the local scene – Nightshift first encountered them at Klub Kakofanny at the Wheatshaf and was blown away by their distinctly wayward, party-hearty approach to classic hot jazz: New Orleans r’n’b, jazz and soul kicked out with ferocious punk spirit, spirits of another kind flowing freely among band members and audience alike. Since then they have gone on to regularly sell out The O2 Academy, with their now traditional Christmas parties a highly-anticipated highlight of the local gig calendar. They’ve also played at The Royal Albert Hall, The Royal Festival Hall and major festivals such as Camp Bestival and Glastonbury.

**WHILE THIS MONTH SEES** the release of their second album, the follow-up to 2011’s ‘Year Of The Rabbit’, it’s generally been their peerless live shows that have built their ever-growing reputation and following. Does Stuart think they’ll always be known more for your live shows than their albums?

“Our albums are a big hit with people who spend time with them. But overall I think we have a good balance. It will be interesting to see how it changes in future because for our *next* record we may go for a slower, more produced sound. If ‘Party Seven’ is a Saturday night record we want to make a Sunday morning record next. Our live show and album will no longer represent each other because there’s no way we’re going to start gigging on Sunday mornings as well.”

**MOVING ON TO ‘PARTY** Seven’ itself, early listens have already thrown up highlights to match any of the band’s old favourites. ‘Matassa’s Ice Cream Parlour’ for starters, a thoughtful story set against a wild swing backdrop. “Matassa’s Ice Cream Parlour is a little shop we saw boarded up on Margate seafront. Carlo’s surname is Matassa so it stuck in my mind. I admire these little run down places and the dignity of the people who struggle to keep them going. It reminds me of what it’s like being in this band. The references are

personal because most of the band come from Catholic immigrant backgrounds but that’s just a coincidence. We’re here to stay whether you like or not.” And there’s ‘King of the Swingers’ and ‘King of Wine’, lyrically more in keeping with TORFSB’s hard-partying reputation. Is there an autobiographical edge to those, or an element of wishful thinking? “I enjoy the imagery of opulence and grandeur on records like (Jay-Z and Kanye West’s) ‘Watch the Throne’ and with ‘King of Wine’ it amused me to take that braggadocio and apply it to little old England. Here it’s culturally misplaced and daft. Vauxhall Pleasure Garden was a stomping ground of Charles II and if we could afford to dress the entire band up as Charles II for a video believe me we would. ‘King of the Swingers’ is a response to anyone who has ever requested us play a song from *The Jungle Book*. Earlier this year we were threatened with violence for refusing to play ‘The Bare Necessities’ for a crowd of yokels in Northamptonshire. So next time you see me walking down the street with a pitchfork up my arse I’ll probably be whistling this song.” And then there’s the relatively more considered gypsy-flavoured ‘Eynsham Witches? Local folk tale or something more personal? “I get a big *Wicker Man* vibe from a lot of villages around Oxfordshire. I’d be highly surprised if there weren’t gangs of Witches hovering around the Co-Op in Eynsham. “Eynsham Witches” has proved hugely popular in Italy - although I wonder what the Italian people would make of our charming rural customs.”

**WHEN WE INTERVIEWED** Stuart and the rest of TORFSB back in 2009 they were just starting to become a bit of a cult hit on the local scene. Four years on they’re the biggest regular local crowd-pullers in Oxford. Did Stuart see that coming, and why does he think it’s happened? “We started getting sell-out crowds when we released ‘Year of the Rabbit’ and it’s thrilling that it hasn’t stopped since. I love playing here. My only regret is that we haven’t always been on absolutely top form, and I know it can be a struggle for brass players in particular to deal with the wall of sound onstage. The best thing is that where people once came sporadically we’ve noticed that

since the beginning of 2013 people who buy tickets are coming back to *every single show* we do.” There have been a fair few guest appearances from local luminaries at those shows, often from unexpected quarters: Juju from Candy Says, Asher Dust, Nick Kenny (Long Insiders), the Brickwork Lizards, Loz Colbert, Mr Shadown, and Vienna Ditto have all teamed up with the Rabbits along the way. “We like to do different stuff with every gig so we ask artist we like; Oxford happens to be full of them. So on one gig we might delve into gospel with Vienna Ditto, on the next we might collaborate with Shadown, improvising something brand new over a long-forgotten

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*“Next time you see me walking down the street with a pitchfork up my arse, I’ll probably be whistling ‘King of the Swingers”*

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Music Hall showstopper. Within the last couple of months the real revelation has been Chukie from BG Records whose voice cuts through so clearly on the mic that it defies technology. It shouldn’t work but, oh God yes, it does.” For want of a better word, you were quite a novelty on the local gig scene in the early days; how hard is it to keep that sense of novelty going over such a long period? “The novelty only dies when you keep playing the same stuff over and over again. If we were still doing the same material we did in 2009 we’d be long gone by now.” Back then the mainstream local jazz scene wouldn’t touch you with a bargepole and labelled you chav-jazz; have those people embraced you any better than they originally failed to now you’re so popular? “Absolutely not, they’re petrified. A well-known jazz musician heard a recording of our song ‘I’m The Taxidermy Man’ and thought he was listening to The Cure: how wide of the mark can you get? To give them credit we’re really a loud rhythm and blues band with a brass section blowing Dixieland over the top. It’s a hybrid of styles – beat music. I like the eerie, gutsy side of early blues and jazz recordings, what used to be crudely labelled together as Race Music. I have a strong emotional reaction to it which rarely involves the snapping of fingers or the tapping of toes.” Back then we also talked about the difficulty for fans wanting to

discover good old-school hot jazz to buy readily-available sounds. Have things improved? “I really think it is easier. Locally both Rapture and Truck Store have a nice selection, and great staff ,and I frequently see good stuff on sale in Gloucester Green market on Thursday mornings. So all is not lost.”

**THE RISE AND RISE OF THE** Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band hasn’t, of course, been confined to their hometown scene. In recent times they’ve played the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall and played Camp Bestival last month. What sort of reaction have they had from non-Oxford gig-goers and critics?

“We get a great response everywhere, although Oxford and the south west are more in tune to the idea of pogoing to our music. People have gone nuts for us on the festival circuit this summer. We also play a lot of these vintage events and those are quite interesting. Most groups with similar line ups to us try to replicate the sounds of a bygone era. But that’s just not what this band is about. I don’t know what *we are* about but that’s our starting point, it’s definitely not our destination. The audiences at those festivals might be expecting a Glenn Miller cover band and when we jump on stage banging out a song like ‘Nancy Mitford Disco’ it’s going to be fucking loud and if you don’t like it... you’d better run.”

**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT** Foot Spasm Band has always had a reputation for enjoying themselves and “relaxing” as much, if not more, than the audience. It’s always been a big part of the show and the band’s appeal. Is that a hard act to keep up, on and off stage? “We have a terrible reputation, don’t we? For a long time the band thrived on the image of the old, drunk jazzman but it’s become artistically redundant. The level of musicianship in the band is so high now that we don’t need a crutch to hide behind. Whether we’re actually drunk or not is entirely up to you but the more

people who gossip about us the better. You’ll know if we all give up drinking because the economy will collapse.” Stuart may be coy about his band’s drinking habits, but that reputation was hardly hindered earlier this year when they launched their own line of cider earlier this year. Was that just limited run? How’s it gone down (literally and figuratively)? “It’s gone down very well. We felt the band needed to release something and the album wasn’t going to ready in time so we made an agreement with the Cotswold Cider Company to launch our own brand of cider. Not surprisingly we’ve sold more cider in the last six months than we’ve sold records in the past two years. It would be embarrassing if it hadn’t funded the recording of ‘Party Seven’. I think cider is in keeping with the *Wicker Man* otherworldly feel of the songs like ‘Eynsham Witches’ and there will be another batch coming out next year. I won’t know when until the apples start falling off the trees, it’s that’s kind of deal.”

**STUART’S PARTING SHOT IN** that first interview was to claim that Oxford has never had its own jazz riot and the band were here to rectify that. Looking back, has Oxford had its jazz riot now, courtesy of the Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band? “We’re still capable of starting a jazz riot but it’s going to be a jazz riot on our terms – one that involves no lengthy double bass solos and if you click your fingers we’ll shoot you.” So, given all that’s happened, still continues to happen and will hopefully carry on happening on stages in Oxford and beyond for many more years to come, will the Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band be the death of you? “Yes, probably. It nearly has on two occasions. But there’s plenty of life in us yet. As long as there are dives to play we’ll be there. I pledged long ago that if the entire band quit I’ll round things off with a French revolutionary skiffle album. I think the guys have enough love for our audience not to subject them to that.”

*‘Party Seven’ is out this month on Jump Steady Records. The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band play Oxford Prison on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Visit [www.facebook.com/rabbitfootspasmband](http://www.facebook.com/rabbitfootspasmband) for more news and gig dates.*



# RELEASED

## HEADCOUNT

### ‘Lullabies For Dogs’

(Malicious Damage)

Often viewed as not being entirely serious, due to their live shows – in particular the razor-sharp wit of vocalist/guitarist Rob Moss cutting hecklers down to size – Headcount’s albums are a different beast altogether.

No time for self-deprecation or knob-gags here; Moss’s rage is far more focused and serious when it’s contained within the band’s songs. Everything annoys Headcount apparently, but rather than waste time concentrating on the piffling stuff like speed bumps or self-service tills at the supermarket like a bunch of Grumpy Old Men, they’re looking at the bigger picture on ‘Lullabies For Dogs’.

‘News Corpse’ takes aim at the main players in the Leveson Inquiry. ‘Greed’, meanwhile, gets all biblical about, well, greed: “You take the stars out of the sky and leave the world in darkness / You walk a path through burning coals to lead the lamb to slaughter,” sings Moss, envisaging the world as a temple turned into a den of thieves.

Sticking with the religious theme is the utterly raucous ‘Heaven Help Us All’, a finely polished chunk of punk anger. That punk side is well represented across the album (the white hot fizz of ‘Tortured Tongue’ in particular); it’s an art they’ve perfected across the years, but perhaps the finest moments are to be found when they take a slightly different approach. ‘Liar’, the heavily-processed opener, could quite easily have been plucked from Ministry’s back catalogue (circa ‘Land Of Rape And Honey’). ‘Black Dog Days’, meanwhile, steps away from political targets and explores the nature of



depression and mental illness. That it’s the most accessible song on the album is surprising given the nature of its subject matter, but the chorus is shot through with a pop *nous* that the band has long flirted with, but never given into fully. Punk they might be, but when they embrace melody it really sets them apart. Similarly putting melody before bluster is ‘Cross The Line’, which smoulders nicely, and throws post-punk riffs into the mix along with a chorus apparently appropriated from Sisters Of Mercy’s ‘Detonation Boulevard’.

Headcount have always been masters of their craft, but ‘Lullabies For Dogs’ sees them making a considerable step forward in terms of composition and nuance. Surely now is the time for them to make an impression, not just in Oxford but further afield. After all, every dog deserves its day.

**Sam Shepherd**



## PAUL BRENNAN

### ‘No One Remembers

### Your Name’

(Own label)

Having charmed us with a couple of elegantly lovelorn demos in the past year, Paul Brennan releases his first full EP, his slightly woozy, boozy lack of luck with the ladies showing no sign of letting up any time soon.

While he treads very similar ground to plenty of

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## CRAYON

### ‘Seconds Are Hours’

(Own label)

A name that’s become a familiar fixture in local gig guides for a few years now, Crayon release their debut album with little fanfare but possessed of some style musically.

‘Seconds Are Hours’ sounds like a band who’ve done the hard work, honing their sound with regular gigging, the whole album constructed and produced to a tee, as if it had come straight out of a major label. This is both its strength and weakness. On the one hand there’s little hear to suggest Crayon couldn’t compete with any number of label-backed big guns, and exposed to a wider audience they’d easily gather a substantial following. Singer Robin Moffatt in particular has a winningly pure voice – slightly lispy but featherlight and limpid, occasionally similar to Belle & Sebastian’s Stuart Murdoch, once in a while reminiscent of Mike Scott, while lyrically he has an unforced way with a simple, romantic outlook that’s hardly groundbreaking but presses the right buttons. Musically Crayon are faultless to a fault:

everything is pin-tight and tastefully put together, from the soaring middle-distance stadium guitar wanderings to the underplayed funky shuffle of the likes of ‘Argue With Myself’. Songs like ‘Science In Me’ manoeuvre from intimate acoustic beginnings to epic crescendos without completely going off on one.

But amid all this, you sense there’s a band struggling to find its own identity. Are Crayon the awkward post-Radiohead shimmer and twinkle of the album’s title track, or the overly burnished 70s soft rock of ‘Barren Skies’? The succinct ‘Recognition’ makes its point and leaves, while further in ‘On The Fold’, among others, sprawl out near the six-minute mark, lacking the depth to stand such exposure. Such a lack of brevity bears out the album’s title, making the album seems far more hard work than it should be, and it’s a struggle to reach closer ‘Haunted’, a track that’s worth the effort as it keeps things simple, ending the journey on a reflective Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young trip.

Ultimately, by giving us more, Crayon leave us taking less with us once the album’s over. Cut these nine tracks down to four or five and you’d remember the best bits far more clearly.

**Dale Kattack**



## THE OTHER DRAMAS

### ‘Noisy Star EP’

(Big Red Sky)

Nice, pleasant and inoffensive are desirable attributes in workmates or pet dogs, but we’re still not convinced any of those descriptions should be something to strive for when making music, even beyond the realms of industrial death metal.



## SWINDLESTOCK

### ‘Pilgrim Blues’

(Own label)

Last month found us bemoaning the lack of grit and gumption in King B’s feelgood blues. Swindlestock



## THE TROPHY CABINET

### ‘Gliding’

(Own label)

With Trophy Wife no more, the podium is now free

The Other Dramas are a duo made up of local scene veterans Maria Ilett and Richie Wildsmith, who between them have produced plenty of quality tunes over the years, but this new EP seems to lack much of the character you’d hope the pair had acquired over that time.

Title track ‘Noisy Star’ is wistful and sprightly, Maria’s voice dancing lightly over unobtrusive folksy jangle pop, not a million miles away from Feist or Edie Brickell, but ‘Last Forever’ feels tethered by a lack of gumption, a plod rather than a skip. ‘Gonna Break My Heart’ finds Maria in surprisingly fluffy mood given the subject matter, as if such emotional trauma is nothing to worry about as long as there are enough low-calorie chocolate dessert pots in the fridge, though the swaying horn finale adds a pleasing sense of woozy euphoria to the affair. Best of the four songs here though is the simple, acoustic ‘My Mermaid Song’, a more temperate take on Laima Bite’s reflective soul-bearing. It points to a greater emotional depth, one lacking elsewhere here. As we say, there’s nothing in these four songs that’s unpleasant and it’s not so twee that it ever grates, but while being nice will make sure you stay out of trouble for the most part, it equally fails to stir any great passion.

**Dale Kattack**

here go some way to redressing the balance on a local level with a five-song EP that feel like it’s at least got a bit of dirt under its fingernails.

Known as much for their folky Americana, this is Swindlestock in full-on blues-rock mode, singer Dava Waterhouse possessed of the classic gravelly tones of Muddy Waters and those big ol’ growly bears of blues, Albert and BB King. He’s joined more often than not by co-vocalist Fern Thornton, adding a lighter, almost country edge, notably on EP highlight ‘Hard Cash’, a free-roaming harmonica dragging the whole thing into authentic Chicago blues territory. ‘Hard Travelling Man’ is more laidback, both singers again working well off each other, and if the almost conversational ‘Be Longin’ Blues’ feels a bit stilted – saved by some sweet slide guitar – ‘Exiled Man Blues’ feels like the real deal.

In fact, when it comes to traditional blues, you wonder what, if anything, new can be added to a well-stirred pot, and short of adding potentially incompatible new ingredients, the best you can do is sound as much like you come from the right place as possible. In that, Swindlestock succeed.

**Ian Chesterton**

for just the one band with Trophy in their name to take the stage in Oxford and the band’s new single ‘Gliding’ recalls The Go-Betweens at their most plaintive – fittingly, given that all proceeds from this two track CD will find their way to a range of charities, including Sobell House Hospice.

In this, the track and its counterpart ‘High Stakes’ plough the same furrow as earlier single ‘Rant’, while the whole enterprise is part of a joint venture with photographer Rankin, purveyor of the exhibition *ALIVE: In The Face Of Death*, currently showing at Liverpool’s innovative Walker Art Gallery. James Fewtrell’s vocals stick to the Robert Forster blueprint throughout and he’s joined, as the title track progresses, by Liz Miller, whose mandolin adds to a slowly building atmosphere of lushness and who perhaps could have been handed the microphone a little earlier. You can see why David Gedge once felt moved enough to offer the band supporting slot, although they may have been a better fit for Cinerama than the ‘Bizarro’ tour they ended up on.

**Robert Langham**



## YELLOW FEVER

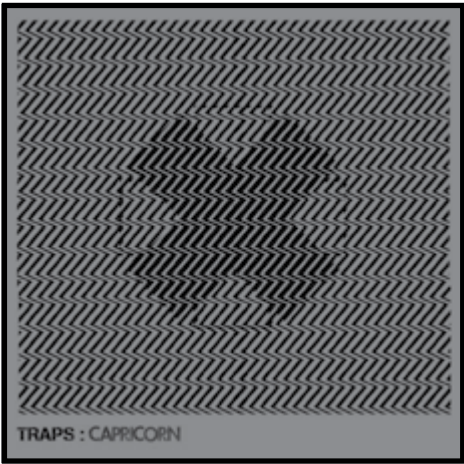
### ‘Wax’ / ‘Hooks For Hands’

(Own label)

Yellow Fever hit pop central with this new single, the opening bars of ‘Wax’ promising something akin to Rick Astley’s ‘Never Gonna Give You Up’ before Dele Adewuyi’s vocals come in, matching the trebly guitar trill for nervous energy and the whole thing sounds like a cut from Paul Simon’s ‘Gracelands’ if it had been fuelled entirely by caffeine and an overwhelming sense of nervous tension. Comparisons to Foals will continue to abound, but with ‘Wax’ Yellow Fever have taken their Afro-pop tendencies into lighter, poppier terrain.

‘Hooks For Hands’ can’t match that opening surge of youthful zest, a more considered piece musically with the vocals blokey, almost conversational, only the playful guitar arpeggios suggesting Yellow Fever’s normal fleetness of foot hasn’t deserted them.

**Dale Kattack**



## TRAPS

### ‘Capricorn’

(Own label)

More soulful power-rocking from Traps here, with their second single, the follow-up to last year’s ‘I Won’t Crawl’. ‘Capricorn’ is a good move on from that, singer’s Lex’s vocals still very much leading the line but no longer carrying the song all by herself, a rugged, slightly serrated post-grunge slab of stadium-friendly rockaboogie that owes a bit to Placebo but, fronted by such a powerhouse performance, sounds like it was built to soundtrack an action scene from one of the *Twilight* movies.

**Dale Kattack**



# G I G G U I D E

**SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’s Farm, Kingham** – The second day of Alex James and Jamie Oliver’s music and food extravaganza, today featuring a headline set from soft lad rockers The Feeling, plus Scottish hitmaker and BRIT winner KT Tunstall, Take That chap Mark Owen, Havana party band The Cuban Brothers, Dexy’s and Style Council-inspired soul crew The Milk and, best of all, CBeebies’ Justin Fletcher, bringing a little bit of Mr Tumble magic to the party.

**MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**THE HOAX + THE KRISSY MATTHEWS BAND: The Bullingdon** – Devize’s blues-rock favourites reform, after disbanding in 1999, to play a handful of European dates, including this Haven Club show. With a reputation for high-energy, volume-heavy blues, they drew admiring comparisons with The Yardbirds, John Mayall’s Blues Breakers and the Rolling Stones as they toured the world in the 1990s and this reunion tour is sure to sell out. They’re joined

*Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>*  
**CAITLIN ROSE: The Bullingdon**  
Being labelled the future of country music at the tender age of 23 doesn’t seem to have weighed Nashville’s Caitlin Rose down too much. Three years after her precocious debut album ‘Own Side Now’ drew admiring comparisons to country titans like Tammy Wynette and Loretta Lynn, she’s followed it up with the more polished but more accomplished ‘The Stand In’, doubtless set to feature in myriad end-of-year Top 20s. Her rich, earthy voice, accompanied by pedal steel, Wurlitzer organ, slide guitar and strings, injects melancholic songs with warmth and wistful humour; in her hands the forlorn becomes uplifting and all her romantic woes feel survivable where others might wallow and drown. Of course, Caitlin has songwriting in her blood, her mum having penned many of Taylor Swift’s hits, but she’s a far brighter talent and less prone to mawkish cliché than her far more successful counterpart, a worthy young heir to Lucinda Williams or Stevie Nicks.



**SEPTEMBER**  
by Bicester’s bright young blues chap Krissy Matthews.  
**3<sup>RD</sup> DEGREE LEBURN: The Jericho Tavern** – Soulful, funky blues from the Californian guitarist at tonight’s Famous Monday Blues show.

**TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Jazz guitarist Hugh Turner and band perform live at the Bully’s weekly jazz club, preceded by two hours of live Spanish-flavoured music.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The White Rabbit**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**CAITLIN ROSE: The Bullingdon** – Big-hearted country and Americana from the Nashville songstress – *see main preview*  
**EXQUISITE CORPSE: The Old Fire Station** – Minimalist drones and musical fragments from Oxford Improvisers.

**JAZZ SESSION & JAM: James Street Tavern**  
**ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil’s, Witney**

**THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**MERCHANDISE: The Jericho Tavern** – Post-punk reverb a-go-go – *see main preview*  
**LET’S TALK DAGGERS + VERA GRACE + SEXWOLF! + I CRIED WOLF: The Wheatsheaf** – Rampant math-rock, grunge and hardcore noise from Eastbourne’s Let’s Talk Daggers, with excellent support from Witney’s virulent metalcore tigers Vera Grace and Birmingham’s militant hardcore warriors Sexwolf!  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf** – Free unplugged set from the veteran local swamp-blues faves.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more every Thursday at Oxford’s longest running and best open mic club.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston**  
**FUNK BAKE: James Street Tavern**

**FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**SLAM CARTEL + LIBERTY LIES + OVERLORD + MOTHERLOAD: O2 Academy** – Growly, blues-tinged hard rocking from London’s Slam Cartel, drawing a line between Guns’n’Roses, Nirvana and Soundgarden on their album ‘Handful of Dreams’.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE GOGGENHEIM + AGNESS PIKE + DALLAS DON’T: The Wheatsheaf** – Top-

notch triple bill at this month’s always eclectic Klub Kak, with psychedelic-disco-jazz-punk-pop crazies The Goggenheim headlining. They’re joined by theatrical Hammer Horror thrash merchants Agness Pike and spiky Pixies and Sonic Youth-inspired indie rockers Dallas Don’t.  
**ECHO BOOMER: Truck Store (6pm)** – EP launch show from the local electro-indie rockers.  
**SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar** – Rising north London six-piece General Roots are the star turn at tonight’s Skylarkin club night with a fusion of dancehall, reggae and lovers rock, having previously toured with Laid Blak and Gentlemen’s Dub Club.  
**ULTIMATE BEATLES: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Beatles tribute.  
**JUICE: The Bullingdon** – House club night with OX105 and Elements of House DJs.  
**TONY BATEY: James Street Tavern** – Live blues.  
**SANCTUM: Varsity Club** – Metal club night with heavy, heavy sounds from across the metal spectrum.

**SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**WILD SWIM: The North Wall, Summertown** – The local electro-pop rising stars showcase songs from their forthcoming debut album ahead of going into the studio, the band updating the rarefied 80s sounds of Japan and The Associates via Wild Beasts and a world of electronic soundscapism.

**THESE ARE OUR DEMANDS + TRAPS + SWINDLESTOCK + STEM + MARK COPE: The Cellar** – Rough-hewn hardcore-informed rockabilly from These Are Our Demands, plus grungy power-pop from Traps, blues-rock and Americana from Swindlestock, trippy electro from Stem and lachrymose acoustic balladry from Mark Cope. Followed by techno, bass and house club night Extra-Curricular.  
**THE CELLAR FAMILY + X-1 + AGNESS PIKE: The Port Mahon** – Virulent hardcore punk fuelled by misanthropic disgust from the mighty Cellar Family, joined tonight by serrated hardcore tigers X-1 and campily insane thrash metallers Agness Pike.  
**HUCK + STUART CLARK & SARAH LUCAS + TAMARA + REICHENBACH FALLS: Modern Art Oxford** – Pindrop Performance night with bluesman, poet and storyteller Huck performing songs from his ‘Alexander the Great’ folk opera. He’s joined by virtuoso folk guitarist Stuart Clark, playing with singer Sarah Lucas; soul-bearing gothic torch singer Tamara, and Americana/folk collective Reichenbach Falls.  
**PETER PAN SPEEDROCK + DESERT STORM + BLASTED + DEAR TRAP: The Wheatsheaf** – Montrous, no-nonsense speedcore from Eindhoven’s PPSR at tonight’s Buried In Smoke show,in a similarly blasted vein to

Winnebago Deal, Mondo Generator and Rocket From The Crypt. Mighty stoner-blues rocking support from Desert Storm and raw, grungy punk rockers Bear Trap.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX + OXFORD UKULELES: James Street Tavern** – Swamp blues and funky psychedelia from The Mighty Redox, alongside the local ukulele mini-orchestra.  
**PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM DJs: O2 Academy** – Thee-clubs-in-one night with indie hits at Propaganda; kitsch pop, glam and 80s at Trashy, and dancefloor faves from Jack FM DJs.  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar** – Weekly house, techno and bass club night.  
**REPLICA: Fat Lil’s, Witney**  
**HOPE & GLORY: Highfield Social Club, Bicester** – Madness, Specials, The Beat and Bad Manners from the local Two-Tone tribute faves.

**SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON LEOPARD + BLIN’ JONNIE DUO + DANNY KAYE + CELESTE: Donnington Community Centre (6pm)** – The Donnington Community Centre hosts its monthly early evening of free acoustic music, with bluesman Beard of Destiny and Jeremy Hughes’ Moon Leopard.

**MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**MORELAND & ARBUCKLE: The Jericho Tavern** – Raw, gritty Delta-style blues and electric blues-rock from Kansas duo Aaron Moreland (guitar) and Dustin Arbuckle (vocals and blues harp), out on a UK tour to promote their fifth album, ‘7 Cities’.

**TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Funky live jazz from The New Jazz Collective.  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth, industrial, cyber-punk, darkwave and ebm club night.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The White Rabbit**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**DROPOUT + GAG REFLEX: The Wheatsheaf** – Moshka club night with epic goth rockers Dropout and spindly, spiky lo-fi hardcore from Gag Reflex.  
**ADINA & JOHNSON: James Street Tavern** – Piano blues and boogie woogie.  
**FREERANGE: The Cellar** – Drum&bass, hip hop and dubstep club night.

**THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**SUPERFOOD: The Bullingdon** – Psychedelic pop and baggy revivalism from Birmingham’s Superfood, out on their biggest UK tour to date, having previously supported Peace on tour, showing off influences from Oasis and Blur to Happy Mondays.  
**LES CLOCHARDS + BAND OF HOPE: The Marsh Harrier, Temple Cowley** – Francophile rock’n’roll from Les Clochards, like Roy Orbison transported to a café on The Left Bank, plus uplifting folk-pop vibes from Band Of Hope.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free unplugged show from veteran bluesman Pete Fryer, still going strong after 50 years on the local gig scene.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston**  
**THE HUMM: James Street Tavern** – Rock covers.

**FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**BABYSHAMBLES: O2 Academy** – Pete Doherty returns to Blighty and to live action after decamping to Paris to escape all the tabloid attention a while back and chance his arm at acting. Controversy and calamity have dogged Doherty since his earliest days in The Libertines, and we’ll not go over each and every sordid episode again here, but at his best he can certainly pen a decent tune, existing in the lineage of quintessentially English songwriters like Ray Davies, Paul Weller and Difford and Tilbrook. And no amount of dirt is going to stop his fanatical followers from worshipping at his musical altar.  
**BLOODSHOT DAWN + BLACK SKIES BURN + GOTSU-TOTSU-KOTSU: The Wheatsheaf** – Ferociously technical death-thrash from Hampshire’s Bloodshot Dawn, alongside local deathcore warriors Black Skies Burn.  
**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Dancefloor Latin, Balkan beats, World grooves and nu-jazz.  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: Jolly Postboys**  
**BLURD vs OASIS UK: Fat Lil’s, Witney**  
**THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: The Evenlode, Eynsham** – First of half a dozen gigs around the county this month from the rockabilly and blues outfit.  
**TRAMP AVIATORS: James Street Tavern**  
**90s NIGHT: The Bullingdon** – 90s club classics.

**SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**JANET DEVLIN: O2 Academy** – Another former-*X-Factor* also-ran passes through town, 2011 contender Devlin briefly considered credible and alternative for being a fan of Red Hot Chili Peppers and covering Snow Patrol and Guns’n’Roses, which just goes to show how meaningless the word alternative has become in musical terms. Why is there never a grindcore round on *X-Factor*? Or a Throbbing Gristle round?  
**YELLOW FEVER: The Wheatsheaf** – Afro-pop-flavoured indie rocking from the local faves, launching their new single, ‘Wax’.  
**FLIGHTS OF HELIOS: Ovada** – EP launch gig for the local psychedelic soundscapists.  
**PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM DJs: O2 Academy**  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar**  
**FALL FESTIVAL: James Street Tavern** – Two-day music and ale festival, today featuring sets from The Gees, The Cellar Family, Bright Works, The Dublings, Move Somethin’ Soundsystem, Ed Man Band and Simon Batten.  
**BINSEY VILLAGE FETE: Binsey** – Live music from The Epstein, The Gees, Count Drachma, Nick Cope and Ags Connolly at the village fete.  
**LITTLE BLACK DRESS: The Bullingdon**  
**RIVERFOLK: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood** – An evening of folk, roots and Americana with sets from Chalice, Mark



*Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>*  
**MERCHANDISE: The Jericho Tavern**  
While later in the month you can see The 1975, a band heralded in deluded quarters as the future of guitar music and who sound like they should really be named The 1985, tonight sees a band far less likely to sell those elusive multi-millions but who are far more deserving of the plaudits and stadium tour tickets. Hailing from Tampa, Florida, Merchandise’s name alone is meant as a two-fingered salute to musical commercialism. Their early gigs saw them compared to Black Flag and attracted a hardcore audience, but they’ve long since left that behind, their most recent outing, the ‘Totale Night’ EP is a raw, dark, dissonant rumble of post-punk noise, early-indie rambling and lots of reverb. LOTS of reverb. At their best, and fronted by the poetically dour Carson Cox, they come across as a cross between Suicide, Crazy Horse and Morrissey. Hollowed-out drums and fractured, dissonant melodies bear out the band’s stated love for jazz and dub, but Merchandise are very much in the spirit, and sound, of indie’s first flowering.

Pidgeon, David Menday and Braham Levy.  
**IAN MILLER & DOMINIC SPENCER: Sandford Village Hall** – The Jazz in the Village tour stops off in Sandford.  
**MILLION FACES: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Stadium-sized rocking from the local hopefuls.  
**JOE McCANN + JOHN KESTON-HOLE: Florence Park Community Centre**  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Red Lion, Eynsham**

**SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**FALL FESTIVAL: James Street Tavern** – Second day of the free music and ale fest, with Grudle Bay, Matt Sage, Hannah Bruce, Swindlestock, Huck, Ags Connolly, Ragdoll and poet George Chopping.  
**GLENDIA HUISH + THE RIGHT HOOKS + THE FIREGAZERS + MOON LEOPARD + LES CLOCHARDS: The Wheatsheaf (2.30-7pm)** – Klub Kakofanney host their monthly afternoon acoustic session downstairs at the Sheaf.

**MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE LAURA HOLLAND BAND: The Jericho Tavern** – The rising London blues singer updates obscure classics from the likes of Ray Charles, Etta James, Little Milton and Elmore James at tonight’s Famous Monday Blues.

**SCANDINAVIAN FOLK SESSION:** **James Street Tavern** – Viking drinking songs, mead and blood spillage.

**TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**JAZZ CLUB:** **The Bullingdon**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** **The White Rabbit**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** **James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**IN ZANADU:** **The Jericho Tavern** – Rock, blues and funk from the Banbury band.  
**SPARKY’S JAM NIGHT:** **James Street Tavern** – Open jam night.

**THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**CATFISH & THE BOTTLEMEN:** **O2 Academy** – Llandudno’s rockers return to the O2 after their show in May, sounding like a cross between Arctic Monkeys and The Kooks.  
**TIM WHITEHEAD & THE SPIN TRIO:** **The Wheatsheaf** – The Spin jazz club welcomes tenor sax player Tim Whitehead alongside the in-house band.  
**THE BEN MOWART STRING PROJECT + TREV WILLIAMS:** **James Street Tavern**  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** **East Oxford Community Centre**

*Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>*  
**JAMES BLAKE:**  
**O2 Academy**  
Few singers could cover Joni Mitchell and Feist while sounding like they’d comfortably fit into Massive Attack’s tripped-out electronic world and sound so natural as James Blake, but it’s a trick he’s pulled off with unstinting panache since he moved away from dubstep production to become a sorrowful soul singer, runner-up in the BBC’s Sound of 2011 poll and shortlisted for the Mercury Prize with his eponymous debut album. Really, he’s just lovely, isn’t he? Possessed, like John Grant, of a voice you could just melt into, a plaintive, quavering falsetto that captures and holds onto every ounce of melancholy on the breeze. Seriously, the man makes The xx sound like Bruno Mars at times in the desolation stakes. Anyway, back recently with his second album, ‘Overgrown’, it features guest turns by RZA and Brian Eno and is set to be the sombre soundtrack to the end of summer for swathes of the population, tonight’s already sold-out show evidence that genuine emotional depth and musical innovation aren’t always mutually exclusive with commercial success.



**FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE BIG TEN INCH:** **The Cellar** – Classic rock’n’roll, jump blues and more with Count Skylarkin and DJ Lil Pearl, plus live sets from Hipbone Slim and Crowntoppers.  
**DAMN VANDALS + THE MILLER TEST + MARK COPE:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Dark-hued post-punk and rockabilly from fast-rising rockers Damn Vandals, out on tour to promote debut album ‘Done For Desire’.  
**ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Jimi Hendrix tribute.  
**HOWLIN’ TAIL DRAGGERS:** **James Street Tavern**

**SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**THE HAWKHURST + BLACK FEATHERS + NICOLA BROWN:** **The Cellar** – Rootsy folk-rock from The Hawkhurst.  
**BRICKWORK LIZARDS + THE NEW FORBIDDEN + CLARK WISEMAN:** **St John the Evangelist** – Self-styled Tur kobilly fusionistas Brickwork Lizards meld elements of Arabic and Balkan folk music with jazz, hip hop and rockabilly in the elaborate environs of St John the Evangelist, joined by Lloyd Grossman’s New Forbidden.  
**MUNDANE SANDS:** **James Street Tavern** – Folk-rock somewhere between The Oysterband and Mark Knopfler from Mundane Sands.  
**HOPE & GLORY:** **The Angel, Bicester**  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND:** **The Standard, Headington**  
**PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + JACK FM DJs:** **O2 Academy**  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR:** **The Cellar**  
**EVOLUTION:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney**

**SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**JAMES BLAKE:** **O2 Academy** – Tripped-out, dubstepped-up heartache balladry from the angel-voiced harbinger of sorrow – *see main preview*  
**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + MEGAN HENWOOD:** **Oxford Prison D Wing, Oxford Castle** – Album launch gig for the local hot jazz heroes – *see main interview feature*  
**EMPTY WHITE CIRCLES:** **Truck Store (5pm)** – Instore show from the local indie-folksters.  
**KILL MURRAY + THE SEA THE SEA + FREADA:** **The Old Fire Station**  
**THE MIGHTY CADILLACS:** **Eagle Vaults, Witney**

**MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**SWIM DEEP:** **O2 Academy** – Digbeth’s rising indie starlets follow up supports to Mystery Jets and Two-Door Cinema Club with a headline tour to coincide with debut album ‘Where The Heaven Are We’, sharing musical space with near neighbours Peace, JAWS and Superfood in their love for classic indie sounds, particularly The Stone Roses.  
**KING MO:** **The Bullingdon** – Haven Club night with the Netherlands’ soulful blues rockers, warming up for their 100 Club show  
**THE KEITH THOMPSON BAND:** **The Jericho Tavern** – Texan, Delta and Chicago blues styles from the British r’n’b veteran at



*Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>*  
**THE 1975:**  
**O2 Academy**  
Manchester’s The 1975 were apparently named after a book that singer Matthew Healy found while on holiday in Majorca, but in reality they’d have been better off calling themselves 1985, such is their harking back to that benighted era for pop music. While there’s been talk in some quarters of the band being saviours of guitar music (and who’d want that particularly poisoned chalice?), they sound an awful lot like they’ve taken Foals’ white-boy funk edge and driven it round to Deacon Blue’s house for a jam and a nice cup of tea, possibly stopping off at Simple Minds’ pad to borrow some epic drum tracks on the way. Add in Healy’s adenoidal lack of vocal range and you’re getting suspiciously close to The Wanted or The Script at times, and even we’re loathe to start bandying those sort of comparisons around without a lawyer present. Still, what do we know, tonight’s show is already sold out, the band’s forthcoming debut album is set to sell thousands, if not millions, and their shows so far have apparently displayed stadium-sized ambitions. So off you all toddle and enjoy yourselves; we’ll just stay in for the night and crank Deafheaven’s album up to illegal volume, and we’ll all be happy in our separate little worlds.

tonight’s Famous Monday Blues.  
**JAMES FOLEY:** **James Street Tavern**  
**ADAM WALDMANN:** **Pizza Express, Golden Cross** – New weekly Spires Jazz Sessions.

**TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**1975:** **O2 Academy** – Hark! Tis the new Deacon Blue! Come to save us! – *see main preview*  
**LIAM FRAY:** **O2 Academy** – Solo acoustic tour for the Courteeners frontman.  
**JAZZ CLUB:** **The Bullingdon**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** **The White Rabbit**

**WEDNESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**MADINA LAKE + FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS + SUPER HAPPY FUN CLUB:** **O2 Academy** – Farewell tour for Chicago’s post-hardcore crew Madina Lake.  
**ALL TAMARA’S PARTIES:** **The Library** – Tamara & the Martyrs host their regular live music club night as they build up to the release of their debut album in December. There’s emotionally-turbulent gothic folk-pop from the hosts, who are joined by Candy Says singer Juju Sophie and darkly-inclined local songstress Bethany Weimers.

**FREERANGE:** **The Cellar**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** **The Fir Tree** – Trevor Williams plays at the open mic club.

**THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE YOUNGER:** **O2 Academy** – Oh for fuck’s sake, is there no end to these boy bands posing as serious rockers? The Script were several steps too far down the road to eternal damnation; this wretched lot are the effluent flowing down the gutter of that hellish highway. Yes they bloody are.  
**MELANIE PAIN:** **The Jericho Tavern** – Retro pop, electronica and *chanson* from Parisian singer Melanie, the voice of Nouvelle Vague for a while, and now out on tour to promote her second solo album, ‘Bye Bye Manchester’.  
**WHEATUS:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – New York’s quirky alt.rockers make a low-key appearance at Fat Lil’s, bringing hit single ‘Teenage Dirtbag’ to the party along with songs from their new ‘Valentine’ album.  
**HUCK & THE XANDER BAND:** **James Street Tavern** – Bluesman Huck performs songs from his pop opera ‘Alexander the Great’.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** **East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** **The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM:** **The Jack Russell, Marston**

**FRIDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN + SUPERLOOSE + ADY DAVEY:** **The Bullingdon** – Blues and Americana.  
**THE ELO EXPERIENCE:** **The New Theatre** – ELO tribute.

**MIKE DIGNAM:** **O2 Academy** – Polished acoustic pop from the Preston singer-songwriter who’s previously provided tour support for Gabrielle Aplin, Elliot Minor, Roachford and most recently Lewis Watson.  
**SWINDLESTOCK:** **Truck Store (6pm)** – Instore show from the local blues-rock/ Americana outfit, launching their new ‘Pilgrim Blues’ EP.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX:** **The Wheatsheaf**  
**DEEP COVER:** **The Cellar** – Hip hop night.  
**HEAVY DEXTERS:** **James Street Tavern** – Live blues.  
**TREVOR WILLIAMS:** **The Magic Café (1pm)**  
**90s NIGHT:** **The Bullingdon**

**SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**AETHARA + MASK OF JUDAS + FLEISCH + LEST WE FORGET + DEMASK THYSELF:** **O2 Academy** – Skeletor’s monthly metal extravaganza plays host to Aethara’s farewell show, the local metalcore, thrash and death-metal favourites bowing out after four years on the Oxford scene. They’re joined by Chichester’s prog-metallars Mask of Judas, local industrial rockers Fleisch, coming in somewhere between Marilyn Manson and Rammstein, and metalcore crew Lest We Forget, mixing up elements of As I Lay Dying, Trivium and Bullet For My Valentine.  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with THE SCHOLARS + THE PUSH + MILLION FACES:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Characteristically eclectic mixed bag of sounds at this month’s GTI, with Banbury’s grandiose, stadium-sized shiny gothic electro-indie crew The Scholars

coming in somewhere near Interpol and Editors. They’re joined by London’s rap, dubstep and breakbeat crew The Push and Witney’s Biffy Clyro-inspired rockers Million Faces.  
**MOTOWN’S GREATEST HITS:** **The New Theatre** – Does what it says on the tin.  
**HAIRFORCE 5:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Heavy rock tunes, from Motley Crue to Van Halen.  
**THE SHAPES:** **James Street Tavern** – 60s-styled pop and rock.  
**PROPAGANDA:** **O2 Academy**  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR:** **The Cellar**  
**THE REVELATORS:** **The Plough, Witney**  
**HOPE & GLORY:** **George Inn, Littlemore**

**SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**MIGHTY CADILLACS:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney**

**MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**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.  
**HANNAH BRUCE:** **James Street Tavern** – Confessional acoustic pop inspired by Elliot Smith from the local songstress.  
**TORI FREESTONE:** **Pizza Express, Golden Cross** – Live jazz.

**UP COMING IN-STORES**

**SEPT 6th**  
**ECHO BOOMER**

**Sept 22nd**  
**EMPTY WHITE CIRCLES**

**SEPT 27th**  
**SWINDLESTOCK**

**OCT 6th**  
**THE SEA, THE SEA**

**OCT 24th**  
**LANTERNS ON THE LAKE**

**THE KEEN BEAN COFFEE CLUB**

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# LIVE

## SUPERNORMAL

### Braziers Park

In another, parallel, universe, possibly one where unicorns really exist, all festivals are made like Supernormal: set in idyllic countryside, curated with love rather than for profit, friendly to a fault, eclectic and challenging to a degree rarely encountered at festival level, where you don't feel like you've been mugged every time you fancy a pint or something to eat and where even the crap bits are funny. More than anything, there are times – quite a few times it must be said – over the weekend where Nightshift's critical faculties desert us in the face of music that is so joyous, so thrilling, the only negative aspect is that the entire world isn't here to witness it.

And speaking of unicorns, pretty much the first act we encounter at Supernormal is **UNICORNDAD VS ROBODAD**. Which is basically two blokes dressed (badly) as a unicorn and a robot. In fact the unicorn is so rubbish we spend most of the set convinced it's meant to be a cow. Straight after which we encounter **MOTHERS OF THE THIRD REICH**, who spend more time setting up their equipment than they do systematically destroying it in an abrupt set of abstract sonic savagery, followed by poet **GARY GOODMAN**, who is so astonishingly appalling he is some kind of genius. At times it's like watching a five-year old reading their summary of what they did in the holidays, although he does provide us with the catchphrase of the weekend: "Bollock out the noise mess." And to think, we went along expecting to see a man playing a bike.

Given that Supernormal is a music and arts festival, with a manifesto to blur boundaries between disciplines, there are displays of conceptual art that cross the line between sublime and ridiculous: we quite like the BMW laden with burgers, stuffed with litter and slathered in fake vomit as a statement about the connection between man, machine and snacks, but the room containing only a tiny TV screen on which a mouth applies and removes lipstick, failing to speak into the microphone set before it, accompanied by a quotation from Diamanda Galas, probably goes over our heads. Similarly **GRETA PISTACECI**'s dismantling of an amped-up electric

guitar with a screwdriver is over-long and less fun than it could be but is easily offset by **SALLY GOULDING**'s creepy sound and video performance in the woods where she superimposes faces and body parts over herself to an eerie industrial soundtrack. Innovative and unnerving in equal measures.

Not nearly as unnerving, though, as **EVIL BLIZZARD**, up on the main stage on Friday evening. Masks are nothing new in rock music but these guys are genuinely freaky. We're not sure who's scariest: the man-woman-Auton hybrid in pink, or the grimacing troll creature. Possibly the decrepit-granddad-dressed-as-Alice-Cooper-for-Halloween trumps them both. Either way, they're an astonishing spectacle, drums and four bass guitarists belching up something unpleasant from the darkest corner of Butthole Surfers or PiL's psychedelic-dub-drone closet, climaxing with the goblin chap playing a sort of anti-theremin made out of a doll's head while a man dressed as a pig takes to the stage to fire a smoke machine at the ecstatic crowd. There's even a kiddie stage invasion, each child wearing an expressionless mask stamped with the word EVIL. Seriously, Slipknot look (and sound) like the Tweenies compared to these guys.

**SEA BASTARD** also have a troll but it's just in one of their songs and they suffer from not being nearly as mental as Evil Blizzard, their raspy sludgcore powerful but not as convincing as **CARAVAN OF WHORES'** superior set earlier on. Talking of following on from great things, last time we saw **SHIT & SHINE** there were about ten of them and they were playing one of the greatest gigs we have ever seen, at Audioscope about six years ago. Tonight there are only three of them, sat around in a drum circle, hammering out a robotic tattoo as cybernetic cogs grind around the beat. What it lacks in incendiary aural carnage it makes up for in hypnotic insistency, like a post-apocalyptic industrial pagan dance ritual – sacrificial unicorn optional, herbal incense seemingly compulsory. In front of us a gnomish little man attempts to sketch the band as they play. Who needs photographers, eh? Still, if he was proper alternative he'd get up



Evil Blizzard

on stage with them and do a brass rubbing.

It's been some 20 years since **TERMINAL CHEESECAKE** trod the boards, and for the first part of their set you can tell. Technical issues add to a general air of chaos as they tear up their crusty punk ire and nasty metallic riffs, but once they hit old classic 'Blowhound' they're into a groove that they mine with an expertise that befits their vintage. Twenty years is but the blink of an eye in **RED SQUARE**'s lifespan, the jazz improvisers having formed in Southend back in the early-70s before decamping to Cropredy. They're genially sedate. For about six seconds, before they tumble into a dissonant tangle of guitar, sax, clarinet and electronics burrowing into and scrabbling against each other as they drift between confrontational tetchiness and soothing ambience.

Lest anyone worry that Supernormal is all about uber-noise sonic punishment (and much of it is, gloriously so), there are plenty of lighter treats on offer. **FEATURE** for instance, who are sweet and

fuzzy and would have gone down a treat on a Sarah Records all-dayer back in 1988, or the fantastic **WOODPECKER WOOLIAMs**, whose witchy blend of dark electronics, harp and quirky folk-pop comes in between Zola Jesus and Joanna Newsome. Not sure about the dancing, mind, which makes her look like she's attempting the Charleston while a wasp flies up her skirt. Then there's **WEIRD MENACE**, who are neither weird or menacing but play a pleasantly straight-up approximation of Throwing Muses' alt.pop. By contrast **COMA WALL**, the acoustic incarnation of Undersmile, near as dammit turn Saturday morning's sunny skies a bleaker shade of grey with their ghostly doom-folk, proof that you don't need to be loud to be intense, and the perfect soundtrack to the most seethingly creepy southern gothic horror film never made.

If Coma Wall are the sound of slowly creeping evil, **ART OF BURNING WATER** are a short, sharp shock of sound, mostly sounding like Godflesh covering The



Coma Wall



Comanechi

Birthday Party's 'Release the Bats' across their 20-minute set, while **GREY HAIRS'** middle-aged ire (the programme notes about them state simply: "Are they angry? Yes they are angry. Can they be arsed to do anything about it? They cannot") takes the form of vaguely White Stripes-ish blues, filtered through Queens of the Stone-Age's heavy-duty riffery.

There's a lot of sludge-stoner-drone noisemaking on offer across the weekend, so it's easy to get tired of another torrent of downtuned riffage, but **11PARANOIAS!** are a class apart. Made up (pretty much on the spot it seems) by members of Bong and Ramesses, they should really be called Mega Armageddon Death, or Molten Sonic Death. Something with death in the name anyway. There is hair, there are beards and there is growling. There are also riffs made of girders. Afterwards our ribcage feels like it's collapsed. Good work, chaps. It's up to **ANTI ANTEATER EATER** to subsequently add tinnitus to our litany of physical damage with what sounds like a

broken Atari games console fighting to the death with an old dial-up connection, all played by a man dressed in swimming trunks and a Mexican wrestler's gimp mask. After which we feel compelled to wander over to Brazier's Park's elegant mansion house where you can sit on the lawn enjoying a cream tea and watch people attempting to play badminton. When we get there there's what appears to be a chapter of Hell's Angels reclined around petite tables eating scones and jam and looking like they're happier than they've ever been.

There's so much to see and hear across three days of Supernormal (we haven't even mentioned the late night rave in the woods, or Nightshift's own DJ set of old Throbbing Gristle, Gary Numan and Fad Gadget gems), but three sets over the weekend take the breath away. First **MUGSTAR**'s awesome swell and blast of space-rock noise that recalls Lemmy-era Hawkwind with everything ramped up to buggery: cavernous subterranean psychedelic jams that rise via elongated, overdriven crescendos to



Mugstar



Hookworms

preposterously cataclysmic climaxes. Which is instantly bettered by **HOOKWORMS'** scouring, soul-cleansing worldstorm where pensive build-ups give way to terrifyingly intense kraut-psych drone-core spirals punctured by reverbed-to-buggery screams and eviscerating keyboards. They may wear their influences on their sleeves – think early Spacemen 3 and Six By Seven – but by god those are great influences and any hype the young quartet are getting is more than deserved. For pure spectacle **COMANECHI**'s set is unrivalled, diminutive singer Akiko Matsuura appearing on stage with what looks like an entire bowl of fruit atop her head. Like a demonic Carmen Miranda she proceeds to holler like a tormented banshee over the band's monstrous machine-gun hardcore before, a mere two songs in, she strips topless and takes us on a searing flight of invective from which the words "cock" and "fuck" are pretty much the only discernible lyrics. Spiteful, badly-brought-up pop melodies lash out from beneath the brutal riffage until they reach 'Patsy' ("She's a

dog, she's a bitch, she's my muse," chirps Akiko) at which point all rules of rock and roll implode and run home crying to their mummy.

But if one single act this wonderful weekend sums up the spirit of Supernormal, it is **ZOMBIE CRASH**, a gaggle of youngsters from Brighton nurtured by the city's learning disabilities music project and who are equally hilarious and chaotic and brilliant and more punk rock than the distilled soul of Jimmy Pursey, whose clarion-call oik-punk the band occasionally resemble. Learning disabilities or not, they've obviously had no problem learning every heavy metal cliché going, nor every swear word in the dictionary, and the feverish joy they get from spewing their racket out is shared right back at them and sums up the anything-goes ethos of a festival that lives proudly on the margins and where each and every act is created with utter conviction and a disregard for commercial viability. So next year just make sure you're there. And bring your unicorn.

*Dale Kattack*

**MAYORS OF MIYAZAGI /**  
**PUNCHING SWANS / MASIRO /**  
**JUMPSTART THE JUNGLE**

**The Wheatsheaf**

Punching Swans are good at endings. Does that sound snide? It's not meant to. They have a knack of knowing precisely when enough of their tannoy-blaring repetitive pop scuzz is enough, never dragging a riff beyond its use-by date, and often stopping with precision just when you think the music is running headlong down a giddy hill of disco hi-hats, beyond control. Their sound adds an elastic twang to thick, grungy ratchetting, like Duane Eddy pitching in with The Jesus Lizard, and if it can occasionally fall back on easy sloganeering yelps, the effect is powerful.

Earlier we saw the debut set from Jumpstart The Jungle, a bass and drums duo who transcend the clichés of the line-up, and at their best are deeply intriguing, playing heavily distorted chintzy basslines that repeat headlong like the music from some trigger-happy Megadrive game, and throwing big, simple vocal lines over the top, like bullet point summaries of full songs. By the end of the set, however, they drift into meandering, wistful melodies that don't suit the vocalist, and leave the drummer with little to do. Promoters Masiro are next up, and whilst they might be intricate math-

rockers, they never forget how great it sounds when rock bands make a noise like machine guns. No matter how complex their writing gets, they always bring the music back to the sound of heavy field artillery, which is fine by us. There are odd melancholic guitar moments that aren't too far from Metheny territory, but they soon pummel any poncy thoughts of false harmonics or modal declensions out of your mind with jackhammer intensity. This may be math rock, but it's likely to beat you round the face with Fermat's last theorem and stick an abacus up your rectum.

Mayors Of Miyazagi have made friends in Oxford, and it's easy to see the fit: they play sprightly Johnny Foreigner-like songs, with just enough twists to avoid begin called "indie chug", and they have that blasted romantic vibe that seems to go down a treat in the town. Trouble is, although the music is an enjoyably tuneful clatter, the vocals have a geeky chortling tone that drags the songs down: be honest, "we drank sunshine through the haze of your cigarette" is not a line that gets any more profound by sounding like it's sung by Moss from *The IT Crowd*. Sometimes, there's a fizzing boy-girl exchange



photo:Johnny Moto

that reminds us of Secret Rivals but the Mayors don't quite capture the sneering vitriol, although they're a better act. And yet, the set is enjoyable, the band are suffused with

energy, and there are hooks enough to snare the ears. Mayors Of Miyazagi are a decent little live band. Does that sound snide? Well, you know... *David Murphy*

**X-1 / PARTLY FAITHFUL**  
**/ JORDAN O'SHEA**

**The Wheatsheaf**

Jordan O'Shea, one of the rising stars of the local Bear On A Bicycle stable, may appear to be the standard open-mic fare: young man, acoustic guitar, satchel of poignant songs (taken from his album, 'Desolation, My Dear'), but with the soft, world-weary flicker of such greats as Colin Blunstone and Nick Drake on the margins of his phrasing and voice, he is someone who, if nurtured away from the hothouse of commercial pressure, could produce some timeless classic songs. The loss of their guitarist Gemma Thompson, who went on to form Savages, could have been the demise of cool, subterranean London band Partly Faithful, but her replacement, the wildly innovative Anouska Haze, has proved to be the making of this fiercely passionate and gothic act. Her sensational walls of 'Scary Monsters'-era Robert Fripp-inspired expressionist guitaring, against which singer Ed Banshee intones his music theatre of metaphors and poetry, simply moves the Bauhaus-esque oeuvre up to a ballsier higher plane. Their debut album, 'Lazarus Under Glass', provides the set with such riff-laden standout numbers as 'We Are Insects' and 'Underset', but it's the lasting impression of Ed, on his knees in front of the audience, wielding his personalised cruciform mic stand, that remains, while Haze and bassist Chris Blake replicate the tunnel collapsing sound of a desperate tube train braking from 100mph to zero, as if we were all

stood, rooted, on the track.

X-1 may well have been around since last century, and compound this by being dads *and* some of the nicest guys in town, but they have still got enough piss and vinegar in them to make the loudest of rackets while being both deftly melodic and having plenty worthwhile to say. Theirs is a great skill, balancing the sheer heaviosity of Big Black and DC hardcore with typically wry lyrics about police surveillance or alpha male politicians, watching as it climbs harder and higher until it topples into the epic fall out jam of ' (My Son's) Gecko'. Age shall not weary them.

*Paul Carrera*

**THE STRYPES /**  
**AARON KEYLOCK**

**O2 Academy**

Oxford boy Aaron Keylock's musical progress almost makes tonight's headliners look like tortoises. Assembling his own band at the age of twelve to headline a Friday night spot at London's Charlotte Street Blues, he's gone on to playing international festivals and open for the likes of Albert Lee and Nazareth – and all before his sixteenth birthday. Sporting clothes and hair straight out of 1974, he looks like Rory Gallagher and sounds like him on the hard rocking blues of 'Medicine Man', while the slow numbers bring to mind Eric Clapton in his 1970s prime, only let down by a slightly tentative drummer.

The buzz surrounding The Strypes is a candidate

for the musical story of the summer, ensuring a sell-out crowd tonight. Formed in Cavan, Ireland in 2008 their effervescent take on Dr Feelgood and early Stones was soon turning heads, including Elton John who signed them to his management company. Still with only two EP under their belts, one self-produced, their debut album seems certain to create an orgy of excitement, and all this with an average age of sixteen.

Bassist Pete O'Hanlon is a blur of curly hair and non-stop motion, Josh McClorey's guitar has just the right mix of grit and virtuosity, while drummer Evan Walsh keeps the beat with a minimum of superfluous flourishes. Stage centre stands singer Ross Farrelly, ice cool in his shades and dapper suit, contributing some fine harmonica just when it's needed. His somewhat reserved presence sits in contrast with the furious energy surrounding him, even leaving most of the between-song banter to his guitarist, but they're unmistakably a unit, seamlessly swapping around instruments as the set progresses. O'Hanlon's bass playing is their secret weapon, running up, down and around every song with restless urgency. New single 'Hometown Girls' is surely catchy enough to see them land their first mainstream hit, though towards the end it becomes clear that variety is not their current strongpoint. The Stones have managed fifty years at the top by shifting their focus and looking for new ways to approach songwriting, if not always successfully. But The Strypes can cross such bridges as they come to them; for the moment they're riding a wave and it's an unbridled pleasure to be there as they do.

*Art Lagun*

**IRREGULAR**  
**FOLK ALL-**  
**DAYER**

**The Perch**

Irregular Folk's offbeat, intimate events have been among the highlights of Oxford's musical calendar so far this year, kicking off with a series of fascinating line-ups at the Cellar and upgrading to the ornate, decadent surroundings of a huge Bedouin tent at the Perch for their summer season.

Though ostensibly showcasing the more acoustic, folky end of the musical spectrum, the real charm in Irregular Folk is in finding the rough diamonds working around the edges, dipping into world music, art-pop and electronica. Fittingly, this all-dayer is their most ambitious show yet, bringing down the curtain on their current season.

Alas, Irregular Folk's commendably egalitarian line-up policy means that the running order is hard to find in advance. Thus we miss out on Message To Bears and illness forces Salvation Bill to withdraw, so our first experience is of some real traditional folk courtesy of **IAN GILES**. His *a cappella* renditions of traditional folk storytelling and murder ballads (all delivered with a pint of real ale in hand) feel like a step back in time and



photo:Giulia Blasbetti

it's a nice nod to classic English folk in amongst the eclecticism. Salvation Bill are replaced at the last minute manfully by **DAI BOWE** from Oxford folk troupe The Oh So Many, stepping out from behind the bar at the Perch to deliver half an hour

of stripped-back, quirky songs with knowing lyrics just on the right side of archness, without preparation or the backing of his usual band. **BETH PORTER AND THE AVAILABLES** bring the show to a close with a deft showcase sparkling

with precision and pleasingly sparse, in front of an apparently spellbound, diligently attentive crowd who lap up every note. A triumphant end to an invigorating season of events – come back soon. *Stuart Fowkes*

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## WILDERNESS FESTIVAL Cornbury Park

It’s a strange thing, Wilderness. In its sprawling Cornbury Park splendour, it combines several kinds of happenings: music, food and literary festivals, talks, theatre and drama, late-night clubbing, woodcraft’n’whittling workshops, new age hokum and all kinds of pop-up artisan paraphernalia. More so than in previous years, the organisers seem to have neatly pulled off this balancing act of entertainment, creating an atmosphere that genuinely does create a sense of wonder and what’s-around-the-next-corner surprise, and providing the means for a diverse group of visitors to each have their own experience. So, as an exercise in logistics, thumbs up; everything is subtly, yet very carefully organised, with a overall relaxed and safe feel permeating the, at times, genuinely strange things that are taking place. Admittedly, the exact details can be difficult to uncover, with many things not running quite to schedule, musical acts switched around and the festival programme providing – in return for eight quid – the only timetable on offer.

It’s hard to say whether this is

intentional, and if in fact the aim is to create the likelihood of surprise; regardless, it makes the experience difficult to take on in any other form than an almost random series of events. The workshops and talks? Surprisingly enjoyable - and at time frustratingly busy - with everything from Ruby Wax to Jon Ronson, to a *Dragons’ Den* entrepreneur who invites us to embrace failure as thriving young businesspeople. The food? Very impressive: four-hour banquets from Yotam Ottolenghi, Russel Norman and Mark Hix; exquisite halloumi and chorizo flatbreads and some of the best fish and chips ever tasted from J Sheekey. The drama and theatre? Everything ranging from a Shakespeare reading up a tree, to the remarkable Les Pepones providing a trapeze-based tribute to silent film, to the magical ‘Maudits Sonnants’ piece by Transe Express, which comprises several bell and drum-playing entertainers slowly and delicately rising fifty feet into the darkness of night whilst playing circular, rhythmic tunes.

And, of course, the music. With performances overall given slightly

more visibility than at last year’s Wilderness, the music is spread out across several large stages and a variety of smaller platforms. For a festival with so many distractions, it’s difficult to treat Wilderness like a music festival as much as a festival with some music, but there are highlights. **NICK MULVEY** of Portico Quartet’s solo performance is mellow, charming and relaxed, translating his band’s sense of subtle experimentation and repetition into a more traditional singer/songwriter setting. **TEMPLES**, despite looking like a series of identikit black-trousered, tousle-haired alterno-rockers, capture the expansive sense of 1960s psychedelic pop in a similar way to The Coral. Japanese one-man band **ICHI** is utterly captivating, arriving on stage on a pair of stilts which are quickly transformed into a steel drum stand, to provide the backdrop to a super-quirky set of songs generated with odd vocals, home-made instruments, kazoos, bells, and all kinds of strange things. Saturday night’s headliner **RODRIGUEZ**, the 71-year old Dylanesque folk singer reintroduced to the world by way of the *Searching For Man* film,

is every bit as good as the large crowd hoped and expected - for an old guy who’s had a hard life, he may be slightly frail-looking but his songs, voice and performance are very strong and, because of the film, beautifully familiar, speaking of personal and counter-cultural beliefs that are still relevant.

That the music programme tends towards the mainstream or non-challenging – the other headliners **EMPIRE OF THE SUN** are cloyingly perky and slick; **NOAH AND THE WHALE** terrifyingly bland enough to drive this reviewer away – seems rather unimportant in the context of Wilderness as a whole, as it doesn’t set out its (pop-up, organic) stall as anything musically bold or experimental. Taken as such, it’s a terrifically enjoyable couple of days. Expensive it may be - it’s widely reported as ‘the posh festival’, which can give the wrong idea; despite the braying Chelsea halfwits who keep the campsite awake all night with their booming idiocy, it’s actually a pretty nice, slightly confusing place to be. And that seems to be what they aim for. *Simon Minter*



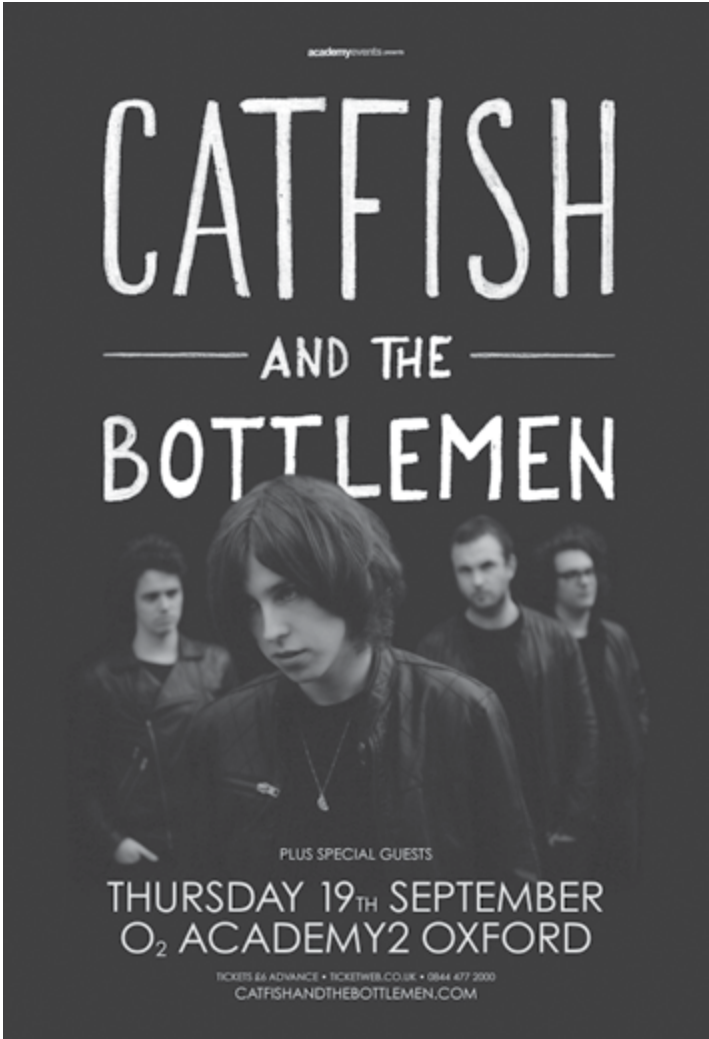
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 23<sup>rd</sup> **KING MO**

Every Tuesday  
**THE OXFORD JAZZ CLUB**  
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 17<sup>th</sup> / 24<sup>th</sup> **TBC**

Wednesdays  
 4<sup>th</sup> **CAITLIN ROSE**  
*Every Wednesday – acoustic music session from 8pm; free entry.*

Thursdays  
*DJs in the front bar – free entry*  
 12<sup>th</sup> **SUPERFOOD.** 7pm; £7.50

Fridays  
 6<sup>th</sup> **JUICE** – Upfront house music with OX105 DJs, plus Elements of House DJs. 10-3am; £5, ladies free.  
 13<sup>th</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> **ULTIMATE 90s** – Old skool and club classics. 10-3am  
 Early Friday gigs  
 27<sup>th</sup> **COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN / SUPERLOOSE / ADY DAVEY**

Saturdays  
 14<sup>th</sup> **LITTLE BLACK DRESS.** 10-3am; £5B4 11.30pm

Sundays  
 22<sup>nd</sup> **COMEDY NIGHT.** Humour Tumour presents the best and newest acts on the UK circuit. 7.30pm; £5

# THE WHEATSHEAF

THUR 5<sup>TH</sup>

## LET'S TALK DAGGERS

VERA GRACE + SEXWOLF! + I CRIED WOLF 8pm/£5

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WED 11<sup>TH</sup>

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FRI 13<sup>TH</sup>

## BLOODSHOT DAWN

BLACK SKIES BURN + GOTSU-TOTSU-KOTSU

THE FLORENTINE CAMERATA 8pm/£7/£5 Advanced

SAT 14<sup>TH</sup>

## YELLOW FEVER

BRIGHT WORKS + ORANGE VISION 8pm/£3

THUR 19<sup>TH</sup>

## TIM WHITEHEAD & THE SPIN TRIO

8pm/£10/£6 NUS

FRI 20<sup>TH</sup>

## DAMN VANDALS

THE MILLER TEST 8pm/£5

SAT 28<sup>TH</sup>

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## DR SHOTOVER: Florence of Arabia

Ah, there you are. Nice to see you... to see you, nice. No, not *really*, oaf ... but I am just back from the Platitude Festival, so what can you expect? Frankly if I were in charge of the recent investigations into the BBC I'd have had Spruce Foreskin locked up by this stage. Just for the irritating facial hair, if nothing else. Now, where were we? And don't say 'In the East Indies Club bar' or I will be forced to, as the young hoodlums say, NUT you. Ah yes, you were on the point of buying me a pint of Auld Scroggins with extra wood-shavings, in celebration of the fact that the Florence Park Community Centre is about to start hosting regular gigs. Apparently we can expect local heroes Radiohead, Foals, Stornoway and Ultrasound... *not* to appear. But hopefully our old pals CAN'T will make a welcome return with some toe-tapping endless jams and incomprehensible howling. Probably every month. Support from the Florence Park Flower Club – hmm, *they* sound pretty psychedelic, don't they? And all the cake you can eat (it says here). Still, however much you may mock – and, oh yes, I hear you mocking – it's got to be a better night out than the Oh Too Echoey, hasn't it? Actually that cake really IS rather delicious, and it goes SURPRISINGLY WELL with this Auld Scroggins, nyom nyom nyom [*the camera pans back to reveal Mel Giedroyc smiling kittenishly beside the bar... a tattered hand-written sign behind her reads 'The Great British F\*\*\*-Off'... Then the TARDIS materialises next to the East Indies Club jukebox, and the bloke from The Thick of It gets out, at which point we realise the whole thing was a dream... Dr S wakes up, having eaten his pillow*].



**Next month: 'Benzedrine Curry – Fast Food' Shock**

# INTRODUCING....

*Nightshift's monthly guide to the best local music bubbling under*

# TRAPS

**Who are they?**  
 Anthemic rockers Traps are: Alexis Goodyear, Roger Blake, Tim Gardiner (*vocals, guitar, bass*) and Peter Canning (*drums*). Roger set up Traps having split from Kill Casino, “keen to create some loud, epic sounding music but with a bit of a twist on a common line-up, having a girl in the band”. Having found Pete, classified ad style, in May 2011 and reconnecting with old friend Tim, the band recruited powerhouse vocalist Lex, ex-housemate of Tim. The four started with their first gig at The Bullingdon and have since played the O2 with BBC introducing, supported Everclear, Tennis and Danananakroyd and performed at this year’s Oxford Punt, as well as Truck Festival in July. They released a double A-side single back in December and an acoustic EP for Record Store Day, and this month release a new single, ‘Capricorn’.

**What do they sound like?**  
 Traps’ sounds is an emulsion of crunching guitar and soulful vocals that walk a tight-rope between rock, punk, soul and pop. Or, as a recent Nightshift review had it “centred on the powerful, vocals of Lex and pumped up [with guitars] on stadium-pop steroids”.

**What inspires them?**  
 “Live acts with passion and energy; big, unapologetic guitar effects and other successful Oxford bands.”

**Career highlight so far:**  
 “Playing at Truck last month and the fun that ensued post-gig. Highlights include cocktails on a boat outside a Hawaiian bar, singing the wrong songs along to Ash when they were on stage and drinking cider for breakfast.”

**And the lowlight:**  
 “Forcing our friends to get us to the MMG Battle of the Bands final by drinking copious amounts of alcohol, for votes. We did get there by a landslide, which says a lot for the conviction of our friends.”

**Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:**



“Gunning for Tamar. It’s inspiring to watch their success and to see them pull it out of the bag at Truck, despite being at the end of a heavy European tour.”

**If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:**  
 “Are you trying to start a fight? If so, Lex would champion ‘Homogenic’ by Bjork, Roger would stand up for ‘Round the Fur’ by Deftones, Tim wouldn’t show any mercy for anyone knocking ‘Lateralus’ by Tool and you’d have to prize Reuben’s ‘Very Fast Very Dangerous’ out of Pete’s cold, dead hands.”

**When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?**  
 “The Cellar on 7<sup>th</sup> September. Expect a wall of loud, anthemic rocky tunes, some with a harder edge, some with a soul-pop centre and banter to match.”

**Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:**  
 There are some great bands and some great venues but there is a big gap between folk and metal in Oxford, so it’s tricky to carve out a space for a band like Traps. We’re loosely bobbing around somewhere in the middle of the gulf but we’re enjoying that we’re different.”

**You might love them if you love:**  
 Skunk Anansie; Yeah Yeah Yeahs; Florence & The Machine, Paramore, Hell Is For Heroes; Fighting with Wire.

**Hear them here:**  
[www.wearetraps.com](http://www.wearetraps.com) or [www.soundcloud.com/wearetraps](http://www.soundcloud.com/wearetraps)

# ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

## 20 YEARS AGO

“Radiohead gave us one of their songs once, when they were **On A Friday**. I had to get up on stage to repair one of their guitars. There were a bunch of my friends down the front and they all started shouting my name. Afterwards, Thom was really chuffed because he thought they all loved him and were shouting his name.” So said **Changelings** guitarist Tom in his band’s interview with *Curfew* magazine in September 1993, thus marking out his claim to personal fame. Not that you’d know it was the September issue, since we’d managed to put October on the front cover. And on the gig guide. Like a bunch of retards.

Anyway, yes, The Changelings, they were right noisy buggers, penning songs about pain and misery and drawing admiring comparisons to Crazy Horse and Smashing Pumpkins, while the band spent much of the interview bickering between themselves about musical taste, Tom’s claim to love Joni Mitchell bringing a chorus of vomiting noises from the rest of them. There was some consensus on Frank Zappa though, mainly because “he hated everyone, especially Americans.”

Away from this philosophical debate, this was the month **Radiohead** re-released their classic ‘Creep’ single off the back of some pretty monstrous American success, having only dented the national consciousness in the UK previously. The rest being history. A more cult local release was **Motorcycle Ride**’s 7” on Fierce Records. Which was **Ride** teaming up with **Motorcycle Boy** singer **Alex Taylor** for a pair of Blondie covers, ‘Atomic’ and ‘Union City Blues’. An entire set of Blondie covers were originally played live as a birthday party treat

for Ride manager **Dave Newton**, while the single is now a rare collectors’ item.

Coming to town this month were **Chumbawamba** and **Credit To the Nation** at the Minchery Tavern; **Senser** at the Oxford Venue and **Catherine Wheel** at the Jericho Tavern.

## 10 YEARS AGO

**The Rock Of Travolta** were, well, rocking, on the cover of September 2003’s *Nightshift* as they prepared to release a new EP, ‘Everything’s Opened Up’ on Idle Records. The song featured vocals from **Seafood**’s **David Line** and was the first TROT song to feature proper singing. It would later earn them Song of the Year in Nightshift’s end of year Top 20. And album, ‘Uluru’, was due to follow in October. Also releasing stuff this month were hot new local hardcore sensations **Shouting Myke**, whose ‘For Your Pleasure’ was out on Hanging With The Cool Kids. It followed a busy year for the band who had gigged with Funeral For A Friend and Lostprophets as well as winning Steve Lamacq’s Unsigned Band of the Month on Radio 1.

More good news for local bands, including **Winnebago Deal**, who were shortlisted for Best Newcomers at the *Kerrang!* Awards, up against The Darkness, Million Dead and Funeral For A Friend. Also **The Samurai Seven**, who were set to take part in a new ITV music show called XPosure, showcasing rising unsigned talent in the UK.

**Beth Orton** (the Town Hall), **Calvin Johnson** (Port Mahon) and **Andrew WK** (Zodiac) were among the month’s gigging highlights but the most noticeable name here was a bunch of young

## THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

Scottish starlets called **Franz Ferdinand**, making their first national foray and coming to Zodiac before going stratospheric shortly afterwards.

A quick glimpse at the demos reveals a band in the Dumper called **First Ugly Pop Star**, the work of a young lad called **James Hitchman**, later to become a *Nightshift* favourite with **Alphabet Backwards**, but back then a “laboriously strummed, nasally rendered emotional rollercoaster, consumed by negative thoughts.” And he sounds so happy these days.

## 5 YEARS AGO

A collage of Latin-labelled sea creatures adorned the cover of *Nightshift* in September 2008. Which could only mean it was **Stornoway**’s first ever interview feature, the band still hometown cult heroes yet to taste chart success and festivals-sized adulation.

Borderville’s Joe Swarbrick went to interview the band for us and promptly found himself with a microphone stuck in front of him and being forced to singing backing vocals on a new song called ‘Mullet’, set to appear on their debut album. It was typical of the quartet’s make-do-and-mend DIY recording ethic. The band had already earned themselves the title “Officially the brainiest band ever” for having no les than four PhDs between them and revealed that Rob was only recruited as drummer because he brought a portable heater to the audition, which was in a freezing garage.

Stornoway’s stamp on the local scene was sealed when **BBC Radio Oxford** DJ **Tim Bearder** locked himself in the studio while standing in on the breakfast show and played the band’s songs for a solid hour, earning himself a suspension.



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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### TENTH LISTEN

Like fellow vintage hardcore/punk revivalists Bear Trap Tenth Listen seem to be trying to steal those genres back from the whiny clothes horses on one hand and the atonal thrash merchants on the other. Looking back to 80s bands like Firehose, The Descendants and The Replacements, maybe even Husker Du at times, they recognise that even noisy bastard music can benefit from having a melodic beating heart, even if that melody is sung by a raw, gravelly voice, possibly possessed by the sort of ne'er-do-well who spent his school lunchtimes giving Barry or whatever his name is from One Direction Chinese burns for being such a soppy bollocks. 'Slow Pain' is the best of the two tracks here, a bit of velocity fizz and fuzz that makes its point well enough and knows not to stick around too long. The production isn't all that and you feel it would all sound much, much better ramped up on the Wheatheaf's PA, but good to hear a decent bit of old-school rocking of this kind on a more regular basis.

### CLEA DE SEBROCK

A one-song dancefloor banger here from Refugees of Culture singer Clea whose coquettishly soulful voice is smothered over the track's squelchy electro-disco stomp like warm, pink icing sugar. She sounds a lot like the singer from seemingly long-lost synth-popsters Schmoosh (who did the best version of 'Sweet Child O Mine' ever – *fact*), and while the whole thing sounds like it could easily have been made in 1978, 1998 or next week, it still sounds about twenty times better than pretty much everything on the last Daft Punk album. Sorry, are we starting to sound a bit obsessed with that particular subject?

### DANGERWHALE

Great name for a band, but one who describe themselves as "synth-prog", something that could easily go either way in the great/shite stakes. And indeed it does, often at the same time. Demo

*Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Silver Street Studios in Reading, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit [umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift](http://umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift)*

opener 'Between The Rocks' glides in on a great eerie synth line, like something from a spooky old 1960s sci-fi movie. But then in come the clattering drums, clunky guitars and frankly awful vocals and the mood is broken – like the postman barging into your living room just as you're about to make out with the sexy evil robot woman from *Metropolis*. Same thing happens with 'Like Baumgarten', clunky indie-grunge chugging dumped unceremoniously on top of great synth chimes and hums. It'd probably have sounded fantastically futuristic back in 1976 set alongside punk's shouty vanguard, but here just sounds a bit lumpen. They sort the vocals out for the final number, 'The Beast', by sticking them through a Vocoder and the bass and guitars meld far better, but they've left those cool synth bits out, so the whole rescue mission seems in vain. Stick the best bits of each of those together and you've got something to build on.

### FUZZY LOGIC BABY

Fusion pop is always a tricky field to negotiate, with the risk of losing any genuine identity or simply failing to fuse those disparate genres. Fuzzy Logic Baby mostly get it right here, fixing up a party cocktail of funk, hip hop, reggae, ska and grunged-up rock. The best tracks are 'Howling Wolves', a lively funky reggae skank with laddish rapping and a daft singalong chorus of "Come and touch my belly," and the Two-Tone-inspired 'Gangsta In Da AM', a horns-powered ska/grunge/hip hop hybrid that flits between styles with a fair amount of fluency. The slick 'March On' settles on more typical low-key hip hop but sounds sterile and way too polite and the livelier, anthemic r'n'b of 'Glow In The Dark' and hysterical, chant-along 'No Problems' are required to bring the party vibe back, the latter coming with a drunken sway about it for that end-of-the-night celebratory feel.

### THE RECKLESS SLEEPERS

John Peel once wisely stated that anyone who claimed they were eccentric most surely wasn't. Similarly any band who describe themselves as quirky is unlikely to possess a single crazy bone in their collective body. It's unfortunate that

The Reckless Sleepers use such a self description as their 60s-styled pop has its charming moments. They also describe themselves as "semi-psychedelic", which seems a bit of a cop-out, like Bill Clinton's "I smoked dope but didn't inhale" claim. 'Bus To Carfax' reminds us of legendary local indie janglers The Anyways a bit, not surprising really after we notice that band's Pete Lock is involved here as drummer. Phil Garvey's lilting voice works nicely on the folky 'Step Out Of Your Frame', with its hippy vibe and vague resemblance to punk-folksters Blyth Power, while 'Swimming With The Sharks' is a soft-centred, airy lament with just the merest hint of Fearghal Sharkey at his most sensitive. Where the band lose it is trying to rock out on 'Would She Dance With Me?', Phil's voice gone all nasal and the whole thing sounding like a clumsy approximation of The Kinks. Or even The Mavericks. Not sure why it reminds us of the Mavericks, but it does. Maybe we're just a bit quirky.

### MORDECAI

There appear to be at last a dozen bands around the world called Mordecai, and they're all metal bands, which takes some doing for a name taken from the old Hebrew bible (oh, please, tell us it isn't from the cartoon bird in *The Regular Show*? It is, isn't it? Peasants!). But anyway, this particular Mordecai are a local prog-metal band, one with the odd Tool album or four in their collection. Which isn't a criticism since we have at least two in our own collection (and admittedly never listen to either). Both songs here clock in around the seven minute mark, starting slowly before trying to build up some kind of a head of steam, each solid and meaty, guided with a deft hand but both strangely failing to hit home with any great conviction. 'One Side's' ambient build-up resolves into fulsome chugging but no further, while the smouldering, almost ecclesiastical 'Mobius Lost' hits a mid-level plateau but needs to spread its wings wider and dig its claws in. The lasting impression is of a talented band who are a bit too serious, frowning at the sound of the band in the next studio bashing away at trying to be The Locust or The Berserker and generally having a lot more fun.

### PRONK

Talking of self-descriptions, Pronk, a guitar/voice/keyboard duo from Oxford and London, tell us they play "jaunty pop," though mostly they sound about as jaunty as anyone who's just had to bury their beloved pet dog at the bottom of the

garden while it's pissing down. 'Life & Limb' is pretty sullen in a kind of blokey, less aloof Pet Shop Boys kind of way, all synth strings, gently pulsing electronic beats and unassuming vocals, everything bubbling along nicely without upsetting anybody along its way. 'That Boy' features the possibly ironic lines "Behold that boy / He's got so much joy / And It's dangerous to behold," while again sounding for all the world like a wet weekend in Bognor in the cheery stakes. Not a bad track, mind, like an electro-pop savvy croon-collaboration between Matt Monroe and China Crisis. Thereafter they tend to drift off into inconsequentiality with the fluffy 'Don't Come To My Party' (we probably wouldn't as we fear it would involve too many sensitive souls moping at the foot of the stairs waiting to be chatted up), until disco loons Coloured crop up with a decent remix of the opening track. They might stick around to offer tips in up-for-it musical recklessness while they're about it.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### BENJAMIN EDWARDS

A singer with an acoustic guitar, you say? Not happy about his lot in life? Can you see what's coming next, dear reader? Utter fucking carnage, that's what. Never mind fish in barrels, here's an elephant in a teacup to be shot at. Benjamin here (seriously, does anyone other than his mum, and even then only when she's cross at him for not putting his dirty socks in the wash basket, actually call him Benjamin?) is doubtless a nice bloke with good manners and a friendly attitude to children and animals, but by crikey this song, 'I Still Believe', is a rotting hessian bag full of rancid bogwater. "We spend the days, waiting for the night time / We spend the nights, praying that tomorrow / Will give us more," run the opening lines. It appears to be a clarion call for positivity ("Raise a glass to the good times," he incites), but it couldn't sound more despairing if it were crawling naked along a filthy city pavement with a litter of dead puppies stapled to its broken legs. Ben old chap (may we call you Ben?), tomorrow will indeed bring you more. But only more misery. More despair. More Bob Dylan albums to clutch to your shivering breast. You may still, as the song title goes, believe, but so do we. In hatchets and hammers and merciless beatings. Unleash the hounds, the party starts here!

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto: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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