



# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month  
Issue 240  
July  
2015

# REGGAE

Leo Bowder delves into  
Oxford's roots, dub and  
dancehall scene.

Also in this issue:

**FOALS** return!

Introducing **MERMAID NOISES**

**TRUCK** and **CORNBURY** previewed  
plus

All your local music news, reviews and  
gig listings for the month ahead

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**NIGHTSHIFT: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU. Phone: 01865 372255**



# THE BULLINGDON

## JULY 2015

Wednesday 1st July  
**Sarah Jane Scouten**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 2nd July  
**The Billy Walton Band**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd July  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
The Final  
Hells Gazelles  
Evavoid  
K-Lacura  
The Reaper  
+ More TBA**

Doors: 6.30pm

Saturday 4th July  
**Peerless Pirates  
Mark Cope  
Vaguelworld  
31 Hours**

Doors: 6pm

Saturday 4th July  
**Bedrock**  
*Oxford's Rocking Club Night.  
Release Your Inner Dinosaur!*

Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 7th July  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Heavy Dexters**

Doors: 8.30pm

Friday 10th July  
**The Amazons**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 11th July  
**The Sherlocks**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 13th July  
**Moreland & Arbuckle**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 14th July  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Martin Pickett Organisation**

Doors: 8.30pm

Saturday 18th July  
**Simple**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 20th July  
**Della Mae  
Loud Mountains**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 14th July  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 23rd July  
**Lindsay Lou  
& The Flatbelllys**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 25th July  
**Klass Vibez**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 27th August  
**Hypnotist Theatre Presents:  
Jekyll**

Doors: 6.45pm

Tuesday 28th August  
**Hypnotist Theatre Presents:  
Jekyll**

Doors: 6.45pm

Wednesday 29th July  
**Angaleena Presley**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 31st July  
**Sworn to Oath  
I Cried Wolf**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 4th August  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Guitar Summit**

Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 11th August  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Hugh Turner Band**

Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 18th August  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 20th August  
**Jungle Brothers**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 22nd August  
**Broken Chords  
48 Hours**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 22nd August  
**Bedrock**  
*Oxford's Rocking Club Night.  
Release Your Inner Dinosaur!*

Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 25th August  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Will Barnes Quartet**

Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 1st September  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Martin Pickett Organisation**

Doors: 8.30pm

Sunday 6th September  
**Andrew Combs**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 7th September  
**Jon Amor & Joel Fisk**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 8th September  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Ewan Baird Group**

Doors: 8.30pm

Monday 14th September  
**Marcus Malone**

Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 15th September  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Heavy Dexters**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 17th September  
**Sasha McVeigh**

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 20th September  
**One Gig Fresher**

Doors: 2pm

Monday 21st September  
**Kirk Fletcher**

Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 22nd September  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Stuart Henderson Band**

Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 23rd September  
**Merz & Family Machine**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 24th September  
**Cardboard Fox**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 28th September  
**Grainne Duffy**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 3rd October  
**The Pretty Things**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 5th October  
**Katie Bradley Band**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 9th October  
**Treetop Flyers**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 10th October  
**Gengahr**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 12th October  
**Erja Lyytinen**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 15th October  
**Palace**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 17th October  
**Gentlemens Dub Club**

Doors: 9pm

Monday 19th October  
**Mentulls**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 23rd October  
**The Corn Potato  
String Band**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 25th October  
**The Ruts DC**

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 28th October  
**Cattle & Cane**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 30th October  
**Hollis Brown**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 6th November  
**Keston Cobblers Club**

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 8th November  
**Titus Adronicus**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 12th November  
**Grant Sharkey**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 14th November  
**Dedication 2015**

Doors: 5.30pm

Friday 20th November  
**Balkan Wanderers**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 30th November  
**Chatham County Line**

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 6th December  
**Steamroller**

Doors: 7pm

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# NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU

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**FAMILY MACHINE** return with their long-awaited second album in August. 'Houses That You Live In' is released on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, the follow-up to their 2008 debut 'You Are The Family Machine'. A single, 'The Less You Know', was previewed on Soundcloud at the end of June and features whistling. Singer Jamie Hyatt explained that the new album, "is about living and dying. It's about the little stories that are in the big life story that we are all in the middle of. It's about the fear, the joy and just the general feeling that everything is just as it is."

Read a full interview with the band in next month's *Nightshift*.

**CASELS** have been picked to play on the BBC Introducing stage at T In The Park this month. The Chipping Norton duo line up alongside a host of new and unsigned acts on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July at the festival at Stathallan Castle in Scotland. Sock it to 'em, lads.

**THE FEELING, SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR, HEAVEN 17, RAE MORRIS, BADLY DRAWN BOY AND HUDSON TAYLOR** are the latest names to be added to the bill for this year's Big Feastival. Gruel-rockers The Feeling will be joined onstage by Bextor for their set at the food and music festival, which takes place over the weekend of the 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August at Alex James's Farm near Kingham.

They join Paloma Faith, Groove Armada, Dizzee Rascal, Example, Roots Manuva and Grandmaster Flash amongst others at the event, which attracts over 15,000 festival-goers over the weekend. Go to [www.thebigfeastival.com](http://www.thebigfeastival.com) for full line-up details and tickets.

**MUSIC IN OXFORD** has sadly pulled the plug on itself as of this month. The long-running local music site has been a vital source of online local music news, gig listings and reviews for well over a decade, starting life as Oxfordbands.com.

Their Facebook group and Twitter feed will continue to run, while it's hoped the website can be preserved as a local music archive. A very big *Nightshift* cheers! to Simon Minter and co. who kept the site running for so long.

**THE INFLATABLES** celebrate 35 years of gigging this month with a special show at the O2 Academy. The veteran ska band headline their own party on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July. They'll be joined by a very special guest for the evening – Specials frontman Neville Staple, with his new band. Also skanking along will be Skaville UK, King Hammond and The Duckworths. Tickets for the show are available from the O2 website or box office, priced £20 plus booking fee.

**THE DREAMING SPIRES** release a new single from their acclaimed second album 'Searching For The Supertruth' this month. 'All Kinds of People' is out on the 6<sup>th</sup> July on Clubhouse Records. The local indie-country faves performed the single on BBC1's Andrew Marr Show in June as well as supporting Chuck Prophet & the Mission Express on his recent UK tour. Later this month the band headline the Veterans & Virgins stage at Truck Festival.

**THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT** charity gig takes place at the Said Business School Ampitheatre on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July – not the 3<sup>rd</sup> at stated in last month's Nightshift. That'll teach us to read emails properly at three in the morning. The show, in aid of children's charities All For One and Ambulatory Care at the John Radcliffe, features a headline set from Cuban dance ensemble Ran Kan Kan, as well as sets from Balloon Ascents, The Dreaming Spires, The Shapes and Co-Pilgrim, amongst others. Things kick off at 4pm; tickets, priced £10 in advance, are on sale from Truck Store and Wegotickets.com.

**RESTORE** hosts a mini-festival in aid of its work helping people recovering with mental health issues next month. In The Garden takes place in the centre's garden on Manzil Way, off Cowley Road, on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August, with sets from Huck & the Xander Band; Balloon Ascents; Bright Works; Family



photo: Giulia Biasibetti

**FOALS** previewed their forthcoming fourth album, 'What Went Down', with a video for a song of the same name at the end of June. Having premiered the new song on Annie Mac's Radio 1 show, the band made the song available for download the following day and posted its accompanying video on Youtube shortly after.

The album, recorded in the south of France, is released on the 28<sup>th</sup> August.

Talking about the new single, Yannis said, "It is one of the most savage and animalistic songs we've ever done. When we play it in a room, it just feels predatory, it feels like we're on a hunt or something. [Producer] James Ford really pushed me to get into a place with the vocal texture where it was just like berserk. He really pushed us and we couldn't be happier. It's going to be our best album, that's how we feel at the moment, which is unusual for us to feel that at ease. I think this is the record where a lot of the different sides of the band have come into focus."

Full tracklisting for the album is: 'What Went Down'; 'Mountain At My Gates'; 'Birch Tree'; 'Give It All'; 'Albatross'; 'Snake Oil'; 'Night Swimmers'; 'London Thunder'; 'Lonely Hunter', and 'A Knife In The Ocean'.

Machine; Julia Meijer and Dave Oakes. There'll also be storytellers, craft activities and massages. Things kicks off at 5.30 and tickets, priced £7 in advance, are available from Wegotickets.com.

**D-FEST** returns for another outing next month. The sixth annual Drayton music fest takes place on Dayton Green on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August – a change from its traditional home at the Red Lion pub. The move means an increased capacity to 400, with a full day of local bands performing. Full line-up details next month, but stick it in your diary thing for now.

**THE MONTHLY BLUES JAM** has been forced to move yet again. The long-running Thursday night jam moved from its home at The Jack Russell in Marston to The Ampleforth Arms in Risinghurst last year, but with the closure of that pub, they've found a new home at The Catherine Wheel in Kennington from this month. All musicians and blues fans are welcome. Fingers crossed this time it's a long-term home.

**AS EVER**, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Saturday night between 8-9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and sessions with local acts. The show is available to stream

or download as a podcast at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

**OXFORD GIGBOT** provides a regular local gig listing update on Twitter (@[oxgigbot](https://twitter.com/oxgigbot)), bringing you new gigs as soon as they go live. They also provide a free weekly listings email. Follow them.



**BLACK CANDY** are set to reform for a one-off show later this year. The local metal band will play at The Wheatsheaf on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July – their first gig in fourteen years. Speaking to Nightshift about the reformation, singer Joe Hill said, "we got together for a catch up over a beer and decided that everyone was happy to do it with no agendas, no stress, just a kick ass show for old times. Should be, if nothing else, cracking fun and a chance to get some old friends together for a night."



# REGGAE

## in Oxford

WHILST NEITHER HIP HOP (see January 2014’s edition of *Nightshift*) or heavy metal (November 2010’s issue) are genres immediately associated with Oxford, it is perhaps roots reggae music, with its aural suggestions of Jamaica, sunny beaches, burning the collie weed, and in particular its tales of the dreadlocked ghetto sufferer railing against Babylon the great downpressor, that could not seem more antithetical to the local context.

Oxford, with its University and related traditions, churning out prime ministers and politicians; its leafy gentility and deep seated conservatism, seems to encapsulate the system, the very entity that roots music is against. Yet there has been reggae music in the city since it first arrived in the UK in the 1960s.

SEVERAL SOUND SYSTEMS and DJs – including BBC’s Sir David Rodigan, who legend has it, sold records at a stall in Blackbird Leys as a youth – have operated from here, and some big names, including a number of bona fide Jamaican legends, continue to keep the city on their gig list. Pioneering dub producer Lee Perry was here recently and current reggae king Chronixx comes to town this month at the O2 Academy, as do Australian reggae fusion outfit Cat Empire.

The fractious relationship of lawless Caribbean culture meeting the establishment perhaps enhances

### LEO BOWDER, presenter of Destiny 105.1FM’s Riddim Show, investigates reggae in Oxford - a scene with a long and rich local history - and finds it in rude health.

the genre’s widespread appeal. Three years ago prime minister and Oxford graduate David Cameron was forced to distance himself from the proprietor of Cowley Road’s Hi Lo Eating House, Mr Hugh ‘Andy’ Anderson, after he was convicted of assault. Prior to this the two apparently used to “talk reggae music” till the early hours. As Anderson remarks, “David was one of our regulars. I think he liked the atmosphere. We get a real mixture of people here.”

IT IS PERHAPS THIS mixture, and a more general sense of contrast, that gives the scene its freshness. The Oxford reggae scene can be broken down to five main components: sound systems/ selectors; bands; venues, and punters.

### Sound Systems

THE SOUND SYSTEM, ITS selectors and MCs and everything that comes with them, remain the heart and soul of the reggae experience.

By all accounts Downbeat Sound was said to be the first big sound system to operate out of Oxford. Keeping it in the family, Sonny Golding, the main sound man, was the father of Slimma Golding, the late singer with local reggae band Mackating. Like many emerging sound systems in the 60s, Downbeat played US blues, blue note, ska, then rocksteady. Following on were Sir Jones Hi-Fi (whose son Andrew is well known locally as Asher Dust); Yard Force; Dubsetter; Sounds For I; Mr Big Stuff; Jamatone; Black Harmony; Sir Notch; Addis Ababa; Desta\*Nation and many more, with varying degrees of success.

OXFORD HAS LONG HAD AN ex-patriot Jamaican community bringing in records. Rocksteady gave way to the 1970s dub explosion, the 80s with its digital dancehall, lovers rock and then more militant UK roots and steppers. There was also the influence of nearby London, bringing sounds like Sufferah Sound (with Dennis Bovell) and

King David. THE NARRATIVE IS LONG and involved, but we can go to the likes of Gary Constant, aka Constant Jammin’, Danny Dread (Addis Ababa, now with Ma-Kaya Sound), and Nico D (Cornerstone) for the details, although a thorough chronology is beyond the remit of this piece. To paint in broad strokes, the sound system culture hit a zenith in the 70s and early 80s before the rave scene, drum&bass (and quite possibly crack cocaine) took over, drastically thinning the pack. Some of the major UK sounds stuck to their guns – in particular Jah Shaka, Channel One, and Aba Shanti – playing pure, simple, roots music. Nowadays, selectors tend to rely on the venue’s PA and simply turn up with records (the roots reggae scene has long had a tendency to be rabidly pro-vinyl), CDs, or – as is increasingly more common – a laptop and controller. The days of heavily-laden Bedford trucks criss-crossing the country from dance to dance are at an end.

This is not, however, without its practical benefits: “It mek it easier,” original Jamaican Nico tells me, outside the radio studio where he presents his show on local station Destiny 105FM. “fi da sound man dem. It was nice goin’ to da dance, but when it finish everybody tired to lif’ up dem box. And heavy record box – man might have three or four! Heavy! Much easier now.”

### Selectors

SITTING IN A SUNNY SPRING garden in a garden in Princes Street I speak to Count Skylarkin’ (Aidan to his friends), the ubiquitous dapper DJ/hype man of the Oxford scene, and a former regular contributor to *Nightshift* until his DJing commitments around the UK took hold. Aidan arrived in the city by happy accident in 1999.

“I found the music scene so welcoming. It felt like you could get to the heart of it so much quicker (compared to south London, where he came from – after growing up in Galway). I’ve got a love for all types of music, but I missed hearing reggae everywhere, so I quickly sought out the Oxford reggae scene and found it at the East Oxford Community Centre on a Wednesday night. That quickly became my big night out every week. I met Natty Mark (Natty Hi-Fi), and he encouraged me to come along and DJ; he was keen to involve anyone with a record collection and enthusiasm.

“Tyrone, Johnny Glasgow, Tommy Downbeat, Danny Dread, Nico and Baps: they were all very nice. My style developed by showing that you could play reggae in pubs and still get the ‘floating voters.’

“I was baptised Count Skylarkin’ by a wasted dancehall MC at 4am on a night I put on. There is a long tradition of that in Jamaica: King Stitt, Prince Jammy, Count Ossie... But I first heard the name through Massive Attack on 2FM when I lived in Ireland; ‘Five Man Army’ drifts off into the Horace Andy track; I looked up the word and I found it meant getting up to no good...”

Indeed... and Aidan can still be found regularly Larkin’ about at the Cellar spinning his selection of ska, rocksteady and roots as well as putting on various nights and acts.

### Bands

PLAYING OTHER PEOPLE’S music is one thing, making your own something else entirely (although Aidan has produced tracks with Harvey K-Tel). While more famed for its indie, Oxford has had many reggae bands, going back many years, the two longest standing being Dubwiser and Mackating, but newcomers The Dublings and Zaia are quickly making a name for themselves. Jonas Torrance, a singer and multi-instrumentalist, met Spider Johnson (drummer/multi-

instrumentalist/producer) when the two arrived at the same time for a session gig in London over two decades ago. As they developed their sound from eclectic strummers to a reggae covers band, a name change was in order. Allegedly the move from Rhythm Driven (who appeared on the front cover of *Nightshift* precursor *Curfew* back in 1993) to Dubwiser, came about as keyboardist Dr Jeff Zippy, under pressure to help think of a new name, suddenly considered his lager bottle,” says Jonas.

“The indie bands were always supportive of us; they all really liked reggae. Back in the day Mackating and Dubwiser used to play together and get big crowds. We did Christmas Eve shows at the Zodiac (now O2 Academy). They were meltdown shows. Steve Queralt, bassist from Ride, he played for Dubwiser, so did Dave Gaydon, who was the bassist with (early dub dance group) The Egg. We were always in the mix with the indie scene.

“One of the reasons the indie bands liked us was that we got people to move, while they were contained in this cerebral, shoe-gazing Oxford indie category. But the guys from Radiohead, Supergrass, they were all into reggae.”

WELL OVER TWO DECADES since their initial formation Dubwiser continue to go from strength to strength, with the foundation of Dubwiser Dancehall, an audio platform for supporting other artists and related genres, a new EP in the can, and enviable sets supporting The Wailers, Skatalites, and even Lee Scratch Perry at the O2 Academy.

Even alongside such greats, Dubwiser retain a committed, and animated, crowd of their own. Any advice for new reggae bands? “You have to get a crowd round you and don’t conform to stereotypes. Live reggae has become very stereotypical in terms of music, the ethos, the visual look – why do you think I’ve not grown my dreadlocks back? – everything, and that kills it.”

PRIOR TO MEETING JONAS *Nightshift* spoke to Daniel, Vicki and Lorraine from fellow local reggae mainstays Mackating, asking them to recall the scene back when they started out. Dave: “The older guys, Nico, Slimma, were really embracing of us lot; it was never a case of ‘what the fuck are you bunch of white



# REGGAE

## in Oxford

guys doing?” The Oxford reggae scene is much less moody than you’d find in London. We went into the studio at the same time we were putting out Supergrass’s single on Backbeat (the label Daniel ran with brother and bandmate Dave Norland, who sadly passed away last year). In fact we bought our instruments – quite a few of them – off selling their records. “Mackating was a predominantly white band. We had Slimma (who passed away in 2003) who was fronting us, and he was a Rasta, but it meant that we were not a righteous, UK dub outfit. Desta\* Nation was more upbeat, no-one’s frowning on you for having a drink. In 94-95 there was just indie music happening in Oxford, or it felt like it, apart from us, as Mackating, Dubwiser and maybe The Egg; there wasn’t anything to dance or go out and have a good time to. Our first gig was at The Bullingdon and we advertised it with the red gold and green posters we put together ourselves, and it

was absolutely packed; it showed us that people really wanted something else.” Hugo Makepeace remembers the developing inclusiveness of the scene. “There’s a point at which people, coming from a white, middle class background take in reggae, because reggae and where its coming from is a consciousness beyond the limits of the paradigms of middle class culture.” Is it a spiritual thing? “What is spirit? It’s just mind, and being in the here and now and being able to accept what’s happening next. But the message is a revelation and Rastafari is at the centre of the message.”

**HUGO, AS WELL AS** performing with Mackating and occasionally Dubwiser and Jamatone, puts on roots nights, including roots legend Macka B, Wayne McArthur and The Disciples at the Cellar. Additionally he presents the Desta

Nation show on Destiny 105 every Sunday night. Newer bands to the scene include Zaia, a seven-strong band who played at the *Nightshift*-organised Oxford Punt in May, who morphed into their present incarnation from experimental dub outfit Raggasaurus, and The Dublings, established in 2010. Both bands (along with Mackating, who have survived the deaths of mainstays Slimma and Dave Norland) went through various personnel changes, and both, in different ways, draw inspiration from a variety of sonic sources, including folk, indie and good old rock and roll. Zaia have a new EP, ‘Challenge 145’, out this month, while The Dublings’ album from last year, ‘Chameleon’, shows the breadth of their approach.

### Venues

**PART OF THE QUESTION OF** where to put on the sound system or band is that of space. In the mid/

late 90s the free party/outdoor rave scene was fairly healthy (prior to the hated Criminal Justice Act with its clamping down on ‘repetitive beats’ and large groups of merry-makers). Desta\*Nation got around this for some time by setting up their system on Port Meadow, and these events are recalled with much fondness. Venues past and present include the much-missed Caribbean Club, which stood on Paradise Street; The Brickworks (now rechristened The Library); The Regal (now the Christian Life Centre and no longer a live music venue); East Oxford Community Centre, and the M3 pub on Cowley Road. Even the Road itself, in the form of annual Cowley Road Carnival, remains one of the few places you can hear a full system outside. With Oxford’s Field Frequency still regularly playing it, plus smaller systems set up at regular intervals, the Road is given a Notting Hill vibe, albeit in much more manageable form.

**THE O2 ACADEMY FIRST** started putting on the Reggae Christmas in the late 90s when the venue was still The Zodiac, and from then on has continued to put on myriad international reggae acts, from Horace Andy and The Skatalites to Toots & The Maytals and The Wailers. There is also the Cellar, the venue many local reggae fans most associate with the genre. Manager Tim Hopkins explains the strong association. “The Cellar opened in 1999 and we started doing reggae with Desta\* Nation sound system. They used to put half of their (speaker) stack up to the ceiling and they’d be at a high table in the middle and they’d literally shake the place. I’d go up to them and say ‘please turn down the bass, because the glasses are falling off the shelves.’ They used to rave up on a Thursday, then Mackating came on the stage, and we had (Aidan) Skylarkin’:

we’ve had a stream of good quality reggae acts coming down here. There’s been bands that have approached me directly and we’ve put them on in house, or we’ve had Hugo (Makepeace) and various other promoters and larger, touring acts like Mad Professor, Dub Smugglers, Wrongtom, junglists such as Congo Natty, etc. and lots of crossover acts; The Cellar really lends itself to those sorts of styles because it’s an alternative music venue that’s a little bit scruffy; it’s not too polished and people feel comfortable down here listening to that type of music. It’s not stuffy; you can be yourself. Also, we’ve got quite a lot of bass; it’s got nice low ceilings, there’s no windows for the sound to glance off. You get a really good sound down here, all the concrete and wood absorbs, it’s all tucked in. Bands can hear themselves well down here, that’s why it lends itself to bassy, reggae style music.”

**ACROSS TOWN AT THE** newly refurbished Bullingdon, general manager Paul Williams is equally keen to support the local reggae scene; when he’s not running the venue he plays sax in Zaia. “We use to go to The Zodiac, last Thursday of every month with DJ Derek (Bristol’s elder statesman selector) and Count Skylarkin’. They were the ones that shaped my soul into reggae and going to the Dub Pub at East Oxford Community Centre; that was where I played my first gig with Raggasaurus. It was terrible but I loved it. Me, bassist Dave (Tomlinson) and guitarist Josh (Hughes) loved DJing and we started playing around, putting club nights on. We started a night called Dub Politics, which was more dubstep dance, but also reggae as House of Roots. The biggest night we put on was after Christmas with David Rodigan at The Cellar a few years ago; it was absolutely crazy. We’ve done Channel One in London, Iration Steppas in Leeds, Mungo’s Hi Fi in Glasgow. We got Gentleman’s Dub Club at The Cellar and O2, Congo Natty at the Bullingdon. I got involved in the Cowley Road Carnival and had a stage behind Tesco’s and put on Dublings and Zaia. I’ve been promoting at the Bullingdon since I was allowed in, 10 years ago. It’s been through a few changes of hands, and the plans for renovation, including a powerful new PA system, went through in January.”

### Punters

**OF COURSE, THERE WOULD** be no scene of any genre but for the fans, and as much as, perhaps more, than any sub scene, reggae fans come in all shapes and sizes ages, colours and creeds. Whereas when we started attending such events in the 90s, we were often the odd one out, in a ‘white man in Hammersmith Palais’ stylee, now it’s almost the other way around, with white punters generally making up the majority. In addition, students make up, as always, a large proportion of the attendees at any roots reggae event, and especially that of its younger hyperactive cousin, Jungle. Free Range (who, with young roots selector Red I and Roots Guidance, promoted Channel One twice) continue to put on Jungle Junction, a regular Cellar gig, and Serial Killaz, from Reading, have been regulars at the Bullingdon.

**REGARDING STUDENTS,** Aidan Larkin puts it well: “You’ve got to engage with the students, because you can never rely on your friends to come.” Nico tells me, “It more of a mix these days. Before, not so much. And it’s a younger crowd. Every generation different but people go to reggae dance, their dad and mums did too, same way. Reggae mek a big impac’ in Oxford!” From banging the low ceiling at The Cellar, to creating a piece of Notting Hill on the Cowley Road the local punters regularly make their presence felt in a more rowdy style perhaps than their indie rock counterparts. In its myriad forms and formats, it seems Oxford reggae is here to stay.

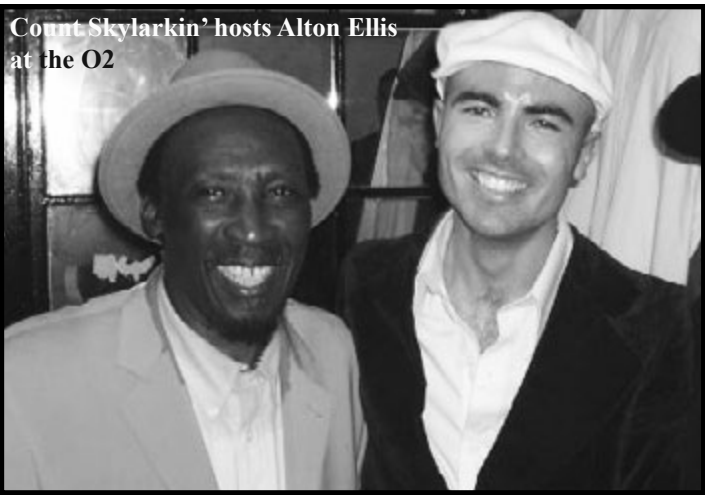
*As well as the venues mentioned above for live shows, DJs and bands, local Oxford radio station Destiny 105.1 FM is where reggae can always be heard for free. Other related programs are the Riddim Show (dub and roots, with Leo B), on a Wednesday evening followed by dancehall with Sir Sambo (with Romy and Elvis, who also have a show on a Sunday afternoon), One Drop (modern reggae with Garvin Dan and D-90 ) and Ultra Culture (jungle with Rob C and Rich Raw ) on a Thursday and the aforementioned Cornerstone (classic selection with Baps and Nico) and Desta\* Nation (roots and culture with Hugo and Daniel Norland) on a Saturday and Sunday respectively.*



Macka B at the Cellar



Aston Barret plays at the O2 with The Wailers



Count Skylarkin’ hosts Alton Ellis at the O2



Exodus Soundsystem



Zaia



# RELEASED

## FOALS

### ‘What Went Down’

(Warners)

There’s a moment in the video for Foals’ new single where Yannis steps back from the mic he’s been near enough chewing to shreds to reveal, not the skinny figure of yer typical indie singer but a squat, muscular frame that closer resembles Henry Rollins. Cut to a bull terrier hurtling off for a fight and a wild swim session that becomes an open water punch-up. If you want to know what ‘What Went Down’ sounds like, it’s the musical equivalent of those three images pulped into one by a giant fist.

Much as they did last time round with the phenomenal ‘Inhaler’, and in particular ‘Providence’, Foals return to the fray all wound up and ready to lash out. You imagine producer James Ford hid the band’s favourite toys before repeatedly poking them with a sharp stick when they were looking the other way just to get them to a point where they were tense enough



to record this. The fresh, cool air of ‘Spanish Sahara’ has long since been curdled into a sweaty, claustrophobic fug from which Foals are in a frantic state to escape. On this showing they could punch through solid oak doors to do it. ‘What Went Down’ – it’s a bit of an animal.

**Dale Kattack**

## WALTZ IN THE SHALLOW END

### ‘Spokes’

(Bear On A Bicycle / Truck Store)

A stroll across Port Meadow or alongside the Thames in Ifley on a summer Saturday will rarely make you want to give up all hope in humanity, and even if the likes of Undersmile manage to extract a degree of doom from the Oxford music scene, there are more than a few bands who reflect that this is actually a pretty smashing place to live. The downside to that is the danger that some bands’ music tends towards the overly jaunty and can be akin to overdosing on Ben’s Cookies from the Covered Market.

That was my initial fear on listening to Waltz in the Shallow End’s debut EP: the threat of insufferable perkiness loomed large. Thankfully, this is far more layered and interesting than that; it’s a pleasingly harmonic mood enhancer of an EP. Opener ‘Strawberry Laces’ recalls Aussies Architecture in Helsinki – perhaps unsurprisingly given the presence of amiable Truck Store barista Trenton Smith in the band – his ‘visa fund’ on the counter should be heartily added to. As the track develops, the drumming becomes more and more insistent and marks it out as just the right side of the alternative/mainstream divide, while the strongest cut on the EP is up next - ‘Io’'s opening harmonies give way to a flurry of brass.

After a closing “cha cha cha” that could have emanated straight from the Folies Bergères, closer ‘Jules et Jim’ has a Gallic feel that is all the more intriguing given that this is a three piece – with local stalwart Jordan O’Shea teaming up with Smith and Kaye Dougall, one hopes there is no potential for disquiet in the manner of that movie’s love triangle. Before that, ‘Penelope’ recalls another local songster in Willie J. Healey and the trumpet maintains consistent performance. Probably not an EP for the Wheatsheaf in the

Sponsored by



## ASHER DUST

### ‘Righteous Boombox’

(Self released)

It’s not a new thing of course but it’s still refreshing to hear artists with many years of experience under their belts seemingly freed from the constraints of trying to be commercially relevant. Asher Dust is a few decades behind Scott Walker or Yoko Ono age-wise but he’s been making music since the 1980s, including two stints signed to major record labels. The realisation that pursuing mainstream success comes at the price of a little bit of your soul has led him out on a far more rewarding journey in recent times, his expansive, esoteric horizons making him a genuinely maverick figure on the local scene.

He’s prolific in the extreme too, and it can be difficult to keep up with everything he releases, but this latest full album might be a good starting point for anyone new to his music and daunted by his extensive back catalogue. Yes, it’s hip hop, yes it’s electronica, and yes it’s dub, but it’s plenty more besides and never, ever fully fits into any of those genre pigeonholes.

For starters ‘Righteous Boombox’ can barely sit still, fidgeting with almost manic energy for the most part, wearing its disjointed nature as a badge of honour, from the skittish, trippy, burbling opening title track, a suitably righteous call to arms to destroy prejudice of all kinds, to the squelching, militant ska-flavoured electronica of ‘This Life’, on through the woozy, crazed dub scurry of ‘Hey Love’ and the almost queasily phased-out ‘Not Quite But Nearly’.

It’s decidedly lo-fi but neatly constructed stuff, Asher Dust’s distinctive grating soul boy delivery a sometimes potty-mouthed but melodic core amid some often seriously scouring electronic noise. However, it’s the more considered, and darker ‘Junk Heart’ that provides the album’s real highlight, AJ exploring a part of his personal history he’ll be glad to have left behind.

Perhaps too scattershot and unpolished to appeal to many genre diehards, ‘Righteous Boombox’ should be worth investigating by anyone more interested in music that in some ways doesn’t even know where its headed itself; far preferable to artists content to stay trapped in their own comfort zone.

**Dale Kattack**



## JALI FILY CISSOKHO

### ‘Diatakendiya’

(Kaira-Arts)

Kora maestro and griot Jali Fily Cissokho is now very much part of the local scene, including being a regular at WOOD festival. He’s yet to write a praise song for WOOD organisers the Bennett brothers though, and his fourth album is firmly rooted around his home town Ziguinchor in southern Senegal.

A great strength of the album is Fily’s easy on the ear baritone voice. Singing in his native language he varies its pitch and expression, being

## ZAIA

### ‘Challenge 145’

(Dub Politics)

Although they’ve been on the local scene for a couple of years now, Challenge 145’ is Zaia, the band who formed from the ashes of Raggasaurus,’ debut release. It’s a fun collection of songs which crosses over genres but with reggae at its heart. EP opener ‘Island’ sets a mellow tone with just a hint of melancholy, one that fades as the beat kicks in. The distortion is vaguely reminiscent of a euro-pop hit but the harmonies are tight. The energy builds up as the EP progresses and following track ‘Letter To An Old Friend’ is upbeat and catchy. The EP closes with ‘Wound Up’, which sounds similar to the previous track but is still a pleasant enough listening experience. Amy MacKown’s vocals tend to play second fiddle to the band’s slick musical arrangement and groove, but with a strong pop-friendly element throughout, ‘Challenge 145’ is a

variously declamatory (‘Diatakendiya’), playful (‘Miniamba’), plaintive (‘Adja Bintou Konte’) and laid back (‘Elhadji Dudu’). The opening title track is a template for what follows. Fily’s voice and kora snake around one another; notes cascade yet astonishingly each one remains crystal clear. Fily, the helpful liner notes tell us, is wishing good health to everyone, a generosity of spirit that runs through the whole album.

He’s accompanied on most tracks by Amadou Diagne, whose sympathetic percussion adds a satisfying depth and compulsive rhythm to the album, while Dave Noble (aka Nature Boy) plays beautifully crisp jazz guitar on a couple of songs.

Some numbers have instant appeal. These tend to be ones on which voice and instrumental march in step, like the beautifully lilting ‘Minamba’, a story of a giant snake doing a good deed. There is plenty too for lovers of greater rhythmic complexity, for example ‘Manu Dabo’.

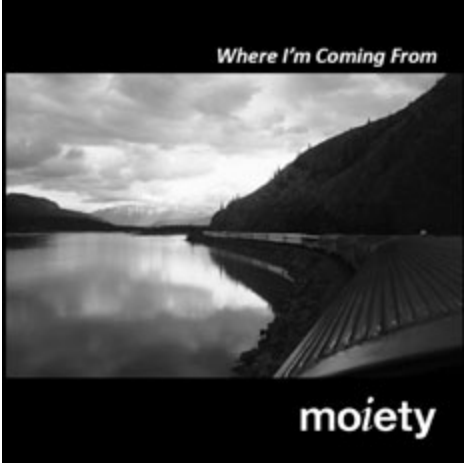
The final track, ‘Kelefaa Baa’, is an odd inclusion being to the kora what ‘Chopsticks’ is for those learning the piano. Jali Fily threw away his L plates a long time ago, but he makes it a fun track using an old style kora which sounds different to his usual one. Surprisingly for such a great kora player, the only other instrumental track is the one disappointment. Overall, though, this is an album it’s a pleasure to chill to and give your imagination time to roam. But also if you turn the volume up it can have you dancing round the room.

**Colin May**



strong opening play from Zaia, and, unsurprisingly for a reggae band, it’s perfectly timed for the arrival of summer.

**Claire Vainker**



## MOIETY

### ‘Where I’m Coming From’

(Red Black Blue)

You know you’ve been around the Oxford music scene a while when you recognise a song on a local band’s new EP as a cover of another local band’s song from almost 25 years ago.

Actually that’s not strictly accurate. The song in question, ‘A Wish Away’, was part of local legends The Anyways’ canon back in the early 90s and was written by guitarist Mark Price who is these days guitarist with Moiety. So he’s essentially reworking his own song. But, y’know, the fact we recognised it after all this time shows that some of the old grey matter still functions. It also shows what a good tune it is. Back in its original incarnation it was sung by Richard Ramage; here it’s Deborah Glass-Woodin, lending the track a kind of psych-folk edge to its west coast pop chime, an edge that tips into full-blown 60s-style psychedelia on ‘Burning Bridges’, a song Jefferson Airplane wouldn’t have been ashamed to call their own. Here Deborah duets with Pete Lock, another veteran of The Anyways, his high, almost keening voice a good foil to Deborah’s tender but steely delivery, obstinate bass line and organ hum upping the lysergic mantra feel of the EP’s stand-out number.

‘Domino’ might be a throwaway piece, a half-formed jam rather than a coherent song, but at their best Moiety show, like true elder statesmen, that they’ve still got class where it’s needed.

**Dale Kattack**

spans are exhausted counters that worry and Elliot remains one of the leading pack of local MCs.



## ELLIOT FRESH & REEPLAY

### ‘The Moth & The Flame’

(Inner Peace)

Rapper Elliot Fresh is increasingly one of the most recognisable voices in local hip hop, his steely, straight-down-the-line rudeboy delivery increasingly escaping any Streets comparisons as he remains dedicated to an old-school approach to the genre. In this he’s ably abetted on this new album by Reeplay, whose lo-fi samples and beats forego slick production or extravagant arrangements for shadowy, shuffling piano and electronics that sometimes sound like they escaped from a home for disturbed jazz lounge tunes.

Clocking in at a little over 30 minutes, and eschewing the plethora of guest MC appearances

and tedious incidental skits that can make too many rap albums overlong indulgent trawls, ‘The Moth & The Flame’ is succinct and cohesive, only Tony Skank’s appearance on ‘Questions Missing Answers’ detracting from Elliot’s words and rhymes. He even goes as far as conducting call-and-response verses with himself on a couple of tracks.

Lyrically and vocally he’s at his best dealing with social issues, like inner city riots on ‘Questions...’ where his abrupt delivery reveals both intelligent thought and skilful wordplay. The more confessional and conversational ‘Pop’, though, reveals a more philosophical side to his writing, even if there’s a bit too much information in recounting his first sexual (mis)adventures. Highlight, though, is ‘Skimming Stones’, with Reeplay’s funky jazz shuffle and skronk providing a more prominent foil to Fresh’s words.

There’s little variety in the rapping across a full album, but the fact it clocks out well before attention

# G I G G U I D E

## WEDNESDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**SARAH JANE SCOUTEN: The Bullingdon** – Gorgeously atmospheric old-time country, folk and bluegrass from Montreal’s Sarah Jane Scouten, over in the UK to promote her second album, ‘The Cape’, capturing the spirit of the mountains and forests of her native Canada.  
**CAT EMPIRE: O2 Academy** – Good-time Latin dance, reggae, ska and jazz fusion from Melbourne’s festival-friendly collective The Cat Empire, mixing up lively Cuban-style party tunes with Marley-esque reggae numbers and back over in the UK to promote their new, seventh album, the follow-up to 2013’s ‘Steal The Light’.  
**BASS NATION: The Cellar** – Weekly bass club night.

## THURSDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**THE BILLY WALTON BAND: The Bullingdon** – Blues-rock in the vein of Hendrix, Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan from the New Jersey guitarist, who has played around his local scene since his early teens, jamming with Springsteen, Gary US

## Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>

### CONAN / DIESEL KING: The Wheatsheaf

Conan – the mighty ancient warrior and destroyer of all who stood in his path. Yeah, that sounds about right for a name for a band who Buried in Smoke promoter and Desert Storm drummer Elliot Cole – a man who knows a thing or two about monstrous rock noise – claims to be the loudest band he has ever witnessed. Bring it on. The Liverpool trio have been a leviathan on the live circuit since 2006, originally a two-piece, and their trademark has remained resolutely the same since they started: huge, heavily distorted, downtuned doom (“Caveman battle doom,” as they describe it themselves), that is in no hurry to get from start to finish but is going to crush everything along the way, like Godzilla with a bank of Marshall Stacks as big as a Tokyo skyscraper. The sheer tone of their slow-motion but relentless onslaught could strip the skin from your skeleton with ease. There’s suitably heavyweight support tonight from London’s Diesel King – more sludgy downtempo brutality, inspired by Black Sabbath, the band having previously supported Corrosion of Conformity and Karma To Burn. Don’t come crying to us if it hurts.



# JULY

Bonds and Double Trouble along the way.  
**WALTZ IN THE SHALLOW END + MOTHERWORLD: The Cellar** – Launch gig for Waltz in the Shallow End’s debut EP, ‘Spokes’, released on Bear on a Bicycle, the band, featuring recent *Nightshift* cover star Jordan O’Shea treading a lighter, more upbeat acoustic pop path than his desolate solo musings.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf** – Free unplugged show in the downstairs bar from the veteran local swamp-rock, festival funk, ska and psychedelic pop outfit.  
**DIRTY VALUABLES + WE HAVE A DUTCH FRIEND + MOGADISHU TUNA: The Jericho Tavern** – Post-hardcore and alt.rocking from locals Dirty Valuables at tonight’s It’s All About the Music gig.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford’s longest running and best open night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers, performance artists and more every Thursday.  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Kennington**

## FRIDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**THE MIDNIGHT GHOST TRAIN + DESERT STORM: The Cellar** – Energetic, superfuzzed and decidedly growly stoner-blues rocking from Kansas’ Midnight Ghost Train at tonight’s Buried In Smoke show, the band mixing classic Led Zep and Blue Cheer blues-rock riffage with Kyuss and Clutch on excellent new album ‘Colder the Ground’. And who else but local stoner/blues titans Desert Storm could match them?  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with CALLOW SAINTS + AMORAL COMPASS + SILK ROAD + MOOGIEMAN + THE MASOCHISTS: The Wheatsheaf** – Klub Kak’s monthly mix’n’match musical goody bag tonight brings Aylesbury rockers Callow Saints to town alongside local lo-fi dirge-core duo Amoral Compass, metallers The Silk Road and quirky anti-folk chap Moogieman.  
**BLOODSTOCK METAL TO THE MASSES – THE FINAL: The Bullingdon** – The long-running band competition to win a slot at this year’s Bloodstock Festival reaches its finale with Hell’s Gazelles, Evavoid, The Reaper, K-Lacura and more to be confirmed, up against each other to see who is the rockiest rock band around.  
**DEAD RAT ORCHESTRA: Modern Art Oxford** – Essex experimental collective Dead Rat Orchestra return to town after their show at The North Wall in May where they played a live improvised score to the classic silent documentary *Nanook of the North*. This time they will be performing a live soundtrack to James Holcombe’s *Tyburnia*, a historical document of public executions over the last 600 years, mixing

reworkings of traditional ballads through the ages with original material.  
**THE STONES: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute to The Beatles, no, The Kinks, no, oh, work it out.

## SATURDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**CONAN + DIESEL KING + DEAD EXISTENCE: The Wheatsheaf** – None-more-heavy doom noise from the Liverpooldian trio – *see main preview*  
**PEERLESS PIRATES + MARK COPE + 31HOURS + VAGUEWORLD + SWEET PINK + CHARLIE LEAVY: The Bullingdon** – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase with roustabout indie rockabilly crew Peerless Pirates mixing up spaghetti western soundtracks and Balkan dance with classic Smiths-inspired indie, plus lachrymose singer-songwriter Mark Cope, introverted indie janglers 31Hours, fuzzy pop-punk from this month’s *Nightshift* Demo of the Monthers Vaguelworld, 80s-styled funky pop from Sweet Pink and sweet melodic folk-pop from Charlie Leavy.  
**BEDROCK: The Bullingdon** – Skeletor’s monthly rock and metal club night, playing heavy classics and new releases.  
**SKITTLE ALLEY ALL-DAYER: King’s Head & Bell, Abingdon (midday)** – The Skittle Alley hosts a full day of live music, with sets from bluesman Beard of Destiny; café-pop crew Les Clochards; electro duo STEM; Americana types Superloose; gothic troubadour Mark Bosley; blues and boogie man Mudslide Morris, and 60s-styled campfire pop trio Boon, Mew & Wooster, amongst others.  
**WHAT YOU CALL IT, GARAGE?: The Cellar** – UK garage, bass and grime club night.  
**HONOLULU COWBOYS: St Giles Church Hall (6pm)** – Hawaiian tea dance with live music from Honolulu Cowboys.  
**THE STANDARD: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Classic and contemporary pop hits.

## SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**CARNIVAL: Cowley Road** – Annual celebration of east Oxford music and culture takes over the length of Cowley Road again with myriad stages, sound systems and dance displays – *see main preview*  
**THE PHARSYDE: O2 Academy** – LA’s weed-worshipping hip hop survivors bring the party to town – *see main preview*  
**SUPERLOOSE + BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON LEOPARD + MARK BOSLEY: Donnington Community Centre (6pm)** – Free evening of acoustic blues, Americana and folk.  
**MUDSLIDE MORRIS: Joe Perk’s, St Clement’s** – Acoustic blues and boogie.

## MONDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**JESS HALL + OWL & MOUSE + SMITTENS: The Library** – Divine Schism hosts local folkstress Jess Hall with her seashore songs, alongside London’s acoustic folk-pop people Owl & Mouse and Vermont’s twee jangle-pop outfit The Smittens.

**MEGAN HENWOOD: Nettlebed Folk Club** – The local folk singer launches her ‘Head, Heart, Hand’ album at the renowned folk club, joined by club resident and regular collaborator Jackie Oates.

## TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB with HEAVY DEXTERS: The Bullingdon** – Free live jazz from Heavy Dexters, playing jazz-funk covers and originals.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

## WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**STRIKE 1 + HEROICS + I SAID YES: The Wheatsheaf** – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.  
**BASS NATION: The Cellar**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Fir Tree**

## Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>

### CARNIVAL: Cowley Road

Now firmly back where it belongs – on the actual Cowley Road – Carnival continues to be the single largest music event in the local calendar. Not just a music event of course – Carnival is a celebration of all of east Oxford life, with the diversity of the area recognised in live music, dance and food, attracting over 40,000 people to five hours of fun running from The Plain up to Magdalen Road. There’ll be the traditional parade, based on the theme of Creating Our Future, while music stages and sound systems line the road and adjoining streets. Among the highlights will be 20-strong traditional Cuban dance ensemble Ran Kan Kan (*pictured*) and melting pot indie stars Balloon Ascents, both on the Manzil Stage; American singer-songwriter Caitlin Cook, Essex’s urban pop chap on the rise Glenn Godfrey, long-time local *Nightshift* fave Jada Pearl and 14-year-old songsmith Arthur Conway, all on the Melody Stage, plus roving sets from regulars Sol Samba and Horns of Plenty, alongside newcomers Rhythms Craft, a drum troupe who build their instruments from recycled materials. Add in the disparate likes of blues rockers Little Brother Eli; jazz/soul singer Nikki Loy; old-skool rapper Rhymeskeemz and friends; soulful dub stars Zaia and bass-heavy DJ collective Dutty Moonshine, plus an assortment of young musicians on the Kate Garrett stage and there’s more than enough to be going on with. Music ranges from Carnival staples like reggae, dub and ska, through indie and pop, to sounds from Nepal and West Papua, while part of Tesco car park will become Cowleyfornia, with SS20 hosting a beach and skate park. And of course when it all packs up at 5pm, the party continues in assorted venues and pubs along the route.



## THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**THEO TRAVIS: The Wheatsheaf** – Spin jazz club with progressive jazz flautist and saxophonist Theo Travis.  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free unplugged show in the downstairs bar from the idiosyncratic local blues-rock veteran.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Kennington**

## FRIDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate** – Razorlight, The Fratellis and Larkin Poe top the bill on the opening day of the annual festival – *see main preview*  
**THE AMAZONS: The Bullingdon** – Anthemic power-pop from Reading’s Amazons.  
**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Dancefloor Latin, Afrobeat, Balkan beats, global grooves and nu-jazz club night, tonight with a live set from local funk and soul man David Noble in his Natureboy guise, playing a more dancefloor-friendly set. Plus world tunes from host Dan Ofer and more.  
**THE JELAS + TWO WHITE CRANES + WILD SWIMMERS + THE BLUE PERIOD: The Wheatsheaf** – Burn the Jukebox bring the lo-fi noise once again, tonight with Bristol’s angular, spasmodic mathcore crew The Jelas; Roxy Brennan from Mountain Parade’s fuzzpop project Two White Cranes; Reading strumblers Wild Swimmers, and Nottingham’s indie/shoegaze people The Blue Period.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The James Street Tavern**  
**THE TROY REDFERN BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney**

## SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate** – Sir Tom Jones, Lulu and Blue bring the showbiz glamour to the second day of Cornbury – *see main preview*  
**THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: The Said Business School Amphitheatre (4.30pm)** – The third annual charity fundraiser – this year in aid of All For One and Ambulatory Care at the JR – features a strong local and out of town line-up, including twenty-strong Cuban big band Ran Kan Kan, playing classic Cuban dance tunes. They’re joined by eclectic indie/electronica/folk/dub/blues starlets Balloon Ascents, alt.country faves The Dreaming Spires; new wave-tinged rocking from The Shapes; Americana from Co-Pilgrim; folk and Americana from The Black Feathers, and acoustic rock from Rutland singer/songwriter Paul McLure.  
**THE SHERLOCKS: The Bullingdon** – Arctic Monkeys-style rocking from Sheffield’s Sherlocks, out on tour to promote new single ‘Escapade’, following supports to Scouting For Girls, Reverend & the Makers and The Enemy.  
**1000 CHAINS + GO AHEAD, DO IT, JUMP: The Cellar** – Melodic rock and metal from 1000 Chains.  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar**

## SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate** – Supertramp’s Roger Hodgson closes the show on the final day of Cornbury – *see main preview*  
**XII BOAR + TEN FOOT WIZARD + THE**



## Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>

### THE PHARCYDE: O2 Academy

Back in 1992, when south-central LA crew The Pharcyde released their debut album, they stood at odds with the dominant gangsta rap scene, with their funky jazz grooves and boisterous, playful rhymes about smoking weed and, erm, smoking more weed. Like De la Soul before them, they were about having a good time all of the time and for a short while it served them well, at least until the good times dried up with a vengeance. Having started out as dancers, Imani, Bootie Brown, Slimkid and Fatlip were fresh air on the rap scene and a great live band – going on to tour with De la Soul and A Tribe Called Quest as well as playing Lollapalooza, which cemented their crossover credentials – but even as they were recording ‘Bizarre Ride II The Pharcyde’ infighting was taking over, while producer j-Swift succumbed to crack addiction. Fat Lip left during the recording of ‘Labcabincalifornia’, and Slimkid was out of the door soon after. The hits dried up, sales flat lined and the band gradually disappeared into semi-obscurity, with sporadic collaborations (notably with Gorillaz) just about keeping the name alive. There were occasional shows but it was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that debut that reignited the band as a going concern and it’s that album Imani and Bootie Brown perform tonight, the good times back again for now.

**GRAND MAL: The Wheatsheaf** – Heavy-duty southern rockers XII Boar, somewhere between Motorhead and Black Sabbath from XII Boar at tonight’s Buried in Smoke show, plus monster blues and doom from Ten Foot Wizard, who have a song called ‘King Shit Of Fuck Mountain’, which makes us love them unreservedly.  
**SHALAMAR: O2 Academy** – The pioneering LA funk and disco crew reform for a hits tour. Massive in the early 80s when they enjoyed top 10 hits with ‘I Can Make You Feel Good’, ‘There It Is’ and ‘A Night To Remember’, they’re equally well remembered for featuring Jody Watley in their classic line-up and for frontman Jeffrey Daniel’s bodypopping and moonwalking skills, which earned him the chance to choreograph Michael Jackson’s ‘BAD’ and ‘Smooth Criminal’ videos.  
**PUPPET MECHANIC + ASTEROX + MARK ATHERTON + BEARD OF DESTINY: The Wheatsheaf (2.30pm)** – Free afternoon of acoustic music hosted by Klub Kakofanney.

## MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**MORELAND & ARBUCKLE: The Bullingdon** – Raw, gritty Delta-style blues and electric blues-rock from Kansas duo Aaron Moreland (guitar) and Dustin Arbuckle (vocals and blues harp), out





*Friday 10<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>*

## CORNBURY ESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate

In celebration of its first decade in existence in 2013, Cornbury Festival dubbed the occasion The Glorious Tenth, a self-conscious reflection of its reputation as Poshstock, one hardly hindered by a regular cast of guests that includes everyone from Jeremy Clarkson and Noel Edmunds to our own dear prime minister, who *Nightshift* was once a little disconcerted to discover standing behind us trying to dance to Echo & the Bunnymen with a typical dad-like dignity deficit.

But for all that the national press concentrate on these A-list VIPs, Cornbury is increasingly a rarity in the modern festival world – an event very much dedicated to the music rather than holistic escapism or banqueting tables – with an eclectic array of big-name stars, cult heroes, rising pop talents and some genuine oddball heroes appearing on its stages over the years.

This year’s line-up features three headliners that show off the best and worst of Cornbury: on Saturday night we have the very great **SIR TOM JONES**, a contender for greatest living Welshman for a catalogue of hits spanning five decades, from the timeless ‘It’s Not Unusual’, through ‘Green Green Grass of Home’, ‘Dellilah’ and ‘What’s New Pussycat’ to a string of collaborations – Art of Noise, Cardigans, Catatonia, Mousse-T, Wyclef Jean, Chicane – that reflect his pan-generational appeal and beyond-cool-or-not-cool standing as an artist. The idea that an hour or so in the company of Tom and his hits could be anything other than a massive barrel of fun is beyond dispute.

On the other end of the scale are Friday’s bill toppers, **RAZORLIGHT**. A band who should gaze upon Tom Jones’ majesty and weep, possibly before hurling themselves off the top of Mount Showbiz and onto the jagged rocks below. Sunday’s headline act, meanwhile, might not be a household name, but possesses a voice that most certainly is instantly recognisable. As singer, and chief songwriter, with Supertramp, **ROGER HODGSON** is the sound of 70s hits ‘Dreamer’, ‘Breakfast in America’ and ‘The Logical Song’, as well as half a dozen of the 70s biggest selling albums. Two out of three ain’t bad, eh?

Beyond these three table toppers is a cast that includes good-time rockney cult heroes **CHAS’N’DAVE** who continue their critical reappraisal by dusting off hits like ‘Ain’t No Pleasing You’ and ‘Gertcha’; legendary singer **MARTHA REEVES**, with The Vandellas, one of soul music’s most distinctive voices; enduring British r’n’b hero **BILLY OCEAN**, who would like you to stop faffing about in his dreams and get in his car when you’ve got a minute; even more enduring hitmaker **LULU** (she better play ‘The Man Who Sold the World’, else we’re going to sit in the bar and sulk), and enduring but perhaps

not in such a good way boy band **BLUE**, whose set we’re going to sit in the bar and sulk through, whatever they do or don’t play.

As with any good festival, many of the real highlights occur a little further down the bill. And so we have legendary punk poet **DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE**, whose sharp, sardonic rhymes earned him an honorary doctorate from the University of Manchester in 2013, and should puncture any airs and graces that might hover around the festival. Even more radical, and an actual doctor, is **HANK WANGFORD**, a man who was flying the flag for British country music decades before Americana was *de rigueur*. From touring in aid of striking miners to battling fascist skinheads onstage, the man has walked it like he talked it, and is probably the performer least likely to invite David Cameron onstage for a duet this weekend.

Perhaps the act we’re most looking forward to over the three days is **THE TREVOR HORN BAND**. The producer of massive hits for Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Grace Jones, Pet Shop Boys and ABC, as well as the voice of Buggles, he and a bunch of mates will be bringing a host of those hits to the main stage, and if you want to track *Nightshift* down and remonstrate with us for being nasty and rotten about Razorlight, you’ll find us leaping around wildly down the front for ‘Video Killed the Radio Star’. Country and folk as ever get a good look in at Cornbury, with **LARKIN POE** – who recently played a storming set at the Bullingdon – bringing their southern-fried take on blues and country rock to Great Tew, with **THE FELICE BROTHERS’** country-soul a similarly rootsy treat. Anglo-American suburban bluegrass ensemble **POLICE DOG HOGAN**, with their tales of shitty white wine and barbecues, are a band who never fail to entertain, while Bob Dylan-inspired singer-songwriter **JACK SAVORETTI** offers a more earnest exploration of the American folk tradition.

There is, of course, plenty more besides over the festival’s two main stages, while the third music stage, hosted by Charlbury Riverside Festival, brings a selection of local acts to Cornbury. **THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND** reprise last year’s excellent set, while **DREAMING SPIRES**, **ALPHABET BACKWARDS**, **LARRY REDDINGTON**, **HOPE & GLORY**, **TOLIESEL**, **BRICKWORK LIZARD** and **LES CLOCHARDS** are also flying the local flag. Comedy – with  **AISLING BEA**, **JOE LYCETT** and **KATHERINE RYAN** – and of course that essential oasis of quality dance **THE DISCO SHED** are also on the menu, and if Cornbury proudly sits on the civilised side of the festival fence, it’s no less fun for all that. In fact, spending the weekend in a field that doesn’t involve sitting in a puddle of someone else’s discarded noodles is an option we’ll happily take any day of the week.



on a UK tour to promote their fifth album, ‘7 Cities’. **WILL JOHNS + STEVE RODGERS + TOM IVEY: The Wheatsheaf** – Rootsy blues from Will Johns, a veteran of the UK blues scene with 15 years playing and touring under this belt, and nominated at the British Blues Awards for the last three years, out on tour to promote new album ‘Hooks and Lines’, and compared to Jeff Buckley, Ray Lamontagne and Scott Matthews. **MISCHA MacPHERSON TRIO: Nettlebed Folk Club** – The BBC Young Folk Musician of the Year comes to Nettlebed’s famous club, the Hebridean singer and clarsach player joined by Scottish border pipe player Conal McDonagh and guitarist Innes White.

### TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB with THE MARTIN PICKETT ORGANISATION: The Bullingdon** – The Bully’s free weekly jazz club plays host to the Martin Pickett Organisation. **INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse. **OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**BASS NATION: The Cellar**  
**SPARKY’S JAM NIGHT: The James Street Tavern** – Open mic and jam night.

### THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**CHRONIXX + DRE ISLAND: O2 Academy** – Reggae revival night at the Academy with rising young Jamaican star Chronixx (Jamar McNaughton Jr – son of singer Chronicle), mentored from a young age by Danny Browne and going on to song with Lutan Fyar amongst others before striking out as a singer in his own right. He’s over in the UK with his band Zincfence Redemption on the back of a string of singles and EPs, with fellow reggae revival starlet Dre Island in support. **ALISON RAYNOR QUINTET: The Wheatsheaf** – Spin Jazz Club with veteran bass player Alison Raynor and her band. **LUCY LEAVE + SLATE HEARTS: The Jericho Tavern** – Fuzzy psychedelic drone-pop and post-punk noise from promising newcomers Lucy Leave at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show. **STEVIE RAY LATHAM + THE APRIL MAZE: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Classic 60s-styled folk-blues in the style of Bob Dylan from London singer/songwriter Stevie Ray Latham, with support from Melbourne’s husband and wife duo The April Maze, with their stripped-back, often haunting dustbowl blues and alt.folk fairytales. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Kennington**

### FRIDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon** – The Charlatans are joined by Clean Bandit and Augustines amongst others on the first day of the annual gathering – *see main preview*  
**YARDFEST: The Courtyard, Bicester (6pm)** – The Courtyard Youth Arts Centre hosts its third summer Yardfest, an all-ages mini festival curated by the kids who use the club. This year’s headliners are Suffolk’s schlocky death-pop crew Fearless Vampire Killers who recently

released their second album, ‘Unbreakable Hearts’. They’re joined on the main stage by Newcastle’s anthemic punk-pop outfit Boy Jumps Ship, New Zealand grungers Rival State and fast-rising alt.rocker Empire, who have supported Max Raptor, Skindred and Arcane Roots along the way. On the local bands stage is a supporting cast that includes thrash crew Twisted State of Mind; well ‘eavy metallers The Reaper, Safety In Numbers, The Unknown and Lake Acacia. All proceeds go to the Young Minds charity. **JABRONI SANDWICH + GODSBANE + SUGAR DARLING: The Wheatsheaf** – Local metal in its various incarnations, with classic heavyweight noise from Jabroni Sandwich, plus proggy Viking metal from Godsbane and crazed hardcore noise from Sugar Darling. **JAKE QUICKENDEN + CONCEPT + CHRIS BOURNE: O2 Academy** – Another month, another not quite winner of *The X Factor*, another day closer to death. **THAMESFEST: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow** – First night of the beer and music festival, with blues, rock and more over two stages across the weekend. Today’s line-up features Sam Kelly, Missing Persians, Memphis Rattlesnakes, Matt Edwards, Callow Saints and Punchdrunk Monkey Club. **HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: James Street Tavern** – Bluegrass, country-folk and Americana. **JAMES BELL + JESSICA LAW + CLAIRE LEMASTER + MATT WINKWORTH: Phoenix Picturehouse** – An evening of acoustic music in the Picturehouse’s upstairs bar. **STEELEYE SCAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute night. **NIKKI LOY BAND: Woodstock Social Club** – Full band show from the local soul, jazz and acoustic pop singer.

### SATURDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon** – Basement Jaxx, Temples and Peter Hook & the Light head up today’s quality Truck bill – *see main preview*  
**THE INFLATABLES: O2 Academy** – Oxford’s premier ska tribute act celebrate 35 years of keeping the sounds of 60s Jamaica and Two Tone alive with a special party. Alongside their extensive catalogue of ska classics, they’ll be joined by ex-Specials man Neville Staple’s band, plus King Hammond, Skaville UK and The Duckworths. **PUPPET MECHANIC: The Cellar** – Indie and Americana from the local outfit. **SIMPLE: The Bullingdon** – House and techno club night. **THAMESFEST: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow (midday)** – Full day of live music at the free festival, with sets from Debbie Bond; Steamroller; Beard of Destiny; Barrelhouse; Bewarethisboy; Kataphor; The Pink Diamond Revue; Get Loose; The Other Dramas and Half Decent amongst others. **THE APRIL MAZE: The Fishes**  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar**

### SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**THAMESFEST: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow** – Final afternoon of music, today with Backbone Blues; Katy Jackson; Crayfish; Twizz Twangle; Jeep and Chris Gillett.

### MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**DELLA MAE + LOUD MOUNTAINS: The Bullingdon** – Pop-friendly country roots from

*Friday 17<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>*

## TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon

You can tell a lot about the nature of a festival by its rules and regulations. Which is why Truck remains our favourite. Why? Well, consider what you can and can’t take into the main arena: you *can* bring your own booze, but you *can’t* bring selfie sticks. And Katie Hopkins has been officially banned by the organisers too. So there’ll be no forking out a fiver for a plastic cup of weak lager, and nor will your enjoyment of your favourite act be ruined by a bunch of narcissistic twats gurning at their phone-on-a-stick right in front of you. Or a vomit-souled old hag spouting bigoted filth anywhere within a five mile radius. Not that Katie Hopkins would turn up at Truck anyway – too many people enjoying themselves without the need to inflict hatred on those less fortunate. Where’s the fun in that?

So yeah, anyway, Truck Festival. It’s not the biggest festival in the county by any stretch, but it remains the very heart of the local music calendar with its origins and story so tightly bound to the local music scene, and as ever there’s a host of local acts spread across its different stages.

This year’s two main stage headliners are big names by any festival’s standards. Friday sees enduring indie heroes **THE CHARLATANS** topping the main stage bill, a band celebrating over a quarter of a century at the top with their 12<sup>th</sup> album, ‘Modern Nature’, going Top 10 earlier this years. They’ve survived the death of two core members over the years, losing Rob Collins in a car crash and more recently drummer Jon Brookes to cancer. A great singalong finale to the first day, with outings for hits like ‘Weirdo’, ‘The Only One I Know’, North Country Boy’ and ‘Just When You’re Thinking Things Over’ all certain to get an airing. Topping Saturday’s bill are house veterans **BASEMENT JAXX**, the London duo having enjoyed a similarly enduring stay at the top, rising from the underground club scene to regular Top 10 placings and a brace of BRIT Awards, the big hits – ‘Rendez-Vous’, ‘Romeo’, Red Alert’ and the utterly mighty, Numan-sampling ‘Where’s Your Head At’ still at the core of their set.

In fact dance music is at the heart of this year’s Truck, with **SWITCH** hosting two late night sessions in the Barn. On Friday **DJ LUCK and MC NEAL** bring the party, while Saturday finds **SHY FX** take control. Back on the main stage, meanwhile, electro chart-toppers **CLEAN BANDIT** will doubtless provide two of the weekend’s anthemic moments with ‘Rather Be’ and ‘Real Love’.

The Barn of course has long been *Nightshift*’s favourite part of the festival, agricultural perfume or not, and this year’s band line-up is particularly



inviting, with **FAT WHITE FAMILY** bringing their own brand of sleazy, stinky gutter rock along on Friday, where they’re joined by Kent punk duo **SLAVES**, Leeds’ wired post-punk noisemakers **EAGULLS**, psych-core riffmongers **THE WYTCHEs**, Nottingham’s maniacal angular hardcore crew **BABY GODZILLA** and one-time local lo-fi noise-pop faves **POLEDO**, amongst others.

The following day **ALCOPOP!** and **BIG SCARY MONSTERS** host their own festival within a festival, with Truck regulars **PULLED APART BY HORSES** returning to Steventon to break anything they left unbroken last time, while Japanese psych-core groovers **BO NINGEN** are capable of wreaking as much destruction armed with just their guitars and some serious amounts of screaming as recently honoured fellow countryman Godzilla does with a few well-aimed stomps. Add in effervescent emo stars **TELLISON**, astonishingly intense instrumental crew **TALONS**, angular indie punks **WOAHNOWS** and Leeds’ **BRAWLERS**, who we love simply because they released and EP last years called ‘I’m A Worthless Piece of Shit’.

We’re running out of word count now and we’ve barely scratched the surface. Back on the main stage, potential showstealers of the entire weekend could be **AUGUSTINES**, Brooklyn’s anthemic rockers whose last visit to town ended with the band performing on the street to a capacity O2 Academy crowd before the police arrived and everyone – *everyone* – squeezed into the Library pub next door for the rest of the gig. Pushing them hard will be **PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING**, a band who prove that being clever doesn’t stop you being fun, their mix of driving electronic music, archive film footage and vintage samples having seen them bringing everything from the Soviet space programme, the Battle of Britain and the Royal Mail night train to brilliant life. Other main stage highlights should be lo-fi Glaswegian fuzz-popsters **HONEYBLOOD**, raucous pop-punk scrappers **DEMOB HAPPY**, pretty psychedelic pop starlets **TEMPLES**, electro-pop types **SUMMER CAMP** and modern jazzsters **KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS**.

Hell, we haven’t even mentioned The Market Stage yet, and that’s got Joy Division and New Order legend **PETER HOOK** on it, playing classic Joy Div songs to counteract all that nasty sunshine and good vibeness. There’s also freakoid grunge-pop quirkmesietrs **DARWIN DEEZ**, stoner haze rap-poet **GHOSTPOET** and winsome 60s-styled fluffly folk-pop singer **LUCY ROSE**.

And that’s where we must leave it. We haven’t mentioned so many of the treats on offer, packed into just two days. In fact, how would anyone find time to take selfies? Truck Festival: it’s great. It’s always been great. Let’s drink to that – from your own can if you like.



**PIG: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Feast of Fiddles spin-off featuring Hugh Crabtree on vocals and melodeon, Alan Whetton on sax, Martin Vincent on guitar, and Dave Harding on bass, together playing folk-rock, covers and community singing.

**TUESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>**

**JAZZ CLUB with ALVIN ROY & REEDS**  
**UNLIMITED: The Bullingdon** – Trad jazz, bop and swing with veteran clarinetist Alvin Roy and his Reeds Unlimited band.

**KID KIN + KANCHO! + FLAMMINGS:**  
**The Library** – Ambient/deafening electro-gaze, math-rock and post-rock from one-man sound army Kid Kin at tonight's Divine Schism show.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**CARSON WELLS + PJARO: The Library** – Free Smash Disco show with Aberdeenshire’s militantly angular emo/post-hardcore (in its truest sense) trio Carson Wells, touring their new EP ‘Tread A Northern Path’, and recalling Fugazi and Embrace (no, not *that* Embrace – Ian MacKaye’s 80s emo band). Support from Sheffield’s noise rockers Pjaro.

**BASS NATION: The Cellar**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Fir Tree**

**THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>**

## LINDSAY LOU & THE FLATBELLYS: The Bullingdon – Soulful bluegrass and rootsy

*Monday 20<sup>th</sup>*

# DELLA MAE / LOUD MOUNTAINS: The Bullingdon

It's quite a month for rootsy Americana at the Bully, with Angaleena Presley, Sarah Scouten and Lindsay Lou all playing the venue, but tonight may be the pick of the bunch, Boston's Grammy-nominated quintet managing that difficult task of paying due respect to the old time songs, while attempting to bring it into the modern pop world. Lead singer Celia Woodsmith's understatedly powerful voice and exquisite phrasing alongside award-winning fiddle player Kimbler Kudiker lead the line but they're more than ably backed by the band's rich harmonies and mix of banjo, accordion and mandolin. 2013's Grammy nominated 'This World Often Can Be' was a highly commercial updating of traditional American folk traditions and its eponymous follow-up continues that mainstream journey with sleight of hand – original songs mix it with covers of The Rolling Stones and even The Low Anthem's gorgeous 'To Ohio'. Support tonight comes from local Americana duo Loud Mountains.

Americana from Michigan's much-travelled harmony-heavy string band, over in the UK to promote their acclaimed 'Ionia' album.

**BIG BLUES NIGHT OUT: The Cellar** – It's All About the Music blues night, with Mad Larry and more.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**

**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**

**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Kennington**

**FRIDAY 24<sup>th</sup>**

**WESTERN SAND + DAKESIS + JEREMY LAWLER'S WINTER'S EDGE: The Cellar**  
– Classic melodic rock and southern rock from Bournemouth's Western Sand at tonight's OxRox gig, alongside Birmingham's proggy power-metal crew Dakesis.

**PEERLESS PIRATES + DIRTY VAUABLES: The Wheatsheaf**

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Bay Tree, Grove**

**SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup>**

**RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Mill Field, Charlbury** – First day of Oxfordshire's preeminent annual free music festival – *see main preview*

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with BE GOOD + RAYMONDE HOWARD + CLARK & MOORE: The Wheatsheaf** – Another mixed-bag showcase show from the good folks at GTI, tonight with excellent local post-doo-wop crew Be Good with their mix and match of 50s balladry, surf pop and prom tunes. They're joined by French singer Raymonde Howard, who's actually called Laetitia and comes from Saint Etienne (the city), and unsurprisingly shares certain attributers with Stereolab's Laetitia Sadier, as well as Saint Etienne (the band).

**KLASS VIBEZ: The Bullingdon SWANFEST: The Swan, Ascott-under-Wychwood (2pm)** – The Wychwood Folk Club host a full day of live music, featuring a headline set from Scottish singer Barbara Dickson, a chart-topping star in the 1980s who's moved back to her folk roots in the decades since, playing a mix of classic folk songs and her own material. She's joined on stage by Nick Holland. There's also music from The Skeptics, Pete Joshua, Blondes With Beards, The Linda Watkins Band, Mad Larry and Chalice.

**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar**

**SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**

**RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Mill Field, Charlbury** – Second day of the free festival – *see main preview*  
**BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm)** – Open blues jam.

**MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**

**TUESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**

**ANGALEENA PRESLEY BAND: The Bullingdon** – Classic Nashville country from the Kentucky-born singer and former member of platinum-selling country trio Pistol Annies, now drawing on her colourful personal life (from



Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>

# RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL:

# Mill Field, Charlbury

Still very much Oxfordshire's 'local' festival, and still very much free, the annual Riverside weekend is beaten only by Carnival as the biggest free music event in the county. In a busy summer of musical weekends it still stands out for both its quality of bands and the quantity of punters making the journey out to West Oxfordshire (the festival site is right next to Charlbury station, so there's no need to take the car). There are some 40 acts across three stages over the two days. Saturday's main stage line-up is topped by alt. country stars **THE DREAMING SPIRES** (*pictured*), who are joined by shiny synth-pop starlets **ALPHABET BACKWARDS**, dark and shiny post-punk crew **ZURICH**; lush, fidgety electro-tinged popsters **LOWWS**, and, from Birmingham, pop-reggae ensemble **KIOKO**. The following day Witney's stadium pop types **LEADER** head up the main stage, joined by electro-folk-dub-blues-indie stars **BALLOON ASCENTS**, disco-funk-honky-tonk ceilidh band **SAEDLY DORUS** & **THE HOOLIE BAND**, Parisian café-folk-meets-loungy-rock'n'roll veterans **LÉS CLOCHARDS**, swamp-bues and festival funkies **THE MIGHTY REDOX**, country-bluesman **LARRY REDDINGTON** and many more. Over on the second stage Truck Store and Rapture curate a line-up that leans heavily towards the local Americana scene with **KNIGHTS OF MENTIS**, **LOUD MOUNTAINS**, **THE AUGUST LIST** and **GREAT WESTERN TEARS**, as well the likes of swashbuckling indie rockabilly warriors **PEERLESS PIRATES**. Plenty more besides, including the traditional Riverside acoustic tent, and if the sun shines, there are few places we'd rather be over a summer weekend.

**BASS NATION: The Cellar**

**THURSDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**

**A SILENT FILM: The Bullingdon** – First Oxford show in a couple of years for the local piano-pop stars, having spent much of the last few years touring The States, playing to crowds of thousands at festivals and enjoying some serious chart action. Now pared back to a duo – singer and pianist Rob Stevenson and drummer Spencer Walker, they're due to release a new EP, 'New Year', the follow-up to 2012's 'This Stage is Your Life', their often epic piano-led alt. pop bringing comparisons to Coldplay and Snow Patrol as well as Editors and even Ultravox. The

most unassumingly successful local band of recent times; it'll be good to have them back again.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**

**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**

**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Kennington**

**FRIDAY 31<sup>st</sup>**

**SWORN TO OATH + I CRIED WOLF:** The **Bullingdon** – Stoke on Trent's thrash/metalcore merchants head out on a national tour to promote debut album 'Pillars', mixing melody and big ol' hooks into their brutal noise.

**SKYLARKIN'S SOUNDSYSTEM:** The **Cellar** – Count Skylarkin's monthly reggae, dancehall and bass night shifts to the last Friday of the month, tonight featuring a live set from Irish dancehall party starters Dirty Dubsters and prolific south London reggae singer 2Nice. The Dublin-based DJ/production duo Obese and Jay Sharp, who made their Oxford debut last year rock the house with a bass-heavy take

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on classic Jamaican music old and new. 2Nice, meanwhile, has worked with Cotti, Congo Natty and Jinx-in-Dub.

**CHURCH OF THE HEAVY:**  
**O2 Academy** – It's All About the Music gig with rock, metal and blues from Last Rites, Leper King, Beard of Destiny and Jack & Felix.

**CONTEK + HIGH RISE + DEFERENCE + SEVERANCE:**  
**The Wheatsheaf** – Heavyweight four-band bill with local newcomers Contek cranking out some post-hardcore and metalcore noise.

**BEER & MUSIC FESTIVAL:**  
**The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Start of the Didcot arts centre's weekend of beer and live music – two of the planet's finest things. Acts today include headliners Dubwiser and soul/jazz singer Nikki Loy.

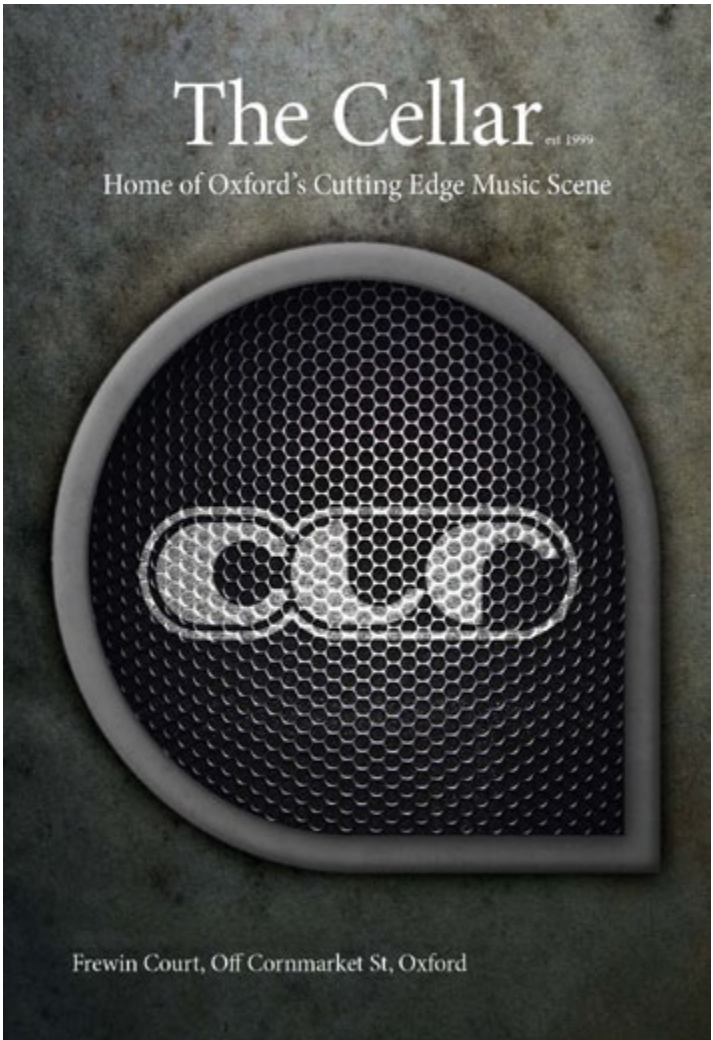
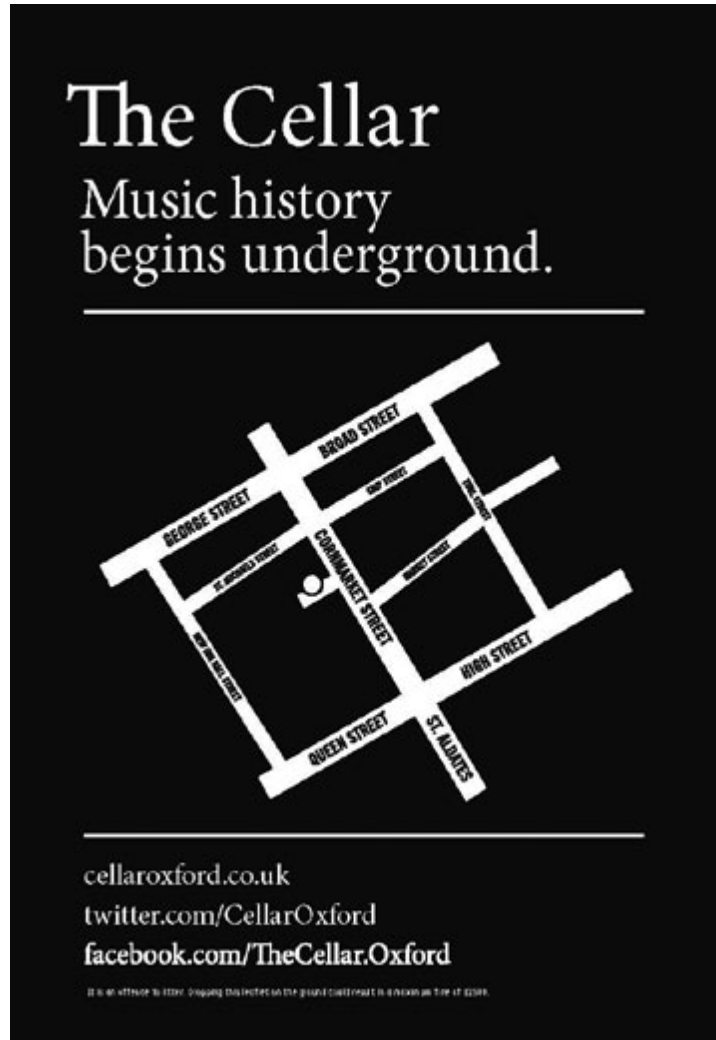


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## TELLISON / BAD IDEAS / CASSELS

### The Wheatsheaf

“This is our love song; it’s called ‘Hating Is Easy’.” It’s safe to say that Cassels aren’t romantics. And they aren’t likely to play an Age Concern charity gig any time soon, either, given that new song ‘Ignoring The Tunnels And Lights’ (written yesterday, we’re told) is about getting old and “carrying on when you should just give up.” What they are, however, is a pair of snotty, precocious nihilists who sound like Iceage experiencing a particularly messy and violent breakdown after bingeing on cheap gin and even cheaper speed. Their songs are ragged and raw, threadbare in places, permanently teetering on the brink of complete collapse but somehow holding together against the odds. This, it should go without saying, is A Very, Very Good Thing indeed.

‘The World Doesn’t Need Another You Or Me’ is essentially a punk rewiring of Philip Larkin’s infamous poem ‘This Be The Verse’ (“They fuck you up, your mum and dad...”). For those of us who are already parents, it’s too late to heed the warning, so the best we can do is to spread the word. Consider it done. As bad ideas go, having to follow Cassels is right up there with the worst, especially with music that is so solid and predictable. Likewise, ex-hardcore types softening up and showing off their sensitive side should be criminalised. Lincoln’s Bad Ideas, enjoying their first ever visit to Oxford, are full of bonhomie at the end of a four-night tour with the evening’s headliners, so it seems a bit mean not to

reciprocate. But their clunky, functional, in-touch-with-its-feelings punk isn’t really punk at all, even if their anthemicism and sense of melody evidently come as a blessed relief to the ears of those left shell-shocked by what has gone before. It’s much the same story with Tellison, whose affable frontman Stephen Davidson thanks the “very respectful crowd” for not throwing bottles or coins (“Coins are accepted, though – and bank cards, cheques, postal orders...”) but whose music is equally mild-mannered, recalling the preppy, singalong, heart-on-sleeve emo of The Get Up Kids and The Promise Ring. Sorry chaps, but no amount of woahing and ohing can disguise the dearth of memorable hooks. Punk, loosely defined, can be many, many things – but feelgood? No. Punk gigs shouldn’t be group hugs. Give me Cassels’ ill-tempered, antagonistic, scabrous, feral, risk-taking racket any time. **Ben Woolhead**

## WILL GREGORY MOOG ENSEMBLE

### St John the Evangelist

By coincidence, the BBC’s science and technology show *Tomorrow’s World* went off air only a few months after the digital channel that would become Yesterday was launched. And today, the idea of prime time telly devoted to explaining gizmos seems itself astonishingly old-fashioned, so embedded has hard- and software become in our lives. Tonight’s gig is a smiling nod back to a faded future, (dis)played on a selection of historic, clunky and primarily monophonic synths - not all Moogs, but all far from their circuit board salad days - more fitted to a loving museum than the rough sticky gig circuit. Goldfrapp’s Will Gregory is the charming host and ringleader, with a whispered avuncular air like a trendy supply teacher filling in as *Jazz Club* presenter, but despite a few light chuckles and cheeky nods to baroque classics, the show mostly avoids middle-brow novelty, and gives us excellent musicianship coupled with intelligent composition and arrangement. Perhaps in honour of Wendy Carlos, the first half centres on classical pieces. There’s never a bad time to hear the snaky glory of JS Bach’s third Brandenburg Concerto, and the Moogs’ farty portamento brings out the rolling

melody beautifully, whilst a burst of Handel has a burnished elegance, like robot knights tilting in some cyber-tourney for the pixellated hand of Princess Peach. However, it’s the new pieces that truly excite the ears. ‘Snow Steps’, based on material from Debussy, is a breath of hyperborean sobriety, whereas ‘Swell’, by ace composer and ensemble member Graham Fitkin, lives up to its name by taking a tumescent tip from Godspeed You! Black Emperor. The pinnacle, though, is ‘Noisebox’, a hissing web of sound that uses the instruments’ ability to generate white noise. Over a Kraftwerk train rhythm hissing blocks are pushed about and tweaked in a manner that recalls minimal dancefloor overlords Ricardo Villalobos and Porter Ricks – like the trombone we associate vintage synth sounds with vaudeville and pratfalls, and can forget what subtlety they can achieve. A few people near us leave in the interval. We’re not sure whether they hoped to hear ‘Ooh La La’ or a Klaus Schulze prog epic, but for us the charmingly warm programme features the best of both man and machine. **David Murphy**

## TINARIWEN

### Oxford Town Hall

Touareg collective Tinariwen’s long journey to Grammy award winning fame from their origins in refugee camps in 1979 is one of music’s more unlikely stories. They bonded there following suppression of the Touareg struggle for autonomy by the Malian state. But such is their current level of global recognition and celebrity fandom, it’s a coup for Catweazle promoter Matt Sage to bring them to Oxford. It’s a surreal moment to see six of the collective, in headdresses and flowing Touareg robes reaching to the floor, emerging up the stairs onto the stage of the Victorian Town Hall. Before they plug in their guitars they start with a slow chant-cum-drone, accompanied only by hand percussion, which feels like something they would sing sitting by a fire out in the desert. They follow this with ‘Kel Tamashek’, meaning speakers of their Tamashek language. It’s as if they’re sending a message: we are here in Oxford playing western guitars but we are still Touareg and bring the desert and our culture with us. The collective’s most recognisable face, and founder, the charismatic Ibrahim Ag Alhabib is an absentee, but there is fellow founder member Alhassane Ag Touhami dancing with arms outstretched to almost every number, and long-time member, the softly smiling Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni playing sweet acoustic guitar and offering a polite “merci” and “ca va, is okay?” at the end of most songs. The two share lead vocals with a doppelganger for a young Ibrahim, Iyad

Moussa Ben, who also plays brilliant guitar without any apparent effort. The band play without a break for eighty minutes, switching between their more organic stripped-down style of spacey desert grooves, all drones, chants, hand percussion and gently ebbing and flowing guitars, and songs which reflect all this while being much more influenced by classic blues. Even here, though, their guitar breaks are understated and part of their appeal is they bring home the blues without resorting to bombast. The one low point is a song in which the collective sound too much like a desert boy band. A rap number delivered by Abdullah is impressive however, and not just because it catches us by surprise. He surpasses this though, coming back on stage alone to lead off the encore with just his acoustic guitar for company in a solo whose roots lie in Andalusia as much as the desert. It’s just stunning. Some of what Tinariwen sing about is extremely bleak given the history of Touareg armed uprisings being met with harsh repression, and of suffering years of exile. Their sound is so seductively feelgood though, that it is easy to forget the dark side. No surprise, then, that the sold-out hall has a festival atmosphere. The crowd of all ages includes young kids who are possibly at their first gig. If so, what a fantastic band they got to see first time out. They’ll be very lucky indeed if every time they go gigging it’s as special as this. **Colin May**

## CHAMELEONS VOX

### The Bullingdon

Why weren’t The Chameleons huge? It’s a question often posed by their fans, and one worth considering to realise just how much chance, luck and timing feature in a band’s success. Back at the birth of the 1980s the Manchester quartet, led by singer and bassist Mark Burgess, carved out an angry but elegant niche between post-punk, gothic splendour and anthemic pop, releasing a bona fide classic album in ‘Script of the Bridge’. But while around them a loose set of contemporaries went on to stadium-sized glory (U2, Simple Minds), chart success (Echo & the Bunnymen, Killing Joke, The Psychedelic Furs), or at least press adulation (Gang of Four), The Chameleons forever lurked in the shadows. Not for them a song on the right movie soundtrack or even an accidental hit. Life threw brickbats at them, culminating in the tragic early death of their manager, and they split. A genuine cult they remained, and remain to this day. And yet, as is so often the case with genuine cult stars, those old fans never lost the faith, the fire still burns, and these days a few of those fans host BBC radio shows and keep the flame alive with regular airings of ‘Swamp Thing’. Which is why tonight’s show at the Bully is packed and the crowd hang on every chiming chord, a creaky but enthusiastic moshpit even breaking out. The band now features only Burgess from the original line-up and

were rechristened Chameleons Vox a few years back to reflect Burgess’ commitment to playing the old songs. This tour is billed as a full run-through of second album ‘What Does Anything Mean? Basically’, but coming off the back of a string of European shows, Burgess admits they’ve not had time to rehearse that, so they’ll just play what they want. Good news, as it provides us with 90 minutes of near as dammit every classic moment they conjured in their heyday, from a majestic, shimmering ‘Swamp Thing’ and bellicose ‘In Shreds’ to the more considered but still bullish ‘Monkeyland’, the years falling away as the band recreate that pioneering sound to perfection. And if the overwhelming majority of those here tonight are diehard fans from the old days, any newcomers would instantly recognise what an influence The Chameleons were on later generations – from Editors and Interpol, to Killers and in particular The Horrors. Burgess was a master tunesmith and a militant but poetic lyricist, one whose voice has remained remarkably intact over 35 years. It’s a triumph of a gig, if an intimate victory, one shared by those who always knew they were winners. If they never got the riches they deserved, let’s at least give The Chameleons the full-scale reappraisal their music is well overdue. **Dale Kattack**

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## PINEY GIR / RAINBOW RESERVOIR / WATER PAGEANT The Cellar

Two thirds of Water Pageant have called in sick tonight, so it’s just singer Ian Tingay and his guitar opening the show. But even without the rest of the band’s understated backing – particularly Lizzy McBain’s vocals – Nick’s voice is something to marvel at, a quavering, occasionally keening instrument in itself, with a proneness to drama at times, one that will inevitably draw comparisons to Neil Young and Jeff Buckley, but in reality closer to The Low Anthem’s Ben Knox Miller. His songs, each resolutely downbeat, feel like tender lullabies, but lullabies to send infants into slumber by way of a whole heap of heartache.

Similarly stripped of backing band is Rainbow Reservoir’s Angela Space, an altogether feistier proposition than Nick before her. Playing solo accentuates the Jeffrey Lewis influence in her music – a punk-infused folk-pop with a propensity to naked aggression amid the lyrical whimsy. “Sadness is just something I do,” she muses at one point, before snapping “You’re a cock / You’re a cockroach,” and proclaiming “Wish I could kill the head girl,” all of which draw her closer to the strange and sometimes magical world of Magnetic Fields at times. She closes with a cover of The Velvet Underground’s ‘After Hours’, the band’s most perversely

twee number, a song that almost sums Angela’s music up – instantly catchy, awash with child-like positivity but with a dark heart. It’s been a while since we saw Piney Gir live, the girl from Kansas once a fixture on the local scene with her strong ties to Truck Festival, moving from sweet, shiny and simple synth-pop to Wal-Mart country across half a decade of different guises. Her latest album, ‘Mr Hyde’s Wild Ride’ suggest a part return to her poppier roots, while unwilling to completely ditch the roots side of her sound. There’s also a serious psychedelic edge to some of the songs, helped not a little by her expansive six-piece band, and at times you could be listening to Hawkwind’s fresh-faced offspring, or Crazy Horse discovering their lighter side by way of Beck. At her best Piney captures the spirit of 60s girl groups and gives it a joyous, grungy makeover, all tambourines aloft and mile-wide grins, but equally she and the band can get stuck in a middle ground rut where everything she’s tried out over the years get fed into the same mixer with the hope it’ll come together, but sound stodgy and stilted. As is traditional, she closes on ‘Greetings, Salutations, Goodbye’, proof that simple, upbeat pop is where her talents really lie. **Dale Kattack**

## SUGAR DARLING / BRIDEGO BRIDGE / SPECTRA

### The Wheatsheaf

“Here at Gappy Tooth Industries we don’t believe in genre. Well we do, but as something to be spurned and ignored,” says club host Richard Catherall. It has clearly been ignored tonight, as none of tonight’s bands can be matched with any genre tag. Solo act Spectra samples his voice live and adds layers of keys, acoustic guitar and sounds drawn from a Mac laptop. He gradually hypnotises the audience with a haunting synthetic pulse before building it into a crescendo of crunching industrial noise. His first track is apparently built on samples from a 17<sup>th</sup> Century harpsichord, but the samples have been messed with beyond possible recognition. More recognisable is the face of Anthony Kelly of The Shapes who plays tonight with new outfit Bridego Bridge, formerly known as Jeep until a change of mind about two minutes before hitting the stage. The group play a fun set of catchy pop numbers, often set against Oxford’s landscape, with pretty harmonies. And then melodic reminiscing makes way for Sugar Darling. The young trio contribute a weird, riotous set that pauses only between every song as frontman George kneels down to prod a finger onto the setlist and yell the next title at his bandmates. Featuring a metal version of a popular *Aristocats* song, plus originals with names like ‘Full Rack of Ribs’ and ‘Fingerbowl’, the set ranges from ridiculously short musical interludes to more normal songs which, as well as having actual structures, are perfectly raw screamy metal tunes that defy their name quite nicely. The band’s energy is infectious and their inability to take themselves seriously makes them hard not to like. There is some impressive talent to be found amongst all the cartoon metal eccentricity, a fact that seems to sum up tonight’s show as a whole.

**Celina MacDonald**

## YOUNG FATHERS O2 Academy

Edinburgh’s Young Fathers surprised everyone, not least the bookies, in winning last year’s Mercury Music Prize, so it’s a considerable coup for the O2 Academy to welcome the trio to Oxford. That they purvey an utterly unique blend of low key hip hop, keyboard squiggling and irregular beats that recalls, variously, Clouddad, TV on the Radio, Alasdair Gray and Shabazz Palaces only adds to their appeal. In a land where landfill indie, flatulent synths and commercial r’n’b holds sway, this is a band whose ‘Dead’ album provides a clarion call for melodic experimentalism. A few years ago, Vampire Weekend and Yeasayer threatened us with the prospect of an indie/world music crossover only to draw back from taking it to its logical end point before it had really begun. This now is that possible culmination, a pot pourri of styles that reflects the varied backgrounds of the Scottish band and their back stories. The searing beat of the drummer is far more visceral than anything on either of Young Fathers’ two full length releases to date, and with the pounding cutting sharply through the evening, the umbilical cord to New Orleans’ Congo Square is evident, the threesome grabbing the one microphone simultaneously and Kayus Bankole dancing dementedly like a marionette. ‘Get Up’ is a call to arms – a ruthlessly modern reflection of globalisation and where it has landed us, while ‘Shame’, a stand out cut

from second LP, ‘White Men Are Black Men Too’, is a highlight of a staggeringly unflinching set – singer Alloysious Massaquoi adding supplementary drums as if the thudding from behind him weren’t enough. Meanwhile, the keyboards are a latest manifestation of the fine way with electronica that Edinburgh’s Boards of Canada and Finitribe have previously delivered us. It’s all a whole lot more pugnacious than the recorded version, far less friendly, and the rapping is more up front and more full on. One expects Graham Hastings’ request of the audience, “can ye dance?” to be followed by a string of Irvine Welsh-style expletives, but there is little clichéd Scottishness here; ultimately, the trio slope off nonchalantly and one by one, about as willing to provide an encore as to don tam o’shanter. That the upper floor of the O2 is pleasingly full is encouraging after the disappointing audience that greeted another feted Mercury act a year ago in East India Youth. That some music is for critics more than for the general public will always be the case, but there is enough rhythm and there are enough hooks to draw in even the most passive of the music-curious while the dare to experiment and to provide a political narrative are ingredients that have been lacking from the UK music scene in recent times. Young Fathers are a band to worship and cherish. No compromise. **Robert Langham**

## GOLDIE The Bullingdon

The second birthday party of the respected Deep Cover night presents a pleasing dose of variety, and with virtually no publicity has The Bully packed to the rafters. Zyklon Sound, VLVT and Pilgrim weave techno, electro and bass into a mix that sets the mood for the headliner while keeping us guessing as to where they’re heading musically. By 1am the room is bursting as the unmistakable figure of Goldie takes to the stage. Drum and bass legend and boss of the Metalheadz label, Bjork’s ex-partner is also an iconic graffiti artist, star of *Eastenders*, several reality TV shows and a James Bond film, among other achievements. In 2012 he was selected as one of Radio 4’s ‘New Elizabethans’, the sixty people with the greatest influence on the country since 1952. His finest moment is probably still 1994’s ‘Timeless’ album, which rescued British dance music as it hit a post-rave lull and deserves its name by still sounding completely unique and years ahead of its time. Its key track, ‘Inner City Life’, is as much a pop music landmark as anything The Beatles or Marvin Gaye ever produced, a truly transformative achievement.

Rather than push into new musical territory his DJ set tonight seems to play a pretty straight bat. The tunes are typically pounding drum and bass fare, moving through a few of the genre’s key rhythmic patterns, with his MC GQ incessantly reminding us what a great time we’re having in Oxford. But nothing’s straightforward with Goldie, and soon we notice otherworldly piano lines coming in to move us on from the clattering, robotic introduction. Drum and bass has been often compared to jazz, in that the untutored ear can find it rather samey and aimless, but a look beneath the surface soon uncovers extraordinary depths and dizzying mathematical complexity. But it’s tempting to suggest that if he can do without an MC on his records he could have given GQ the evening off tonight, as he finishes with a rousing ‘Inner City Life’. Om Unit follows on with a slower trip through dubstep and bass territory, confirming his status as a new name to watch. But despite the constantly shifting sands of modern electronic music it was the 49-year-old Goldie who easily saw off all challengers tonight. **Art Lagun**

## ELECTRIC EEL SHOCK / SMILEX The Cellar

After twenty years of singing, Smilex frontman Lee Christian says that today he’s finally mastered the art of not blowing his voice in the soundcheck. The same unrestrained level of energy that’s to blame for Christian’s raw vocal chords runs through the rest of the band. Starting the set with a ferocious level of energy, it can be hard to keep building until the end, but then the same could be said for Smilex’s entire live career and yet they keep bringing their special brand of noise and aggression to every performance. It’s hard to take your eyes off Lee, and to do so would be inadvisable anyway, putting you at greater risk of being hit by a microphone or a stand, although it seems Christian has mastered the art of not hurting anyone except himself, ending the night with a scalp peppered with self-inflicted bruises from his microphone and anything else he happens to have to hand. Full of dark, heavy tracks from 2013’s ‘La Petite Mort’ album, the set is a rare glimpse of Smilex, whose members are soon to disperse again to embark on different projects. “We are very shy, that’s why we put our merch table somewhere very

hard to find,” announces Electric Eel Shock frontman Akihito Morimoto. Someone clearly didn’t get the “very shy” memo, as drummer Tomoharu Ito mans the kit in nothing but a well-placed sock. EES are quite possibly the only band who could follow Smilex’s act, with a ferocious energy that repeatedly exceeds itself. And with a combination of killer riffs and self-deprecating humour it’s obvious that they chose the right band to support them. The audience are equally enthused, headbanging and vocally joining in on the only chorus that everyone seems to know the words to, the lyrically predictable ‘Bastards’. Fans of EES will be familiar with Tomoharu’s trademark four-stick action and seeing Morimoto holding his guitar in his teeth, but the set is still fresh even if they’ve done it all before. “You’re my favourite number nine,” they sing on a humorous and only totally offensive track that rates their female love interest on a list of priorities from one to nine, only just under “spag bol” and fishing. It all makes for a gig to remember, especially with the resulting tinnitus keeping the memories alive for days after **Celina MacDonald**





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### CONAN

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Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July – *IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

### STRIKE ONE

HERETICS + I SAID YES 8pm

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July – *THE SPIN*

### THEO TRAVIS

8pm

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July – *BURN THE JUKEBOX*

### THE JELAS

TWO WHITE CRANES + WILD ISLAND + THE BLUE PERIOD 8pm

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July – *BURIED IN SMOKE*

### XII BOAR

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Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July – *IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

### WILL JOHNS

STEVE RODGERS + TOM IVEY 8pm

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July – *THE SPIN*

### ALISON RAYNER QUINTET

8pm

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July – *OXROX*

### JABRONI SANDWICH

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## DR SHOTOVER: Truly, Madly, Wheatley

Ah there you are, Leary... got off your ‘drug driving’ charges did you? Pull up a pew and steer something colourful and refreshing my way, then. Oh all right, a pint of Kool-Aid laced with primo-quality Owsley acid, that’ll do nicely. Gesundheit! In fact, Gesund-Haight Ashbury! As the Viagra spammers would have it, ‘Take your wife to the seventh sky’. Now, before the rush sets in... what about Gaz Coombes, eh? Guesting, large as life, on Saturday Kitchen the other week, eh? Eh? It’s only a matter of time before some production company commissions Now You’re Cooking With Gaz (as predicted in this column, oooh, three years ago)... Our handsome yet slightly simian host can then invite all his local music pals on to cook and/or eat their favourite tasty treats in front of the camera. Mind you, knowing the groovy guys of the Oxford Music Scene it’s bound mostly to resemble the 60s and 70s weeks of Back In Time For Dinner. Chicken Kiev, prawn cocktails, cheese triangles, Angel Delight, Miracle Whip, you know the sort of thing. Real Bands don’t eat salad, apparently. Plenty of ‘hash browns’ though... eh? EH? What’s that, Bournville? You thought all the local bands were VEGETARIANS? Not any more, young feller-me-lad. As our American cousins would say, that is like SO last year... Bedingfield, I say BEDINGFIELD, use the East Indies Club pestle and mortar to crush up those pork scratchings so I can snort them with my friend Leary here. There’s a good fellow. Now tell me some good Estonian jokes as I ramble off into psychedelic food heaven... Ha ha, datt iss so fuünni!

Next month: I’ll phone ya from Estonia



Now You’re Cooking With Gaz – *The Moustache Years*

# INTRODUCING....

Nightshift’s monthly guide to the best local music bubbling under

# mermaid noises

**Who are they?**  
Electro-pop duo Mermaid Noises are Karen Cleave (*vocals*) and Mac (*noises*). The pair are local music royalty really, Karen having sung and played in The Anyways, Lucky & the Losers and Les Clochards, while former Jericho Tavern promoter Mac fronted Arthur Turner’s Lovechild? and Hot Hooves (“I was their biggest fan,” claims Karen) among numerous other acts over the years. The pair have watched each other’s band’s for years but got together musically after Mac saw Karen performing some Mermaid Noises songs acoustically at The Wheatsheaf (“I finished my slot without wetting myself or falling over and Mac was impressed. And inebriated. He offered to help me make some demos and the rest is... we were having fun so we made an album instead.”). Their debut album, ‘Mermaid Noise’, was released last month on Big Red Sky Records.

**What do they sound like?**  
A playful, inventive and deceptively simple canter through arty lo-fi post-punk, oddball synth-pop and something sweet and a little folky, with Karen’s clipped, deftly snippy vocals and lyrics up against Mac’s electro squiggles and Numan samples and steals. “There’s more going on in each three-minute journey into whimsy than most bands manage in a lifetime,” said *Nightshift*’s review of the album.

**What inspires them?**  
“Birds shouting; birds waking up; collie dogs; physics; spirit; spirits; hippy shit; bombastic wordage and bathos; things my friends say; philosophy; redressing the balance; looking for the funny side; kindness; love; rage; intoxication.”

**Career highlight so far:**  
“Any gig where you’re in the zone, the band is kicking and the audience is grinning back at you. Teenagers shouting ‘We love you’ at Peter Momtchil-off when Les Clochards warmed up for Tom Jones at Latitude.”

**And the lowlight**  
“Plenty of unproud moments to choose from. Best to play the next point...”

**Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:**  
“Twizz Twangle, cos I love his mediaeval singing style and the way he transmits joy and uncertainty in equal measure. Special mention too for Mark Bosley, who holds it all together if Twizz leaves the stage during his trumpet solo to, say, pour himself a beer or ride his motorcycle.”

**If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:**  
“‘Real Life’ by Magazine. Mac never tires of it. The less I say the bigger our photo will be.”

**When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?**  
“Songs from ‘Mermaid Noise’ played acoustically, me on guitar backed up by Ian Nixon on double bass. For now, Darren & The Tramp, c’est nous. Other songs too of course, no covers though, unless severely tampered with. I definitely have alt-country-euro-punky leanings but I’ll go a long way sideways. I’ll fix up some shows and let you know.”

**Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:**  
“I like all the people who smoke lots of dope and I don’t like all the people who take lots of coke.”

**You might love them if you love:**  
Young Marble Giants; Viv Albertine; Gary Numan; Stereolab; Momus.

**Hear them here:**  
[Mermaidnoises.bandcamp.com](http://Mermaidnoises.bandcamp.com).

# ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

## THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

**20 YEARS AGO**  
July 1995 saw the launch of a new local music magazine. *Nightshift* was essentially the rebirth of *Curfew*, which had folded six months previously at the time **The Jericho Tavern**, **The Oxford Venue** and **The Hollybush Inn** had all closed, but it came in a more compact A4 size and featured a slightly different set of *Dr Who* pseudonyms among the reviewers. Business as usual in most ways though, with its mix of Oxford music news and reviews and gig guide. **The Mystics**’ Sam Williams featured on the cover beneath the headline Happy Days Are Here Again! Local music news centred on the go-ahead plans for what would become **The Zodiac** later in the year, offset by less positive news from The Hollybush. With the local venue scene still emerging from its bleakest period, the gig guide still featured a decent contingent of shows, including gigs by enduring regular visitors to town like **The Selecter** and **John Otway** at **The Dolly** and **The Hobgoblin** respectively; local stars **Bubbleman**, **Skydrive**, **The Bigger the God**, **Underbelly** and **Arthur Turner’s Lovechild?**, and highlight of the month, emerging Anglo-Indian trance-noise urchins **Cornershop**. Less well remembered names treading various boards this month included **Folk The System**, **White Knuckle Hush**, **Derbel & the Herbal Gerbils** and **Grey Lady Down**.

**10 YEARS AGO**  
Busy times in July 2005 for the Oxford music scene. *Nightshift* featured a two-page preview of

**5 YEARS AGO**  
**Truck** doings once again on the cover of July

2010’s *Nightshift*, as festival founding brothers **Robin and Joe Bennett** talked about Truck’s status as “godfather of the UK’s small festivals” and “best example to other small festivals,” both titles awarded by national newspapers. They also talked about surviving the catastrophic floods of 2007, which led to the cancellation of that year’s event. “I went to some of the more corporate festivals when I was a teenager and then I saw the Woodstock movie and noticed how much the idea of ‘festival’ had changed from a celebration of great music to a carefully calibrated marketing exercise. I also wanted to play at a festival, and to do that I had put one on,” said Robin, ahead of this month’s event which featured headline sets from **Mew** and **Teenage Fanclub**. It was Canadian hardcore geniuses **Fucked Up** who stole the show though, turning the Barn into a crazed moshpit over which singer Pink Eyes surfed, blood streaming from a self-inflicted head wound. Rather more sedate summer fun at **Cornbury** this month where **David Gray**, **Squeeze**, **Jackson Browne**, **Dr John**, **Newton Faulkner** and **The Feeling** all played. Here, the show was stolen by **Raghu Dixit** on the third stage, the Indian guitar maestro managing to get an entire field, including a sizeable *Nightshift* contingent, both dancing and laughing for a full hour. Big names in town at the regular venues to with **Ozzy Osbourne**, **Public Image Limited** and **Suzanne Vega** all at The **O2 Academy**, while Oxford pop legend **Amelia Fletcher** returned to town with her new band **Tender Trap** at **The Wheatsheaf**.





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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### VAGUEWORLD

“Enjoyed your review of our EP, very kind words :)” writes Vaguelworld singer Luke Allmond. “I’m sure you’ll be excited to hear that since we put that out last year we’ve been busy writing our second offering.” If that last demo didn’t make it into the Demo Dumper it came close, but Vaguelworld reacted with dignity and honour, avoiding bleating and whining in favour of getting better and showing us what they’re really capable of, which is this, a four-song batch of songs entitled ‘Regret Everything Immediately Forever’, possibly their own feelings on those earlier tracks. In a month when most demos seem to be trapped in a torpor, ‘Regret Everything...’ hurtles into action by way of some fuzzy flowing pop-punk that recalls local heroes of the genre Dive Dive with considerably more verve and conviction than previously, simple ideas executed with real intent, busy mathsy pedalling going up against everything-in-the-mixer fuzzstorms that retain an almost pretty melodic edge throughout. They’ve a tendency towards going all soft-centred at times, particularly at the beginning of songs like ‘Something Bad’ and ‘Because I Can’, but while the noisy crescendo that builds to the close of the latter feels a little clichéd and tagged on in case anyone accuses them of being a bunch of wimps with a secret hankering to be One Direction, the former has real power behind it, Luke’s quavering voice becoming a yelp of sheer frustration as the guitars spit out sparks behind him. The quiet bit/loud bit dynamic could place Vaguelworld at any point between now and back to the early-90s but they’ve come on in leaps and the odd bound in a short space of time and while pretty much everything else in the pile here sounds like it’s happy to die and rot beneath a pile of grass cuttings, they sound alive and ready for a fight.

### OLD ERNIE

Good things, we’re often told, are worth waiting for. Fine wine; summer holidays; a decent showing from England in the World Cup; a GP appointment, all take their time to come round or mature. And sometimes the same can be said of music. Not every great song can kick straight in with the chorus, a bit of delayed gratification can go a long way. But you’d hope you’d get some kind of reward for sitting through the

*Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit [www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift](http://www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift)*

build up. Sadly Old Ernie – the bedroom-bound project of David Kahl – denies us our prize, after teasing us for a good five minutes that something splendid might be on its way. The almost Gregorian stumble of lo-fi drums, guitar and groaning isn’t so much ponderous as slug-like, edging with tectonic-bordering-on-arthritic lack of haste to some kind of climax, a glorious explosion of overdriven post-rock-shoegaze-style noise; this is inevitable, we think to ourselves. Except it gets halfway up the hill and decides to sit down for a break and promptly falls asleep in the grass. Just as we were getting properly interested. This isn’t even delayed gratification. It’s like presenting us with a gift wrapped box and hinting there’s a litter of tabby kittens inside, only when we unwrap it we find an empty packet of custard creams instead. If there’s a second instalment to come, send it over forthwith; we’re hungry for noise. Right now it feels like the barman just turned off the lights and bolted the door 30 seconds before we arrived at the pub.

### GRANDMA’S HANDS

If Old Ernie is a litter of kittens that isn’t there, Grandma’s Hands are a very timid hamster. Inside the warm cosy fug of its den it sits, occasionally peaking nervously out at the bright daylight where food and pretty lady hamsters and possibly wild drug-fuelled hamster raves take place, but all it can think about are the hawks and foxes that hover or lurk, waiting to pounce and gobble it up. So it’s going to stay in the dark and warm and safety and write sensitive folkly pop songs, which it’s going to sing softly to itself in a strange hamstery voice. And if you think the description overplays certain metaphors, consider that Grandma’s Hands have a song called ‘Sitting Here (The Awkward Silence of Being Alone)’, which is Timid Hamsterland’s national anthem and makes Mumford & Sons sound like Evil Blizzard jamming with Shit & Shine after a heavy peyote session. Elsewhere we have songs with titles like ‘Wistful Words’, which is, unsurprisingly, a rather wistful number in the vein of a stuffed toy dormouse contemplating the beauty of an episode of *Fifi & the Flowertots* while eating a packet of Little Gems. They’ve got one song called ‘She Sees Stars’ but we’re guessing it’s not because she’s been involved in a violent bar brawl. Everything jangles and shuffles along meekly, while the singer manages to keep up his impression of someone with a bubble in their throat for the entirety. And when it finishes, like a hamster gobbled up by a ravenous desert fox, it’s as if it was never there at all.

### ANDREW MILLOY

More wistfulness here from Andrew Milloy, who plays in local folk crew Band of Hope and sent us a genuinely affecting EP in tribute to his baby daughter a few years back, so he owns a small corner of our heart already. Sadly this one-song offering, ‘Green Me Blue’, can’t further endear him to stone-cold cynics like us, sounding a lot like something Van Morrison might knock out in an idle moment of slightly sozzled self contemplation. Sombre strings and minor key piano plonking are the canvas for Andrew’s slightly grizzled acoustic soul and some metaphors about painting and love. “Make me a work of art,” he implores. Might need the combined forces of George Martin, Joe Meek and Quincy Jones to manage that, young fella. “Together our colours will run,” he continues. Now that’s just filthy.

### DINOSAUR CRUSH

Ah good, a bit of life. A band called Dinosaur Crush playing a song simply called ‘Noise’. Fuck, this is gonna *ROCK!* Ah, hmm, oh well, maybe next time. Actually it’s not bad at all and it reminds us a lot of The Rezillos, the fizzy, frothy post-punk pop urchins what did ‘Top of the Pops’ seemingly a century or so ago. In fact it’s near as a dammit a full-on steal of that hit. It’s a tinny lo-fi slice of cheerleader fuzz-pop that comes armed with an overwhelming sense of positivity which seems to trump any other musical failings and carries the whole thing merrily along on an almost surf-pop wave. From here the band dip into slightly shrill country-flavoured jangle pop (‘Wall In My Heart’) and awkward regional band competition heat runners-up bluesy rock fluff (‘Nowhere To Run’), but in ‘Can’t Stop Tomorrow’, a scrappy but likeable chunk of lo-fi grunge-pop, they show they’re at their best when they keep it spiky and sound like they’re having fun rather than trying to impress sensible grown-up people.

### GLUEMAN

Beware the midlife crisis band reunion. Glue-man is made up of three quarters of noise rockers Soulcraft, one of a handful of bands who made up a compact but strong Witney scene back in the 1990s and eventually led to the formation of The Rock of Travolta. Singer Matt Barlow was a lanky, quietly spiky frontman and it pains us considerably to report that some things are perhaps best left unresurrected. Songs like ‘Forgiveness’ are plodding, pleading, hollowed-out shells of something that might once have had a passing acquaintance with grunge but now drift with indeterminate form and resolute lack of purpose, a semblance of a decent melody occasionally lurking beneath the surface trying to get out, but trapped like that poor soul in *The Omen* beneath the ice, left to flail against inevitable doom. ‘Set Sail’ appropriately picks up a bit of a breeze but by

this stage the ship is off course and heading for the rocks. Coming back to a band after a decade or so pursuing a career or raising a family can feel like a fun escape from the dreary reality of that grown-up life, so it’s important to make sure the music doesn’t simply reflect such humdrum pursuits. Maybe follow the example of Headcount – a band who were born as angry middle-aged men, a politically inverted tabloid newspaper column of a band, out to destroy the complacency they recognise they’re part of, and with the muscle to deliver some serious punches along the way. For *Nightshift*’s part, we simply never grew out of being furious toddlers.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### ANDRE TAJCHMAN

Ooh, a video. We like demo videos, especially ones with loads of heavy-handed symbolism in them. This one – a song called ‘Weird Kid’ – layers on the symbolism with several shovels and a JCB. It being called ‘Weird Kid’ there’s a kid in it who’s, like, weird. We know this because he’s wearing a mask. Obviously. And he’s wandering through the city streets and it’s busy and bustling but he’s ALL ALONE (we know this because in the video everyone’s ignoring him and in the song Andre is singing “He’s always the weird kid / Outside in the cold / He’s always the weird kid / Playing on his own.” There’s a lump in our throat already. So anyway, weird lonely mask-faced boy is wandering unnoticed through shopping centres and across busy roads. But wait. There’s a girl mask person now, and she’s ALL ALONE. And she’s wandering the streets. Can you see where this is going, dear reader? We’re so excited. It’s going to be all happy and cuddly and stuff at the end. But, no! NOOO! They’ve walked past each other and didn’t even notice each other. Masks are definitely an impedance to periphery vision. But wait! Now they’ve seen each other! Hurray! Love is on the way! But hey, what’s this? They’re both too shy to speak to each other! They’re weird kids! They’re used to being ALL ALONE! Girl mask person is running away. Boy mask person is chasing her. This is getting a bit stalkerish if we’re honest – just leave her alone, boy mask person! And now, at the dramatic denouement, they’re together – but ALONE together – in an alleyway. He takes his mask off and throws it to the floor. And that, folks, is the end. No smiles, no snogging, no off to the pub for six pints and shag. Just a discarded mask lying on the pavement. ALL ALONE. Good job the song itself lives up to its own hype about sounding like “a thoughtful confessional tale layered over an intense production with a dub sound compared to the likes of The xx, James Blake and SBTRKT.” Only kidding, the song’s shit too.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk), 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. And don’t fucking whine about your review on Twitter either, else we’ll print a screenshot and make you look like a prize tit.*



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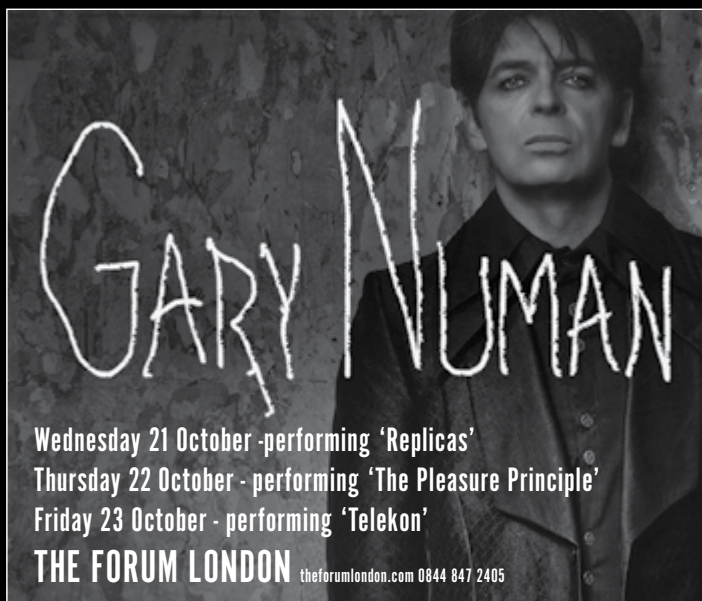
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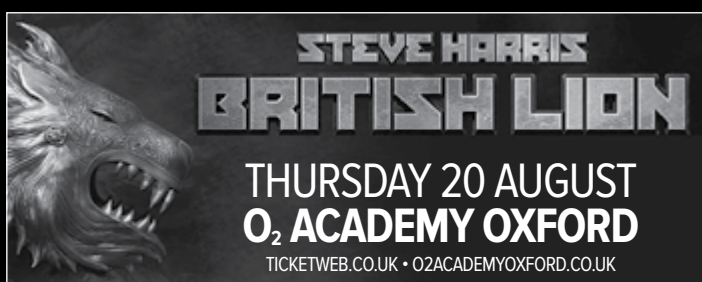
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