



# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every  
month  
Issue 236  
March  
2015**

# UNDERSMILE

Oxford's darkest doom-mongers talk bunnies, puppies, kittens and creating a doom metal masterpiece.

*"Sometimes we feel like people are almost disappointed when they meet us and realise we're actually just nice people"*

*Also in this issue:*

Introducing **BUG PRENTICE**  
**GLASS ANIMALS** talk fish-slapping  
**TRUCK / WILDERNESS / WOOD**  
line-ups announced  
*plus*

All your Oxford music news, previews, reviews and five pages of local gigs.

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

# THE BULLINGDON

## MARCH 2015

Friday 27th February  
**Keep-Hush presents:  
Walk Thru Pt 1  
Last Japan  
Silas & Snare Surgeon  
Phase 2  
Pilgrim**  
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 28th February  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
Heat 3**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 28th February  
**Klass Vibez:  
White Magic Sound  
I Shense  
2xclusive Crew  
Likkle**  
Doors: 11pm

Monday 2nd March  
**The Riotous Brothers**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 3rd March  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Guitar Summit**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 4th March  
**Aquilo**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 6th March  
**Kim Churchill  
Che Aimee Dorval**  
Doors: 7.30pm

Friday 6th March  
**Dr Syntax (UK Tour)**  
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 7th March  
**Police Dog Hogan  
Goat Roper Rodeo Band**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 7th March  
**Bloody Knuckles**  
Doors: 11pm

Monday 9th March  
**Krissy Matthews  
New Album Launch**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 10th March  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Blakes 7 Funk Project**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 11th March  
**Tragedy - A Metal Tribute  
to The Bee Gees & Beyond**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 12th March  
**Bug Prentice  
Single Launch**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 12th March  
**DJ Pilgrim  
& MC Novelist**  
Doors: 11pm

Friday 13th March  
**Sivu**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th March  
**The Brookes Brothers**  
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 14th March  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
Heat 4**  
Doors: 6.30pm

Saturday 14th March  
**Ben UFO**  
Doors: 11pm

Monday 16th March  
**Stephen Dale Petit**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 17th March  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Stuart Henderson Quartet**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Saturday 21st March  
**The Knights of Mentis  
Black Feathers  
The Shapes  
Trev Williams**  
Doors: 6pm

Saturday 21st March  
**Bedrock  
Oxford's Rocking Club Night.  
Release Your Inner Dinosaur!**  
Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 24th March  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Hugh Turner Band**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 26th March  
**M-Band & Good Moon Deer  
After the Thought  
Esther Joy Lane**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 27th March  
**The Showhawk Duo**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 27th March  
**Into the Jungle**  
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 28th March  
**White Magic Sound**  
Doors: 11pm

Monday 30th March  
**Ben Poole**  
Doors: 7.30pm

Tuesday 31st March  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 1st April  
**The Helen Highwater Band**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 2nd April  
**Bunty  
Okina**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd April  
**Tremorheart**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 4th April  
**Homeplanetearth  
Echoic  
Esther Joy Lane**  
Doors: 7.30pm

Saturday 4th April  
**Desta\*nation**  
Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 7th April  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Bullingdon Hot Club**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 8th April  
**Turbowolf**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 10th April  
**Larkin Poe  
Jess Morgan**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 11th April  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
Heat 5**  
Doors: 6.30pm

Monday 13th April  
**Federal Charm**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 14th April  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Martin Pickett Organisation**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Saturday 18th April  
**Bedrock  
Oxford's Rocking Club Night.  
Release Your Inner Dinosaur!**  
Doors: 11pm

Monday 20th April  
**Earl Thomas**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 21st April  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Stuart Henderson Quartet**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Sunday 26th April  
**Ugly Duckling**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 27th April  
**Girls with Guitars  
Blues Caravan**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 28th April  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 30th April  
**Pearson Sound**  
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 2nd May  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
1st Semi-Final**  
Doors: 6.30pm

Tuesday 5th May  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Hugh Turner Band**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 12th May  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Big Colours (16 Piece band)**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Friday 16th May  
**Bedrock  
Oxford's Rocking Club Night.  
Release Your Inner Dinosaur!**  
Doors: 11pm

Monday 18th May  
**Virgil & the Accelerators**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 19th May  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Guitar Summit**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 21st May  
**JP Harris and  
the Tough Choices**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 23rd May  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
2nd Semi-Final**  
Doors: 6.30pm

Tuesday 26th May  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 27th May  
**An Evening with  
Slaid Cleaves**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 29th May  
**Chuck Prophet**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 1st June  
**Chameleons Vox**  
'What does Anything Mean? Basically' Tour  
Doors: 7.30pm

Tuesday 2nd June  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Funk Bake**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Monday 8th June  
**Laurence Jones**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 9th June  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**  
Doors: 8.30pm

Saturday 13th June  
**Danny and the  
Champions of the World**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 15th June  
**Ryan McGarvey (US)**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 18th June  
**Well Hung Heart  
Dave Arcari**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 20th June  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
3rd Semi-Final**  
Doors: 6.30pm

Monday 22nd June  
**Hamilton Loomis**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 29th June  
**Larry McCray**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd July  
**Bloodstock:  
Metal to the Masses  
The Final**  
Doors: 6.30pm

Monday 13th July  
**Moreland & Arbuckle**  
Doors: 7pm

# NEWS

**Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**  
Phone: 01865 372255 email: [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net)  
Online: [nightshift.oxfordmusic.net](http://nightshift.oxfordmusic.net)



**TUNNG, SONGHOY BLUES  
AND TREETOP FLYERS** headline  
this year's **WOOD Festival**.

Mali's Songhoy Blues (*pictured*) have toured with Damon Albarn throughout February and release their debut album, 'Music In Exile', on Transgressive this month. WOOD takes place over the weekend of the **15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> May** at **Brazier's Park**, near Wallingford. The eco-friendly event, run entirely on renewable energy, also features sets from Spiro, Josienne Clarke & Ben Walker, Duotone, John Josphe Brill, Todd Dorigo, Hans Chew, The Dreaming Spires, Nick Cope, Knights of Mentis, Natureboy, Oxford Ukuleles, Tamara Parsons-Baker, Brickwork Lizards and The Cooling Pearls, with more names to be added. As well as live music WOOD features all manner of workshops and activities with an environmental theme. This WOOD has been designated The Year Of The Bee, following on from last year's badger-friendly theme. Go along dressed as a bee, why not. Earlybird tickets for the festival are already sold out but weekend tickets

are on sale for £74 from Truck Store on Cowley Road, with kids under 12 going free. Visit [woodfestival.tumblr.com](http://woodfestival.tumblr.com) for more news and ticket details.

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL** announces its full line-up for 2015 on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February. Supertramp singer and chief songwriter Roger Hodgson has already been announced as the headline act for the Sunday night of the festival which runs over the weekend of the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July at Great Tew estate, near Chipping Norton. Last year's event featured headline sets from Simple Minds, Gypsy Kings, and Jools Holland. Hear all the line-up news as it breaks on *Nightshift's* Twitter (@**NightshiftMag**), or visit [www.cornburyfestival.com](http://www.cornburyfestival.com) for full festival info.

**ENTRIES FOR THIS YEAR'S OXFORD PUNT** close on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March. The annual showcase of new Oxford music talent takes place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May featuring some 20 acts across five venues in the city centre. Venues this year are The Purple Turtle, The Cellar, The Wheatseaf, The Turl Street Kitchen and The White Rabbit.

To enter, simply send us a link to your music to [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net). Clearly mark your mail Punt. Acts must be from Oxfordshire, have some gigging

**GLASS ANIMALS' DAVE BAYLEY** has been talking to *Nightshift* ahead of the band's sold-out homecoming show at the O2 Academy and the release of a new single this month.

The local heroes play a hometown headline show on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** as part of their biggest UK tour so far, having just enjoyed an incredible 12 months that have seen them tour throughout Europe, The United States and Australia, reach over a million Youtube views for 'Hazy' and see their single 'Gooley' become the second most shared track of 2014 on Spotify. 'Black Mambo', from the band's debut album 'ZABA' is out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

"It's been nuts cool. I think they are all doing well. Australia is *hot*. We played a travelling festival, which was cool, called Falls. Ed (Irwin-Singer) got as close to fulfilling his lifelong dream of being in a circus as he has yet. Highlights were the Mexican street food and karaoke clubs in LA, and onion rings at the diner that Frank Sinatra hung out at, at four in the morning in LA. That was a good night.

"Gooley' being the second most shared song

on Spotify was a shock. It still is actually. Who knows how far we can go in 2015 – up to 16 maybe? 17 at a real push. As long as we make it to Glasgow on this tour. They have some awesome White Russians up there. We're really excited about the Oxford show, though; it's always the most special one. There won't be any flame throwers this time; the Jericho Tavern fire breathers were a one-off, sadly.

"After that it's just lots of touring for the rest of the year, seeing more amazing people and places, and hopefully the beginning of new musical adventures. Obviously you'll be the first to know when they're ready!"

Dave also explained the rather weird video the band posted recently of Drew MacFarlane stripped naked and being slapped with fish by his bandmates. "It was a joke that got horribly out of control. We promised fans if we got in (Australian station) Triple J's Hot 100 Top 20 we'd strip Drew naked and slap him with fish. Twitter is a powerful mistress – I think our social media output should be monitored more closely from now on."

Follow Glass Animals on Twitter @*GlassAnimals*.



**BJÖRK, GEORGE CLINTON AND BEN HOWARD** will headline this summer's **Wilderness Festival**.

The music, arts, food and outdoor pursuits festival takes place over the weekend of the **6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> August** at **Cornbury Park**, near Charlbury. Björk is the real coup on this year's line-up, the Icelandic musical genius making her Oxfordshire debut in the wake of her ninth studio album, 'Vulnicura', released in January. Funk legend George Clinton will be combining his Parliament and Funkadelic incarnations for a run through of both acts' pioneering 70s classics.

As well as the headline acts, this year's line-up includes Roisin Murphy, Nick Mulvey, Nils Frahm, Caravan Palace, Hercules & Love Affair, Ibibio Sound Machine, The Brandt Brauer Frick Ensemble and Will & the People.

Beyond the main stage there will be a travelling folk barn, while a late night Spiegel tent hosts The Tiger Lillies, Camille O'Sullivan and Ronnie Scott's jazz club. Elsewhere there is Wilderness' usual clamour of entertainment and activities, from theatre and circus, to banquets and cookery schools, to nature talks and trails, and myriad outdoor activities. Last year's sold-out event featured sets from Burt Bacharach, Metronomy and London Grammar.

Tickets for Wilderness are on sale now, priced £165.99 for adults, £80 for under-18s and £5 for under-10s. Get more info and line-up details at [www.wildernessfestival.com](http://www.wildernessfestival.com).

experience and be over 18. **A contact phone number is essential.** A limited number (100) of all-venue Punt passes are on sale from Truck Store on Cowley Road, Blackwell's Music Shop on Broad Street an online from Wegottickets.com. The line-up will be announced on the 15<sup>th</sup> March on the **Oxford Punt 2015** page on Facebook.

**RECORD STORE DAY** takes place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April. The annual celebration of independent stores, will as ever feature limited edition releases and live instores. Truck Store on Cowley Road, Blackwell's Music Shop on Broad Street and Witney's Rapture will all be taking part in the international event. Visit [www.recordstoreday.co.uk](http://www.recordstoreday.co.uk) for details.





# NEWS

## THE OXFORD FOLK

**WEEKEND** returns in April with headline sets from **Chris Wood**, **Lady Maisery** and **John Spiers**. The annual community-run festival runs over the weekend of the **17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> April** at **The Old Fire Station**. Other acts confirmed so far include The Hut People, Boldwood, Patsy Reid, Moore Moss Rutter, The Askew Sisters, Threepenny Bit and The Rheingans Sifers.

Adult weekend tickets are priced £57, with discounts for under-18s and under-12s. The festival organisers are also looking to recruit volunteers to help run the weekend. More details on that and everything else at [www.folkweekendoxford.co.uk](http://www.folkweekendoxford.co.uk)

## COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL

was named Best Community Project at the Oxford Charity & Volunteer Awards last month.

The Carnival, which last year attracted 45,000 people to Cowley Road, returns on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July this year, and is the culmination to a year-long programme of community events and planning.

Danielle Battigelli, Executive Director of Cowley Road Works, which organises the event, said: "We are over the moon. Not only is Carnival a fantastic event celebrated by the many communities within Oxford, it is also the culmination of a series of other events and a whole lot of hard work from the team and all our volunteers. To get this award is fantastic recognition of our work. We wouldn't be able to organise Carnival without our wonderful team of volunteers, fundraisers, sponsors and supporters, and I want to thank every one of them. We couldn't do it without you.

Cowley Road Works trustee Paul Wolf added: "Community projects need time to nurture and grow, and

as the roots grow deep it becomes clear that Carnival has lasting benefits all the year round. It is great to have this recognition for all the support and effort that people in the area have put into celebrating Oxford's vibrant community."

This year's Carnival will be sponsored by Brookes University. To find out how to get involved, visit [www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk](http://www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk)

## THE SWEATBOX IN WANTAGE

hosts its third Rock The Park event this year. Running over the weekend of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July in Wantage's Manor Road Recreation Ground, the event will showcase local acts of all ages and genres. Event organisers, made up of the youth club's young volunteers and social workers, are looking for bands and artists wanting to play. Email Beth at [whitehartmusic@gmail.com](mailto:whitehartmusic@gmail.com) with music links and info about your band. Visit [www.whitehartmusic.com](http://www.whitehartmusic.com) for more details.

**JON OUIN** has written the musical soundtrack for a new production of Mary Stuart at the Oxford Playhouse this month. Peter Oswald's translation of Freidrich Schiller's 1801 play runs from the 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> March. The Stornoway chap told *Nightshift*, "Essentially it's about the power struggle between Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>. What with *Wolf Hall* on the telly, Tudors are all the rage right now. My score involves plenty of harpsichord and strings and roboticised choir. It's occasionally dark and evil, so I thought it might appeal to *Nightshift* readers."

Tickets for the play are available from [www.oxfordplayhouse.com](http://www.oxfordplayhouse.com). **Stornoway**'s third album, 'Bonxie', meanwhile, is released on the 13<sup>th</sup> April on Cooking Vinyl. *Review next issue.*



**BASEMENT JAXX** are the first headline act to be announced for this year's **Truck Festival**. The electronic dance hitmakers will be joined by **Saint Raymond** and **Peter Hook and the Light** over the weekend of the **17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> July** at **Hill Farm** in Steventon.

Other acts confirmed so far include Pulled Apart By Horses, Slaves, Rae Morris, Jawws, Honeyblood, Baby Godzilla, Blaenavon, The Academia, King Pleasure & the Biscuit Boys, and The ODC Drumline. Many more acts to be confirmed.

Adult weekend tickets are £79.50, with under-12s going free. For tickets and more details, visit [www.truckfestival.com](http://www.truckfestival.com).

**ASHER DUST** has an album's worth of tracks available for streaming or download on a pay-what-you-like basis this month. 'Splendid Odds & Bloodclart Sods' features ten tracks recorded over the past few years that have never been previously released. The maverick singer/producer's highly eclectic mix of hip hop, electronica, dub, trip-hop, punk, blues and jazz has made him a mainstay of the local scene and one of the most inventive musicians in Oxford. A full new album is due for release in May, but until then, get your dose of experimental craziness, random riddims and general brilliance at [asherdust.bandcamp.com/album/splendid-odds-and-bloodclart-sods](http://asherdust.bandcamp.com/album/splendid-odds-and-bloodclart-sods)

**THE JAMES STREET TAVERN** hosts a four-day live music festival over the May Bank holiday weekend. **Mayfest** runs from the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> May at the pub in James Street, east Oxford and they're looking

for acts wanting to play. Artists wanting to appear should email [mayfest@btconnect.com](mailto:mayfest@btconnect.com). The only stipulations are all acts must be from Oxfordshire or play here regularly, and no covers bands.

Acts already confirmed include, Auralcandy, Bewarethisboy, Blackthorn, Firegazers, Gemma Moss, Goin' Loud, Ian Woods, Last Rites, Monkfish, The Pink Diamond Revue, Reckless Sleepers, Rory Evans, Tom Ivey Band, Tony Batey, and Wednesday's Wolves.

**CLEARWATER STUDIOS** have upgraded to 16 simultaneous tracks from this month, aiming to help bands who bands who want to record live. They are also offering local bands a discount rate of £150 for 10 hours for bookings in March. Contact Mike on 07818 342173

**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).

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

**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.



11-27 March 2015, Oxford

For more events and ticket bookings please visit [www.audiograft.co.uk](http://www.audiograft.co.uk)

12/03-22/03

Mario De Vega

Arno Fabre

Minoru Sato

Janek Schaefer

Fiona Sally Miller

Rob MacDonald

Thurs-Sun 12:00-18:00

Free

Opening 11/03 18:00

OVADA, 14A Osney Ln, Oxford OX1 1NJ

12/03-22/03

Keir Williams &

Joseph

Fairweather

Hole

Tues-Sat 10:00-17:00

Sundays 11:00-16:00

Free

The Story Museum, 42 Pembroke Street, OX1 1BP

14/03

Mike Blow

John Grieve

Sat only 12:00-18:00

Free

John Henry Brookes Building, Oxford Brookes University, Gypsy Lane Campus, Oxford OX3 0BT

19/03-22/03

Sam Kidel

Thurs-Sun 12:00-18:00

Free

O3 Gallery, Oxford Castle, OX1 1AY

## EXHIBITIONS

WED 11/03 18:00

Free

Launch Night

OVADA, 14A Osney Ln, Oxford, OX1 1NJ

Andy Guhl

Mario De Vega

## CONCERTS

THUR 12/03 19:00

(doors)

£10/8

Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, OX1 1BP

Darren Copeland

Diego Garro

FRI 13/03 19:00

(doors)

£10/8

Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, OX1 3SD

*Cutting into the Continuum*

[rout] perform compositions by:

Jennifer Walshe

James Saunders

Matthew Shlomowitz

Paul Newland

Paul Whitty

& Felicity Ford

SAT 14/03 19:00

(doors)

£10/8

The Story Museum, 42 Pembroke Street, OX1 1BP

Maria Chavez

Minoru Sato

Sally Golding

Lucio Capece



**MARK GARDENER** releases the album he recorded with **Robin Guthrie** this month. 'Universal Road' will be released on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March on Soleil Après Minuit Records. The collaboration between the Ride frontman and the former Cocteau Twins guitarist was recorded and mixed between 2013-14 and comes just as Ride reform for a series of shows over the summer. Anyone buying the album directly from [robinguthrie.com](http://robinguthrie.com) or [markgardener.com](http://markgardener.com) will also get a free limited edition CD of the 2012 track 'The Places We Go', unavailable anywhere else.

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# A quiet word with UNDERSMILE



**“WE REALLY ARE** *humourless and miserable,” says Olly Corona-Brown, “we were going to call the album ‘Buttfuck Surprise’ but ‘Anhedonia’ has more of a ring to it.”*

**OLLY, BASSIST WITH** Oxfordshire’s sludge/doom uber-beings Undersmile, is responding to *Nightshift’s* enquiry as to whether the band reflect the title of their new album, ‘Anhedonia’. The dictionary defines the word as “the inability to experience pleasure.” There are those who, having experienced Undersmile’s music, and fled to a safe hiding place, or wondered at a bleakness they had not previously considered could exist on this plane of existence, probably think the album title is apt. No other band in the county, bar the indescribably brilliant Sextodecimo, has polarised opinion to such a degree as Undersmile. And yet, where some see horror, ugliness and brutality, the chosen few recognise beauty, sensuality and melody, or at least enjoy being hammered half to death in slow motion by riffs made of ghosts and girders. So anyway, why the title? Is it a joke at the expense of people who think Undersmile really are humourless and miserable? “I’d like to say it was us being arseholes,” says Taz Corona-Brown, along with Hel Sterne singer and guitarist in the band, “but perhaps you give us too much credit. We truly are just humourless and miserable! Personally I like the feel of the word,

it sounds kind of ancient.” Hel: “Olly isn’t joking, he’s been campaigning for that title for *months!*”

**TRUTH IS, YOU’D STRUGGLE** to meet a more affable bunch of people than Undersmile, which is what makes the nature of their music – an awesome, overpowering, oceanic tide of doom and sludge and haunting dual vocals – a spectral moan from the cellar of a haunted dolls house, as *Nightshift* once described it – all the more startling. And it is startling music. The first time we witnessed Undersmile live, at The Wheatshaf many years ago, we were gobsmacked at its sheer naked power and uncompromising nature, and really, we’ve never lost that sense of awe. There is no band on earth – or beneath it – that sounds like Undersmile. This month they release their second full-length album, the follow-up to 2012’s debut behemoth ‘Narwhal’, and we’d make so bold as to declare it a masterpiece. Along with the shock and awe of those tectonic beats and riffs comes graceful contemplation and a sense of majesty, a deathly siren’s call rather than a brutish punch to the jaw, cello adding extra gravity to the guitars, electronics, courtesy of friend and local drone master Lee Riley, ramping up the tension and menace while all the while downplaying the latent aggression in the music.

**NIGHTSHIFT TALKS TO** Undersmile (Hel, Taz, Olly and drummer Tom McKibbin) shortly

after a photo shoot in a nearby tennis court of all places (of which more later), and asks them first, how the new album compares to ‘Narwhal’. Taz: “We approached the writing in a slightly different way, if only in as much as trying to scale songs back a bit, strip them down. We intended the album to be far shorter than ‘Narwhal’, though it’s only ended up five minutes shorter. We also made room for some more sombre sections, clean guitars and sparse arrangements. We’ve always loved these elements in the music of Earth, Codeine and 40 Watt Sun, and Hel and myself have worked on similar pieces of music for nearly ten years so it doesn’t seem so starkly different to us as it will to some. Conversely, I think there is more aggression in the louder sections than on our previous releases, and emotionally, as well as lyrically, it is *heavy*.” Hel: “We were very strict with ourselves in the arrangements this time. Our main goal was for the album to actually fit onto the CD this time. Poor Billy Anderson had a time splicing ‘Narwhal’ down: three times it wouldn’t burn. So with that in mind we were like ‘Yeah, we can just write a short album!’ So it was quite flabbergasting to learn that after all our concerted efforts, it’s only five minutes shorter than Narwhal. “We wanted ‘Anhedonia’ to be more succinct in terms of impact and listenability. There is more of a melancholic atmosphere going on throughout but it wasn’t intentional, more a natural progression. This time around I really visualised and went into what I was

writing, at times feeling pretty bleak because of it. Taz and I were both stuck in a writing haze for months on end, unable to think clearly about much else, so we’re pleased we have come out the other side.” Tom: “We’re incapable of doing a 40-minute album, even if we *really* try. I personally think ‘Anhedonia’ is a more interesting album than ‘Narwhal’; Narwhal is kind of ‘everything all of the time’ and can be pretty hard work to listen to, whereas ‘Anhedonia’ is more mysterious and dynamic.” When you’ve made records as extreme as you have (the band’s last release, a split-EP with the band Bismuth last year, featured a single, 23-minute track, ‘Titanaboa’), is there ever a question of ‘where do we go from here?’ when it comes to making the next one? Hel: “We’re genuinely not concerned about things like that. We’ve all agreed that we should never limit ourselves in any way. We tend to write the music and then decide how it translates, rather than set guidelines and try to work to a brief. We have done that before but it seems to stunt the creative process. In this album we were delighted to have the cello accompaniment as it was something Taz and I had longed for since we started writing in 2006, so I was delighted to have had the opportunity to write and arrange some cello parts for ‘Emmenagogue’ as it takes the depth of feeling to the next level.” Taz: “We’ve always agreed that whatever comes out naturally during the writing process is where we should go next. We try not to put too many constraints on ourselves. Some parts of the album have actually been around for a long time so we sort of knew what was coming. On ‘Anhedonia’, we decided to add cellos, which definitely create a lamenting atmosphere in a different way to anything we’ve recorded before. It also features Lee Riley who has contributed some Lynchian noise to ‘Labyrinths’ and ‘Knucklesucker’, which have created a building sense of dread.”

**ON THE DOOM AND SLUDGE** scene, Undersmile are rightly regarded as one of the finest acts to have come out of the UK. They have been championed by and worked with the near-legendary Dylan Carson of Earth, as well as Billy Anderson and Justin Greaves. Friends in high places are always good to have, but who’s been the biggest help and influence of everyone they’ve encountered? Taz: “We are truly blown away to

have worked and played with all those guys. For me, playing with Dylan Carson was pretty epic; someone who I’d read about in so many books, to be sharing a stage with him was incredible. Justin was great to work with – he co-produced and recorded ‘Wood and Wire – he’s insanely talented and a good friend of the band. Billy Anderson, again, somebody with a catalogue of work like his!? Crazy! We have had to pinch ourselves a lot in the past six years...” Hel: “We really admire those guys, they’re all actual legends and we immensely appreciate all the support and encouragement that we’ve received. The thing that blew us away the most was when Henry Rollins ordered our record. We were thinking ‘we know where you live now, Henry.’ He has featured us on his radio show and a few fans have informed us we’ve been mentioned on his website on bands to watch out for. We can’t understand it: Henry Rollins!” Tom: “Having all of those names attached to our work has been great, but the first person to give Undersmile a serious helping hand was (local producer and Blindsight Records honcho) Umair Chaudhry; his patronage of the band in the early days was really important to us and helped get us in magazines. After that we’ve had the support of a couple of labels such as Tartarus Records in Holland, and Shaman Recordings and Future Noise in Manchester. It’s one thing getting a big name endorsement, but it doesn’t mean much if there isn’t someone willing to back you and release your record for you.”

**AND FOLLOWING SUCH** ringing endorsements, Jon Davis from the band Conan is putting ‘Anhedonia’ out on his Black Bow label, further confirmation of the high regard Undersmile are regarded in. Taz: “We’ve known Jon for a while through the doom/sludge circuit. He is putting out some really great stuff on Black Bow Records. We recorded ‘Anhedonia’ at his studio Skyhammer with the brilliant Chris Fielding, who is also Conan’s bass player: and much to our delight also a Nirvana and Alan Partridge aficionado. We fell in love with it there, in the heart of the Cheshire countryside with rescue chickens and bunnies roaming wild and free. Hel and I arrived with sore throats and were greeted by Jon with warm Himalayan pink salts, ginger and honey. True gents.”

**BUNNIES? CHICKENS?** Herbal remedies? Are these really the purveyors of sonic terror of the kind that once cleared an entire venue before their first song had finished at the Oxford Punt? A band who, as we discovered the first time we interviewed them, are powered by nightmares, night terrors and the

darkest of horror films? Of course they are; they’ve not gone soft on us yet. ‘Anhedonia’ is still a malevolent music ride beyond the wildest dreams of the most metal bands. The snarling aggression that punctuates the likes of ‘Song of Stones’ and ‘Emmenagogue’ jars rather nicely against the reverie that surrounds it, but equally it feels almost caged, like there’s something far worse lurking, waiting to get you if you peer too closely into the dark. Taz: “Yes, I think so. As a band we have always enjoyed surprising people with the unexpected. Even just aesthetically we’ve taken pleasure in lulling people into a false sense of security. We definitely wanted to create that contrast between sorrow and aggression. It’s possibly an amplified version of what has gone before; the sad sections more mournful and the screams and drawls more desperate.” Hel: “We all appreciate the juxtaposition of loud/quiet, beautiful/ugly, glory/tragedy. But my only real intention was finding and getting into a feeling, then working on translating it. I wrote ‘Song of Stones’, for example, after seeing Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, which was also very similar to one of my favourite post apocalyptic video games, FallOut3. I like to go into ‘the zone’, as we call it, and from there just see what happens. ‘Emmenagogue’ was comprised on a theme of regret and betrayal and the lyrics in part portray a woman talking about her death, after she’s left her body. I felt like, this time, it was easier to communicate emotional soundscapes through clean guitars. The addition of the mournful cellos gave a stark contrast between the heavy guitars.” And are you still watching those horror films? Hel: “Taz, isn’t allowed to watch those films; she goes wrong.”

**RETURNING TO THAT PHOTO** shoot with *Nightshift* snapper Sam Shepherd in the tennis courts; as befits a band of Undersmile’s dark nature, it took place after dark, but beyond that you’d think nothing more of its nature or location. Sadly sexism continues to raise its ugly head for the band from some quarters – quarters that should know far better. Tom has previously told us the band were asked to make a photo shoot ‘more erotic’. How do the band deal with that kind of attitude? Tom: “It was a PR person for a fairly prominent metal record label in Europe. Me and Olly were tempted to get them out but we have far too much

integrity.” Taz: “We feel angry and also sad. You really wouldn’t expect it from what are, relatively speaking, underground record labels. ‘Oh, you are two women, have you thought about using your bodies to create more interest in your music?’ It’s surprising, yet not so. What a shitty attitude to have towards women. And music.” Hel: “We’d rather not have the CD sales of people buying our music purely on looks. Taz and I have always, and will always, retain our integrity. Unfortunately there are still some pretty backwards views on women making music which is considered to be ‘men’s music’ as it’s so filthy. “It’s nonsense and I can’t see how baring any flesh will help anything, other than getting a different fan base for all the wrong reasons. In terms of telling us to be more erotic, so many funny things sprung to mind; on the other side of being insulted/irritated, we were quite amused. We wanted to send Tom and Olly into a topless shoot.” Olly: “We should have emulated one of the Frankie Goes to Hollywood photo shoots. *They* were pretty erotic. It’s just annoying; you wouldn’t see a photograph of a bunch of bearded men being told they had to be ‘sexy.’” Although Undersmile are well outside of even the metal underground, do they still experience the attitudes that can still go with such a macho type of music, and are there particular expectations of how women should present themselves? Taz: “Thankfully that’s not the normal response from people we work and play with but, as you say, the sludge/doom scene is a sub-sub-sector and were we playing mainstream metal, I don’t doubt we would encounter sexism a lot more frequently. The genre we play in is overwhelmingly supportive and on the whole no issue is made of our gender. Obviously you get the odd douche. We have received the occasional review that focuses more on our outfits than our music, which is rather tiresome...” Hel: “As far as expectations of how we should present ourselves, I think we’re beyond caring what other people think; we just do what we like to. We have had loads of harsh criticisms and if we were going to worry about that we would have given in, or killed ourselves, as was once suggested.”

**AS WELL AS BEING THAT** rarest of things, particularly locally – a female-led metal band – Undersmile’s music lifts them far away and above

any other band from across the metal spectrum, which in itself brings another form of incomprehension. Didn’t one local metal band, who shall remain nameless to save their embarrassment, ask you if you were incapable of playing any faster? Hel: “One? *Tons!* Other people have complained about our live performances, things like, ‘they were clearly mashed up on drugs’. We’re generally stone cold sober, so I don’t even know what that is.” Taz: “Hopefully it wasn’t malicious, they just really didn’t get the kind of music we make and assumed it must’ve been because we tried playing fast but couldn’t!” Tom: “That was a complaint from a number of local metal bands who obviously didn’t seem to appreciate that there are an insurmountable number of musical genres out there, in the wide world. Still, we had to admire their single-minded dedication to pugilistic metal posturing. If it’s any consolation to them, there’s a moment in the new album where Hel does some black metal strumming.”

**UNDERSMILE, OF COURSE,** take it all in their stride. They are singular in their determination to make the music they do without compromise, living proof of our favourite maxim that bands should take their music seriously, but not themselves. And such is their success, on a level well beyond that that most local bands could imagine, they barely have to contemplate the views of those who simply don’t get it. The magnificent ‘Anhedonia’ will only further their cause. So back to the original point of this conversation. If someone only knew them from their music, what would be the biggest surprise or shock for them when they met Undersmile in person? Hel: “Sometimes I feel like people are almost disappointed when they meet us and realise we’re actually just nice people. We are all more than happy to laugh at ourselves and be silly, and now and again I’m not sure that goes down too well.” If Undersmile could have a kitten or a puppy, which would it be? Tom: “What kind of sadist would make a person choose between the two?” Taz: “Arrgh! How. Could. You? I love both pups and kits. I shall likely be lynched by the kitty-loving doomster scene but I come from a long line of dog lovers. I’m going to have to say, puppy!” Hel: “Without question: kitten. If there’s one thing that can make me melt spontaneously, it’s a kitten. Those little mews and all that crab-walking. Then again, I love puppies too, bounding all over the place. Oh, why make us choose; *WHY?*

**‘Anhedonia’ is released in April on Black Bow Records.**



# RELEASED

## UNDERSMILE

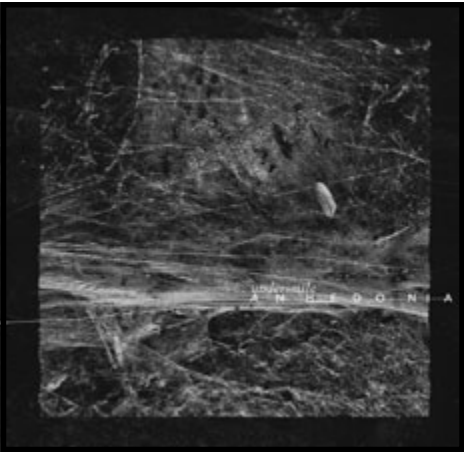
### ‘Anhedonia’

(Black Bow)

It’s fair to say that Undersmile are a band that truly divides opinion, and not just locally. A quick glance at the comments under the video for ‘Milk’ on Youtube suggests that the band’s molasses-slow brand of doom angers as many people as it pleases. The fact that Undersmile generates such frothing at the mouth is to be applauded; in getting such a reaction, positive or otherwise, they’re clearly doing something right.

‘Anhedonia’, their second full album, continues along the path of righteousness, although the band has altered their sonic palette a little for this album. It is not as directly confrontational as their debut ‘Narwhal’; there’s more subtlety to be found, and more in the way of nuance. The influence of Undersmile’s “unplugged” sister-act Coma Wall is noticeable across the album as the band toys with dynamics to bring out the full range of emotion buried within these songs. ‘Aeris’ is perhaps the most obvious example, with its delicately picked introduction sounding like a desert blues and the careful application of strings as the song progresses. The twin chanted vocals of Taz Corona-Brown and Hel Sterne, here at least, conjure up beautifully crafted and emotive melodies. It’d be a stretch to describe ‘Aeris’ as Undersmile’s pop moment, but it is the most accessible and perfectly crafted song they’ve done to date. Similarly, the conclusion to ‘Emmenagogue’ sees the band utilising strings to add emotive weight to their sound – as if more weight were needed.

Despite these flourishes, there’s still plenty of the thunderous and unsettling Undersmile to be found too. Never has the band sounded so intense and crushing; they’ve harnessed a bottom end so heavy that when the distorted guitars kick in, the ground shakes. ‘Sky Burial’ for example simply rumbles when the main hook crashes down,



and when coupled with the roared vocal refrain of “there’s no one else, I’m the only one,” it becomes genuinely unsettling. Opening track ‘Labyrinths’ showcases the band’s ability to write songs with carefully constructed musical and emotional narratives. Starting life like a folk song as penned by Dylan Carlson, it finds time to visit a haunting church service, and take a slow paced tour of hell conducted by the Cenobites. It’s the band’s use of space and pacing that makes it work, however. The emotional core of the song is established by mournful cello lines and Sterne and Corona-Brown’s almost impressionistic vocals. The sledgehammer guitars are only unleashed when the song demands it, but when they hit, they are all the more effective for the band’s attention to their craft.

This album represents a significant step forward for Undersmile in terms of sound and songwriting. They will continue to divide opinion, of that there’s no doubt, but ‘Anhedonia’ is an assured and impressive album, that deserves its place (locally at least) alongside Sevenchurch’s doom masterpiece ‘Bleak Insight’. To paraphrase one of those Youtube commenters: *this* is what happens when you let women write music.

**Sam Shepherd**



## VIENNA DITTO

### ‘Hammer And A Nail’

(Self released)

Short and sweet, the new release from ‘voodoo sci-fi blues’ duo Vienna Ditto is a single track to whet the appetite for their forthcoming debut album. It starts traditionally enough, with an urgent blues guitar strum, but within seconds this tradition is subverted with odd synth sounds and the warbling strength of Hatty Taylor’s vocals. From here on, we can do nothing but submit to an increasingly thrown-it-all-in production style, as keyboards, organs, horns and chaotic electronics wend their way through a frenetic song structure. It’s all expertly handled, and melodically it reminds of ‘House Of The Rising Sun’, albeit through the dual lens of 19th century bawdy French sing-songs and 21st century post-everything muso culture. Without the fantastic vocals, it could be slightly lessened as a piece, but even on the merits of the music alone, it lays out an increasingly idiosyncratic sound for a band that seems hell-bent on doing things their own way. Bring on the album!

**Simon Minter**

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## TOLIESEL

### ‘Wilderness Blues’

(Self released)

Thankfully there is no Rolls Royce immersed in a swimming pool on the cover of ToLiesel’s new EP but there’s plenty of rock and roll history’s grand sweep nonetheless. Images of billowing hair, moustaches, cacti, cowboy boots and two lane blacktops assault the senses as the guitars scream in homage to the giants of the past while stand out cut ‘Bones’ could be booming out of a jukebox in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas.

What’s that got to do with Oxford, you may ask. That the answer is ‘about as much as Mount Rushmore’ is not enough to send criticism the band’s way – after all, the formula did quite well for the Rolling Stones, Hawkwind, the Broken Family Band and a host of others and the familiar combination of sounds is pulled off here with considerable aplomb.

But it’s that familiarity that is the problem and if you are looking for experimentalism, you won’t find it here. The lightness of touch in evidence on previous tracks such as the *Nightshift* Top 25 nominated ‘Whispered Half Asleep’ is absent and while Neil Young is an obvious debt, it’s the Canadian shorn of radicalism, be it musical or political. It’s passé to criticise guitar solos for guitar solos’ sake but the wheeling riff on ‘An Hour Later’ takes things up a further notch as if opener ‘The Light Part 2’ and the aforementioned ‘Bones’ were not bombastic enough. To finish, the action reverts to the camp fire and log cabins of the Marston Road, the title track revealing itself as a slow burner of a ballad straight out of Americana’s central musical casting before an extended bout of arm waving and lighter lifting that exorcises the ghost of Eric Clapton.

Only in the final few seconds does the untrammelled wall of noise this reviewer craved reveal itself, permeated by echoing vocals – if the whole EP had displayed this kind of nerve, we might have more reason to be excited. For now, dust down that plaid shirt and your Levis.

**Rob Langham**



## BUG PRENTICE

### ‘Nicholas Ray’ / ‘Spoon’

(Self released)

Based on quotes from director Nicholas Ray’s movies (you might remember him from such films as *Flying Leathernecks* and *Rebel Without A Cause*), Bug Prentice’s latest single is every bit as edgy as you might expect. Musically, it’s as far removed from main man Ally Craig’s solo work as is possible to get. A raucous post-punk affair driven by Stephen Gilchrist’s pummelling drumming and given a serious cutting edge by Craig’s stabbing, serrated guitar, ‘Nicholas Ray’ is a song that constantly strains at the leash. Were it not for Ally’s pop-*nous* this could easily be too discordant for its own good. As it is, some neat melodies, and a fine vocal performance add balance and ensure that no matter how angry the song sounds, it always has focus and a purpose. After the thorough shellacking given by ‘Nicholas Ray’, ‘Spoons’ is a different beast altogether. Here, the band is in far more introspective mood as Ally celebrates his best friend. A simplistic guitar and bass pattern mix with some aching cello (provided by Jon Clayton) to create an atmosphere shot through with a palpable sense of love, and a little sadness too. As different as these songs are, they are both capable of taking your breath away, albeit via different methods.

**Sam Shepherd**



## CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM

### ‘Breather’

(Kissability)

## TWISTED STATE OF MIND

### ‘Letting Go’

(Toil)

Last time we saw Twisted State of Mind, a trio still in their early teens, live they were blowing all the grown up bands on the bill offstage in a display of classic thrash firepower and unselfconscious showmanship that completely belied their tender years. Since then the cherub-faced threesome from Witney have toured the States, hooking up with Toil Radio along the way. A live recording of ‘Letting Go’ for the station here makes it out as the band’s debut single.

While on the one hand a live recording helps capture some of their energy and sense of fun, there’s a little something lost in the production that lessens its power to thrill somewhat, in the same way that live music television always feels reigned in compared to a proper gig. The song itself is solid enough, closer to the likes of Armoured Saint or Accept than Metallica’s full-throttle thrash; the opening blast beat salvo helps them out of the traps with enough vigour to slay initial doubts before they settle into standard 80s riffage.

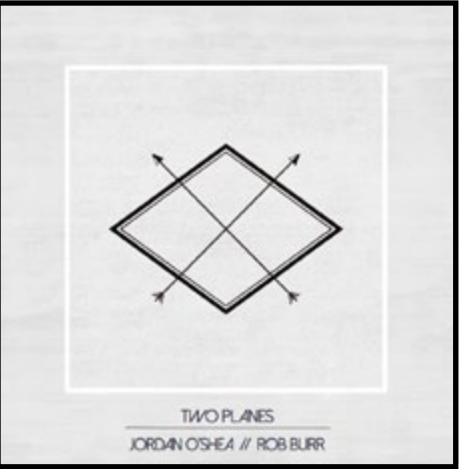
Maybe not their best track by any means (we’re waiting for ‘Rock and Roll in Hell’ to see the light of day), but still a remarkable slab of noise from such a young band. Hopefully they’ll get the time to grow into something seriously beastly.

**Dale Kattack**



Flamenco is the music of joyous sexuality and drunken revelry, right? Not in the hands of Charlie Cunningham it ain’t. Like Jose Gonzales he conjures a cosy sense of melancholy out of it, his voice rich and airy and reflective even as his fingers fly across his fret as if trying to conjure the spirit of the Tarantella. He does it best on the sweetly wistful ‘Less Leg’, which as the title might suggest is the polar opposite of a cheery drinking song but manages to properly capture your heart in its gentle web of sorrow. Elsewhere ‘Long Grass’ sees Charlie making simple instrumentation and arrangements feel like so much more, though when you’ve a voice that so comfortably cuts to the heart of romantic longing, who needs more. In fact there’s a feeling he finds this all too easy, and in a crowded genre where too many earnest young men sound like they’re straining every muscle to squeeze some kind of genuine emotion into the music, it’s a rare treat to hear it done with such easy grace.

**Sue Foreman**



## JORDAN O’SHEA /

### ROB BURR

### ‘Two Planes’ (Split EP)

(Bear on a Bicycle)

Some things in life are certain: death, taxes and the likelihood that Jordan O’Shea’s new record won’t be a barrel of laughs. Jordan is not a man to whom happiness comes easily, it seems. His last album was titled ‘Desperation, My Dear’, and that sense of desolation continues into this six-song split EP with Sier Pin Sky’s Rob Burr. But hey, if you want happy fun things in your life, go and buy a puppy; cheerful music is for self-consciously wacky office ‘characters’ and serial killers.

“My heart belongs to her / If only I could find the words / Is this my punishment for all the mistakes I’ve made?” sings Jordan on EP opener ‘Aviary’, partway between Year 11 bedroom poet and man seriously at the end of his tether, and it gets more despairing from here, mournful horns and minor key grief laid out like the red carpet into Purgatory on the shimmering, autumnal ‘Boketto’, from which that word ‘desperate’ once again emerges. By the time he reaches ‘Farewell December’, a barely-there, soft-as-snow blanket of melancholy, Jordan’s talking of “leaving this world behind” as he declares “I will hear you in everyone,” like a living wraith whose love has been lost at sea leaving him to wander the shore forever more. It’s not what’s commonly referred to as ‘a banger’.

Rob’s songs seem rather better adjusted to the concepts of summer, giddy kittens and not throwing yourself off a motorway bridge. Armed with a reflective, whispery voice and an acoustic guitar, he shares a sense of disconsolation with Jordan but these songs could sit more easily in the company of a country tavern folk jam where the audience could stare wistfully into their pints without feeling the need for recourse to heroin or loaded pistol.

The ghost of Nick Drake hovers just over the shoulder of songs like ‘Slither of Moon’, with its starlit sparseness, and if he doesn’t quite stand out from a small army of similarly downbeat acoustic troubadours, Rob’s purity of voice and lyrical simplicity marks him out as a likable talent.

**Dale Kattack**





# GIG GUIDE

**SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**LOLA COLT: The Jericho Tavern** – Noisy gothic drama from the rising London band – *see main preview*  
**BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON LEOPARD + DES BARKUS + SONG & SUPPER ROOMS: Donnington Community Centre (6pm)** – Free early evening of acoustic music, hosted by Moon Leopard’s Jeremy Hughes and featuring bluesman Beard of Destiny and rocker Des Barkus.  
**MAD LARRY + TOMY IVEY + SPOON THEORY + ADY DAVEY & SHAKY LIPS + DES BARKUS + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm)** – Free afternoon of unplugged live music courtesy of Giddyup Music.

**MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**THE RIOTOUS BROTHERS: The Bullingdon** – Raw, rocking r’n’b, blues and prog from the south coast’s Riotous Brothers at tonight’s Haven Club show, the band, formed back in 2003,

*Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>*  
**LOLA COLT: The Jericho Tavern**  
We wouldn’t call Lola Colt a goth band but it wouldn’t be too much of a flight of fancy to imagine the London sextet dressed head to toe in black while thinking the darkest of dark thoughts. Their debut album, ‘Away From The Water’, was produced by Bad Seed Jim Selavunos, so the dark side definitely has them for its own. And by crikey they’re serious fun in their adherence to heavily reverbed post-punk noise and emotional drama, singer Gun Overbye possessed of a venom-and-velvet-laced voice pitched partway between Patti Smith, Anna Calvi and Grace Slick, while the band’s brooding psychedelia and gothic pop sounds like the soundtrack to a bleakly trippy spaghetti western orchestrated by The Doors, The Gun Club and Savages. Some cracking influences there, and Loa Colt are already building a reputation for live ferocity, so enjoy tonight’s intimate setting. Just don’t let them have the key to the cutlery drawer.



## MARCH

touring their third album, ‘The Tree’, drawing comparisons to classic 70s pub rock acts like Ducks Deluxe, Brinsley Schwarz and Graham Parker & the Rumour.  
**BILL KIRCHEN: The Jericho Tavern** – The “Titan of the Telecaster” comes to the Famous Monday Blues, showing no sign of giving up any time soon as he continues to tour, some 45 years after the success of ‘Lincoln Hotrod’, the hit he led as guitarist with Commander Cody’s Lost Planet Airmen. Adept at blues, boogie-woogie, country, swing and rockabilly, and with a well-earned reputation as a consummate entertainer.

**TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**GLASS ANIMALS: O2 Academy** – Already sold-out show for the homecoming heroes, back on their own turf after touring the States, Europe and Australia, celebrating being the second most shared act on Spotify in 2014 and set for a game-changing appearance on Letterman. And they’re ours, all ours! – *see main news feature*  
**JAZZ CLUB with GUITAR SUMMIT: The Bullingdon** – Free weekly jazz club, with guests Guitar Summit playing live.  
**BEN GOSLING + THE JULIA MEIJER BAND + ALL THINGS CONSIDERED: Old Fire Station** – Little Red multi-instrumentalist Ben Gosling plays solo, inspired by Billy Bragg, AA Bondy and Vic Ruggiero. He’s joined by Oxford-based Swedish singer-songwriter Julia Meijer and her band, mixing atmospheric acoustic pop with folktronica, and Berkshire’s folk-fusion outfit All Things Considered.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**AQUILO: The Bullingdon** – Lake District lads with a sweet disposition – *see main preview*

**THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE AUTUMN SAINTS + RUSSIAN COWBOYS + FLOURITE + KHAMASINA + MEGAN JOSEPHY: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music showcase with REM and Tom Petty-inspired Anglo-American rockers Autumn Saints, and funk-pop crew Russian Cowboys.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf** – Free unplugged gig in the downstairs bar from the veteran local blues, swamp rock and psych-funk faves.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford’s longest running and best open club night continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more every week.  
**SUPERMARKET: The Cellar** – Pop, disco, UK garage and 90s house club night.  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst**

**ACOUSTIC THURSDAYS: Jude the Obscure** – New weekly acoustic open session at the Jericho pub, with guest performers and all-comers welcome.  
**ADAM LATIF BAND: Joe’s Bar & Grill, Summertown** – Gypsy jazz quartet pays tribute to Django Reinhardt, plus jazz standards.

**FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**SKYLARKIN’ SOUND SYSTEM: The Cellar** – Celebrating fifteen years bringing dub and roots sounds to town, Skylarkin’ continues to be one of Oxford’s essential club nights, tonight with Massive Attack’s Daddy G, fresh from rocking the beach stage at Outlook 2014 and taking a trip underground to play a set of deep, dubby reggae, hip hop, soul, garage and block party gems that hark back to his 80s soundsystem days with The Wild Bunch. The night is hosted by Tru Thoughts mic man Deemas J.  
**KIM CHURCHILL: The Bullingdon** – Breathless, bluesy rock and soul from the barefoot Aussie songsmith, over in the UK to promote his fourth album, ‘Silence/Win’.

**DR SYNTAX: The Bullingdon** – Hip hop club night with much-travelled Banbury rapper and producer Dr Syntax, who’s worked extensively alongside Foreign Beggars, collaborated with Rizzle Kicks and Del the Funky Homosapien and lately has been fronting Manchester hip hop collective Mouse Outfit.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with PEERLESS PIRATES + MAD LARRY + BEARD OF DESTINY + DECOVO: The Wheatsheaf** – Swashbuckling rockabilly, Tex-Mex and spaghetti western fun from Smiths-inspired party starters Peerless Pirates at tonight’s characteristically eclectic Klub Kak. They’re joined by veteran blues and country fella Mad Larry Reddington, one-man blues army Beard of Destiny and indie rockers Decovo.

**DAISY RODGERS MUSIC presents LOWWS + LEADER + ORANGE VISION: The Jericho Tavern** – Triple bill of local indie rock at tonight’s Daisy Rodgers Music show, with Lowws – the new name for The Sea The Sea – offering lush, fidgety electro-tinged pop in the vein of Foals and Friendly Fires, alongside delicate stadium pop from Witney’s Leader and heavier indie rocking from Orange Vision.  
**LONELY THE BRAVE + HANNAH-LOU CLARKE + LAKE ACCACIA: The Courtyard, Bicester** – All-ages gig in aid of Oxfam at the Courtyard Youth Arts Centre, the show organised by the club’s gig committee, and featuring stars of last summer’s Truck Festival Lonely The Brave, hailing from Cambridge and whose epic, urgent alt.rocking recalls Pearl Jam and Glasvegas at times; after tour supports to Lower Than Atlantis, Marmozets and Deaf Havana, they’re off on tour as headliners. They’re joined by singer Hannah-Lou Clarke and Banbury’s teenrockers Lake Accacia.  
**THE LOST ART: James Street Tavern** – Local duo Greg and Gordo take their acclaimed debut album into the live arena, their sweet, soulful

acoustic pop, showtunes and Tex-Mex flavourings drawing comparisons with everyone from Labi Siffre, Jamie Cullum, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Buddy Holly.  
**ZZ TOPS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute night.  
**DISCO MUTANTES: The Library** – Disco, funk and acid house club night, tonight a special tribute to disco godfather Larry Levan.

**SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**POLICE DOG HOGAN: The Bullingdon** – Upbeat urban bluegrass, suburban country, fun drinking songs, tales of failed barbecues and souvenir tea towels at tonight’s Empty Room show from the ever-touring septet, featuring *Guardian* columnist Tim Dowling on banjo, the band’s inclusive, feelgood vibes a neat counterpoint to his dry, hangdog humour.  
**THE LITTLE UNSAID + WALTZ IN THE SHALLOW END: The Cellar** – Dramatic, cinematic, string-laden folktronica from West Yorkshire producer and multi-instrumentalist John Elliot, inspired by Nick Cave and Jeff Buckley as well as the dark literary tradition of Lolita and Dante’s Inferno, out on tour to promote his new album, ‘Fisher King’, produced by Oxford’s Graeme Stewart, who has produced Jonny Greenwood’s recent film scores.  
**VERA GRACE + PROLONG THE AGONY + BEING EUGENE: The Wheatsheaf** – Quality

*Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>*  
**AQUILO: The Bullingdon**  
While it hardly equals nearby Manchester as a musical hotbed, The Lake District does seem to keep producing excellent new bands that seem to reflect the isolation and serenity of their surroundings. On the heels of Wild Beasts and Mozart Parties come Aquilo, a pair of young men from Silverdale with sadness in their hearts and musical pasts that involved rival thrash metal and grunge bands in their hometown. The duo’s dreamily atmospheric electro-pop and ethereal r’n’b, all lush, layered electronics, pianism and wistful choirboy-pure vocals, has seen them compared to Mount Kimbie, James Blake and London Grammar, and earned them a well-received slot on the BBC Introducing stage at Glastonbury. Following the frothy acclaim their early Soundcloud recording garnered, an EP ‘Human’ came out in December, a musical incarnation of standing atop the Fells gazing down on Buttermere on a clear, frosty morning.



noise with Witney’s splenetic hardcore crew Vera Grace up against Portsmouth’s metalcore merchants Prolong the Agony and Abingdon’s Being Eugene, this month’s *Nightshift* Demo of the Monthers for their pummelling hardcore assault.  
**BLOODY KNUCKLES: The Bullingdon** – Classic house at the student club night.  
**THE MATT EDWARDS BAND + LEPER KING + SECRET KID: The Jericho Tavern** – Electric blues rocking from local guitarist and singer Matt Edwards, plus stoner rocking from Leper King.  
**PETER KNIGHT’S GIGSPANNER: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – The legendary former Steeleye Span fiddle player continues his virtuoso journey through the world’s musical traditions, infusing his traditional English sounds with elements of Balkan, French, Cajun, African and Aborigine folk.  
**THE LOST ART: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow**  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Jolly Postboys, Florence Park** – first of a handful of shows this week from veteran local blues rocker Pete Fryer and band.  
**WINTER-WILSON: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood** – Harmony-heavy trad folk from former-Ragtrade members Kip Winter and Dave Wilson, out on a national tour to promote their sixth album, ‘Cutting Free’.  
**THE MISSING PERSIANS: The Marsh Harrier, Temple Cowley** – Easy blues rocking from the local regulars.  
**EYE-CON: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Current and classic mod covers.  
**HONOLULU COWBOYS: St Giles Church Hall (6pm)** – Hawaiian tea party.

**SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**STEAMROLLER: The Cellar** – Rocking 60s-style blues in the vein of Hendrix and Cream from the local veterans, tonight playing in aid of autism charity Oasis and joined by a host of guests, including local blues stars Krissy Matthews and Aaron Keylock.  
**WOMANITY: Modern Art Oxford** – Return of the annual one-day festival of music and interactive talks with the emphasis on gender in music. Playing live is cello’n’loops maestro Duotone with his gorgeously melancholy electro-folk-pop; quirky, jaunty singer and multi-instrumentalist Rainbow Reservoir; dark, emotionally harrowing singer/songwriter Tamara Parsons-Baker; musical storyteller IM Kalifa, soulful singer Mary James, plus songs and sets from young players from the Young Women’s Music Project. Talks start at 2pm, with the music from 7pm.  
**RED BUTLER: The Jericho Tavern** – Electric blues-rocking from Sussex’s rising young band at The Famous Monday Blues, the band, centred around guitarist Alex Butler and singer Jane Pearce drawing comparisons to Stevie Ray Vaughan, Gary Moore, Joe Bonamassa and Etta James.  
**OSPREY + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm)** – Free afternoon of unplugged live music courtesy of Giddyup Music.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Bell, Wantage**

**MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**KRISSY MATTHEWS: The Bullingdon** – Bicester’s hotly-tipped young blues guitar talent returns to the Haven Club, his electric style



*Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> – Friday 27<sup>th</sup>*

**AUDIOGRAFT: Various venues**  
Audiograft, to give it its full title is ‘A contemporary experimental and sound art festival’. Now an annual event curated by the Sonic Art Research Unit at Brookes, and co-promoted by Oxford Contemporary Music, Audiograft aims to explore cutting edge musical and visual experimentation in a variety of venues around Oxford. This can be anything from sound frequencies morphed and mutated by heat, as in the work of Japanese artist **Minoru Satu**, or speakers suspended from pendulums and helium balloons, courtesy of Argentina’s **Lucio Capece**. It really is an international affair, with Mexican artist **Mario De Vega** challenging his audience to face their fears with the use of gunpowder, bullets and overheated microwaves in his music, and France’s **Arno Fabre**, whose electro-mechanically rotated bells bring rhythmic cohesion from randomness. Add in the likes of veteran electronic music experimenter **Andy Guhl** and this is as far from tired old rock music as it’s possible to get. It’s music that challenges, confounds, educates and opens minds to all manner of possibilities, while blurring boundaries between music, art and film. For a full festival programme, visit [www.audiograft.co.uk](http://www.audiograft.co.uk)

inspired by Hendrix, Freddy King, Albert Collins and Joe Bonamassa.

**TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**JAZZ CLUB with BLAKE’S 7 FUNK PROJECT: The Bullingdon** – Roj Blake, Kerr Avon, Genna Stannis and Zen the onboard flight computer battle the evil and decidedly ungroovy Federation using only the power of funk at tonight’s jazz club.  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth, industrial and ebm club night with Doktor Joy and Bookhouse.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**AUDIOGRAFT LAUNCH: Ovada** – Launching three weeks of experimental music and art events and exhibitions in venues across the city, curated by the Sonic Art Research Unit at Brookes and Oxford Contemporary Music, a free show by Andy Guhl and Mario De Vega – *see main preview*  
**SLEAFORD MODS: O2 Academy** – The grim underbelly of modern life made musical flesh from the Nottingham duo – *see main preview*  
**TRAGEDY: The Bullingdon** – Another return to town for the heavy metal tribute to The Bee Gees.  
**THE MARK + MOMENTO + CARDBOARD CASTLE + CLAIRE VIOLET HODGKIN:**





*Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>*

## SLEAFORD MODS: O2 Academy

In an age where raw social commentary and genuine anger in music is a rare-to-extinct thing, confined to the margins of conscious hip hop and righteous hardcore, the column inches devoted to Sleaford Mods is a welcome reminder that some people are still mightily pissed of about, well, everything. The Nottingham duo of musician/beatmaker Andrew Robert Lindsay Fearn and gob-on-a-stick Jason Williamson are mining the lost art of articulating the experience of life at the coalface (or call centre, or job centre, or pretty much any scabby, dead-end place you care to imagine and wish you could unimagine) with a vengeance. With a dedication to lo-fi sounds and scabrous wit, coupled with an oddly poetic eye for the nastier details, the pair make for brilliant if sometimes uncomfortable listening, sounding like a seriously vexed John Cooper Clark manning the barricades with McLusky and Mike Skinner. Most of their songs are far too potty-mouthed to get on the radio but 'Divide & Exit' featured highly in every decent end of year poll in 2014, while Williamson is an interviewer's dream in an age of say-nothing rock stars. With a tumultuous personal past to draw on, he's realised his time is now and he's not holding back. Thank God for Sleaford Mods. Unlike the Yellow Pages, they really are here for the nasty things in life.

**The Wheatsheaf** – Heavyweight rock and metal from The Mark and genial Balkan and Middle Eastern-influenced folk from Memento at tonight's It's All About the Music showcase. **BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar** – 80s, new wave, disco, synth-pop and glam club night. **WOODY PINES: Three Horseshoes, Towersey** – Stripped-down American roots music from the North Carolina singer.

### THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**DARREN COPELAND + DIEGO GARR: Modern Art Oxford** – Audiograft continues – *see main preview*  
**BUG PRENTICE: The Bullingdon** – EP launch show for Ally Craig's freak-rock band, making music awkward in the vein of The Cardiacs, Sonic Youth and Soft Machine – *see Introducing feature*  
**DJ PILGRIM & MC NOVELIST: The Bullingdon** – Grime, garage, techno and house from the Deep Cover residents.  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the local bluesman.  
**HANNAH ALDRIDGE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Emotive traditional country from Nashville

songstress Hannah Aldridge, daughter of Muscle Shoals legend Walt.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAYS: Jude the Obscure**

### FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**RAGING SPEEDHORN + SEETHE + MUTAGENOCIDE + REVELLER: The Wheatsheaf** – Death to false metal! Death to everyone and everything! RARRRRRRRRR! – *see main preview*  
**CUTTING INTO THE CONTINUUM: The Holywell Music Room** – Interpretations of experimental compositions by Jennifer Walsh, Paul Newland, James Saunders, Matthew Shlorowitz and Paul Whitty & Felicity Ford as part of Audiograft – *see main preview*  
**SIVU: The Bullingdon** – Darkly repentant electro-tinged pop from Cambridge singer James Page, mining his past working in a call centre and for a bailiff company for his sometimes bleak, sometimes smoothly soulful songs.  
**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Dancefloor Latin, Balkan beats, Afrobeat, global grooves and nu-jazz dance club night, tonight featuring a live set from seven-piece Edinburgh Afrobeat outfit Pocion De Fe, infusing their sound with Caribbean rhythms, funk grooves and Cuban salsa. They're joined by Bristol's tropical DJ crew Area Boys.  
**BROOKES BROTHERS: The Bullingdon** – Club night.  
**SWITCH with FRIEND WITHIN: O2 Academy** – Classic 808-led house at the O2's weekly electro night.

### SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**ARTHUR BROWN: The Cellar** – Man on fire – *see main preview*  
**MARIA CHAVEZ + SALLY GOLDING + MINORU SATU + LUCIO CAPECE: The Story Museum** – Audiograft experimental concert – *see main preview*  
**BLOODSTOCK – METAL TO THE MASSES HEAT 4: The Bullingdon** – Fourth heat in the band competition to win a slot at this summer's Bloodstock, alongside Megadeth.  
**BEN UFO: The Bullingdon** – House, garage, dubstep and grime from the veteran DJ, co-founder of Rinse FM's Hessle Audio.

**THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + DUCHESS + GO ON, DO IT, JUMP + BEN PILSTON: The Wheatsheaf** – Ace acid house-infused surf rock and psychedelia from Reading's Pink Diamond Revue, plus sunshiny township jive, samba and pure pop from Duchess.  
**MIKE PETERS: O2 Academy** – Once more round the block for the Alarm singer, playing the band's 'Strength' album in its entirety.  
**TURF TOUR: The Cellar** – Detroit techno, house and disco club night with scratching and beat maestro DJ Bone and Dekmantel Soundsystem  
**YOLANDA BROWN: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – MOBO-winning saxophonist Brown comes to the Cornerstone, her smooth, pop-friendly style of jazz taking in elements of reggae and ska.  
**THE MISSING PERSIANS: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow** – 60s-styled psychedelic folk rocking.  
**W.A.M: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Ska-punk covers.

### SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

### MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**STEPHEN DALE PETIT: The Bullingdon** – Return to town for the Californian blues guitarist who has made it his mission to take blues to a younger audience – notably his 2007 lecture and gig tour of UK universities – and an oddity in that he's an American bluesman inspired as much by the British blues explosion of the 60s and 70s as he is by traditional American blues greats like Albert King. Having moved over here in the 80s he made his cult reputation by busking in the London Underground and has gone on to play with the likes of Eric Clapton and Dave Gilmour as well as touring alongside The Rolling Stones' Mick Taylor.

### TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**DUKE SPECIAL + PAUL COOK & THE CHRONICLES: O2 Academy** – Intimately orchestral pop ballads from Belfast's dreadlocked troubadour, performing songs from his eighth album, 'Watch Out Machines!'.  
**JAZZ CLUB with THE STUART HENDERSON QUARTET: The Bullingdon** – Free live jazz from trumpeter Stuart Henderson and band.  
**PERKELT + JESTERS + FIREGAZERS + THE SCOTT GORDON BAND + LUNA GHECKOS + SUPERLOOSE + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf (6pm)** – Free evening of unplugged live music courtesy of Giddyup Music.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**BENEDICT BENJAMIN + MONUMENT VALLEY: Secret address, OX4** – Tigmus host a special secret show in a to-be-disclosed location – you'll need to visit their website to find out where exactly nearer the time – with former-Peggy Sue and Mariner's Children man Ben Rubinstein now going out in his Benedict Benjamin guise, mixing brooding Americana, 50s harmony pop and sunshiny melodies. He'll be joined by Ned Younger's atmospheric acoustic pop project, Monument Valley.

### THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**JAMIE IRIE + CHESHIRE CAT & STICKY JOE + ED ASHER + DANI + LEO B: The Cellar** – Reggae, dub and roots night hosted by local reggae champ Leo Bowder, featuring an Oxford debut for Midlands singer Jamie Irie, alongside Ranking Reggae DJ and producer Sticky Joe and Leftfield and Jungle Citizens vocalist Cheshire Cat, as well as local DJs.  
**DECOVO + VAGUEWORLD + WARDENS + BLACK MIRRORS: The Jericho Tavern** – Indie rocking from Decovo at tonight's It's All About the Music showcase, plus riff-heavy rocking in a QOTSA vein from Wardens.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAYS: Jude the Obscure**

### FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**MACKA B & THE ROOTS BAND + DESTA\*NATION + CORNERSTONEMUSIK + JAH LAMBS & LIONS + ONE DROP COLLECTIVE + CHIEFTAIN JOSEPH:**

**The Cellar** – Rasta consciousness from lyrical chief Macka B, returning to the Cellar after his show here last year, celebrating some 30 years making his reputation as one of the UK's finest ever dancehall toasters. Inspired by U-Roy, I-Rot and Prince Far I, he's toured the world with The Wailers, Burning Spear and Lee Perry among others and tonight graces the intimate confines of the Cellar backed by the Roots Ragga Band. Heavyweight local reggae support from Desta\*Nation and Cornerstonemusik, plus an Oxford debut from MC/singer Chieftain Joseph.  
**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + HUCK & THE HANDSOME FEE with TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER + ZEPPELIN CREW + VICARDS OF TWIDDLY DJS: The Jericho Tavern** – Hot jazz, swing and r'n'b heroes TORFSB host their own Vicar's Tea Party, with a debauched, whisky and gin-fuelled edge, the band kicking out their classic 30s speakeasy jazz in style and joined tonight by gutter blues crew Huck & the Handsome Fee, plus Zeppelin Crew, a steampunk a cappella group, destroying popular hits from the last century. Crazy surf-rocker Vicars of Twiddly return to

*Friday 13<sup>th</sup>*

## RAGING SPEEDHORN

## / SEETHE / MUTAGENOCIDE / REVELLER:

## The Wheatsheaf

In the earliest days of the now legendary Club That Cannot Be Named, Corby's Raging Speedhorn were regular visitors to town, a band fuelled by hate and hedonism and who left a trail of broken venues and bloodied noses behind them. They even boasted a song called 'The Hate Song', for which the word virulent was almost certainly invented. With the sludgy riffage of Iron Monkey and dual vocal attack of Extreme Noise Terror or Hard To Swallow as primary influences, the band breached the walls between metal, hardcore, punk and all-out sonic violence, and we loved them dearly for it. They released five albums before splitting in 2008, their legend growing ever greater in their absence. But last year saw them reconvene for sets at Damnation and Sonisphere festivals and they seem to have remembered just how much fun it all was as they now head off on a tour of the sort of venues where they truly belong. Great supporting cast too, including local tech/death/thrash monsters Mutagenocide and Milton Keynes thrash crew Seethe. And is it any coincidence tonight's gig takes place on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>? Course it isn't. There will be blood.



action on the decks.  
**THE STRAYS + TOO MANY POETS + THE GRAFHAM WATER SAILING CLUB + MOGMATIC: The Wheatsheaf** – It's All About the Music local bands showcase.  
**THE BUCK CLAYTON LEGACY BAND: St John the Evangelist** – A tribute to Duke Ellington led by BBC Jazz Record Requests host Alyn Shipton, directed by German saxophonist Matthias Seuffert and featuring pianist Martin Litton, the band revisits Duke Ellington's small band repertoire.

### SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**KNIGHTS OF MENTIS + BLACK FEATHERS + THE SHAPES + TREVOR WILLIAMS: The Bullingdon (6pm)** – Inventive, expansive Americana from Knights of Mentis; Irish, English and bluegrass folk from Black Feathers; classic sounding r'n'b and 60s pop from The Shapes and emotive acoustic pop from Trevor Williams at tonight's One Gig Closer to Wittstock fundraiser.  
**SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE + BARRY & THE BEACHCOMBERS + OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS + THE HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: The Wheatsheaf** – Oxford's champion gig goer Leon 'Dancingman' Stiles celebrates his birthday in the company of electro-pop stars SHOTP, tonight launching their debut album 'Loudspeaker' and mixing OMD's more experimental synth adventures with a groovy Giorgio Moroder disco edge, plus punk freaks Barry & the Beachcombers; funky blues crew The OX4 Allstars, and Americana folks The Headington Hillbillies.  
**FALLEN FROM GRACE + DEVIL INSIDE + SEVERANCE + SILK ROAD + SUGAR DARLING: O2 Academy** – Skeletor host a showcase of local metal and metalcore, including headliners Fallen From Grace, rap-metal and hardcore crew Severance and angular hardcore types Sugar Darling.  
**BEDROCK: The Bullingdon** – Skeletor's monthly rock club night plays metal classics and the best new sounds from across the rock universe.

**THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + SAM MARTIN + ROBERT LANYON + EMMA HUNTER: The Jericho Tavern** – Very welcome return to town for Reading's Pink Diamond Revue, a deliciously scuzzy mash-up of classic surf rock, acid house, psychedelia and electronica, partway between Dick Dale and Death In Vegas.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: James Street Tavern**  
**HAIRFORCE 5: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Hair metal covers.  
**SCARECROW: The Swan Inn, Ascott-under-Wychwood**

### SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**THE SELECTER + THE TUTS: O2 Academy** – Pauline Black and her ska warriors return to town – *see main preview*  
**LAIMA BITE + DAVE TOMLINSON + MOONSHINE MARTINIS + PUPPET MECHANIC + LES CLOCHARDS: The Wheatsheaf (3-7pm)** – Free afternoon of unplugged music in the Sheaf's downstairs bar, hosted by Klub Kakofanny.  
**SUNDAY SESSIONS with KISMET + THE DUBLINGS: Florence Park Community Centre (2-5pm)** – Family-friendly live music session with trad-folkies Kismet and dub-pop crew The Dublings.



*Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>*

## ARTHUR BROWN: The Cellar

"I am the god of hellfire, and I bring you... FIRE!" As far as opening lines go, Arthur Brown's one and only chart hit takes some beating. In fact almost half a century after it reached Number 1, selling a million copies in the process, Brown is still known as The God Of Hellfire, while that line has been sampled by The Prodigy amongst other. While he'll forever be known for 'Fire', Brown's musical career is long and varied, taking in collaborations with Hawkwind, Die Krupps and Bruce Dickinson, while his outlandish onstage performances, generally involving nakedness, theatrical make-up and setting himself on fire, set the template for Alice Cooper, Marilyn Manson and Kiss, as well as getting him kicked out of Italy and off a tour support with Jimi Hendrix. Shock tactics aside, Brown's four-octave vocals – verging on the operatic – provided inspiration for metal singers the world over. Now in his 70s, Arthur Brown remains musically prolific; his world is still a crazy one, and the flaming headgear is still an essential part of the show. He's very much a one-off, and the world is doubtless a safer, and less interesting, place for that fact.

### MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**THE STRANGLERS: O2 Academy** – The Men In Black's annual visit to town, now down to just JJ Burnell and Dave Greenfield from their classic line-up, still kicking out punk classics from 'Peaches' and 'No More Heroes' to 'Golden Brown' and 'Something Better Change'.  
**HUNTER & THE BEAR: O2 Academy** – Sweet, rustic folk-rock and Americana from the Cornbury regulars, touring the UK ahead of a second EP release, inspired by Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Band and, in particular, Bruce Springsteen.  
**NICO'ZZ: The Jericho Tavern** – Funky blues and soul from the French guitarist and singer at tonight's Famous Monday Blues.

### TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB with THE HUGH TURNER BAND: The Bullingdon** – Funky jazz from Hugh Turner and band at the Bully's long-running jazz club.  
**LIBERATE MAE + CARVING A GIANT: The Wheatsheaf**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**STIFF LITTLE FINGERS: O2 Academy** – Jake Burns' enduring Belfast punk rockers come back for another outing of classic hits 'Alternative



Ulster’, ‘Suspect Device’ and more, these days rejoined by original bass player Ali McMordie. **CLOCKWORK + HASHTAG ALICE + THE DEVIATED + LEPER KING: The Wheatsheaf THE LOST ART: Brewery Tap, Abingdon**

**THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**GOOD MOON DEER + M BAND + ESTHER JOY LANE + AFTER THE THOUGHT: The Bullingdon** – Pindrop host Icelandic ambient electro / digital jazz experimenters Good Moon Deer with their disorientating blend of scrambled compositions, samples, electronic beats and live drumming.  
**GOIN’ LOUD + JOHNNY’S SEXUAL KITCHEN: The Cellar** – New monthly blues night from It’s All About the Music.  
**TOLIESEL + ROBOTS WITH SOULS + WALTZING IN THE SHALLOW END: The Library** – Free gig courtesy of Smash Disco, tonight with epic country-flavoured indie rockers ToLiesel launching their new ‘Wilderness Blues’ EP, alongside synthy indie popstrels Robots With Souls.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon**  
**BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAYS: Jude the Obscure**

**FRIDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE SHOWHAWK DUO: The Bullingdon**

*Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>*  
**THE SELECTER: O2 Academy**  
While the local gig calendar, particularly at the larger venue end of the spectrum, continues to host a rotating cast of heritage bands, it’s sometimes worth stopping and reminding yourself why some of them have endured for so long. The Selecter are a prime case in point. 36 years ago they emerged from the same multi-racial Coventry music scene as The Specials and helped make Two Tone one of the greatest indie labels of all time, fusing highly danceable Jamaican ska rhythms with social commentary at a particularly grim time in recent British history. If The Specials provided the soundtrack to the early-80s riots with ‘Ghost Town’, The Selecter were alongside them with a host of now classic hit singles, from ‘Too Much Pressure’ and ‘Three Minute Hero’ to ‘Missing Words’. Throughout their stop-start career, featuring a number of splits and reunions, and innumerable members, they’ve been helmed by the formidable Pauline Black, a charismatic singer who now also hosts one of the most eclectic shows on 6Music. She’s joined by fellow original member Arthur ‘Gaps’ Hendrickson, and while on the one had it’ll be a trip down Nostalgia Avenue for old fans, it’ll equally be a reminder that music can be a potent unifying force.



– Acoustic trance from the busking duo whose interpretations of everything from ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ and ‘Adagio for Strings’, to old school trance classics and funky house tracks has earned them appearances at Glastonbury and Secret Garden Party.  
**INTO THE JUNGLE: The Bullingdon** – Jungle club night.  
**WAY TOO GULLY: The Cellar** – Drum&bass club night with Phuzion Records’ DJ Nookie and Warning’s MC Fivealive playing a 90-minut set, plus Rich Raw, Mark B, Rob C, Sandman MC, Wyatt Noise and more.  
**ROCKSOC: The Wheatsheaf** – Live rock and metal from the Uni’s Rock Society.  
**THE POOZIES: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Traditional folk songs and originals from Sally Barker’s all-female folk supergroup, whose alumni includes Kate Rusby and Patsy Seddon.  
**AN EVENING OF CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITION: St John the Evangelist** – Compositions by Sarah Hughes, Joseph Clayton Mills and Adam Sonderberg are among those brought to life by a seven-strong group of musicians using electronics and objects at tonight’s concert.  
**WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – AC/DC tribute.  
**RACHEL EDDY: Three Horseshoes, Towersey** – Old-time American folk from the West Virginian fiddle, banjo and guitar player.

**SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with INDICA BLUES + BROMIDE + MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS: The Wheatsheaf** – GTI’s monthly mixed bag welcomes rising local riffmongers Indica Blues, previous *Nightshift* Demo of the Monthers for their big ol’ Sabbath-styled stoner grooves and sheer volume. They’re joined by London’s alt.rockers, drawing noisy inspiration from The Lemonheads, Dinosaur Jr, Guided By Voices and Husker Du, plus local caustic popster Moogiemán and his wry, self-effacing songs.  
**KNOCK OUT KAINE + DEAD CITY RUINS + BAD BEHAVIOUR: The Cellar** – OxRox rock and metal night, with former *Kerrang!* Best Unsigned Act winners Knock Out Kaine out on tour to promote second album ‘Rise of the Electric Jester’, following tour supports to Status Quo, Steven Adler and WASP’s Chris Holmes.  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar** – Hip hop, rap and grime club night, with Reejai and band, Ollie Mac and Legoman, Benoffocial, Severed Tongue and Three Faces of Death. Dr Erbz hosts.  
**WHITE MAGIC SOUND: The Bullingdon**  
**DAMN GOOD REASON: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Classic rock covers, from Led Zep to Thin Lizzy.

**SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**CHARLI XCX: O2 Academy** – Anthemic electro popping from the major league hit-maker – *see main preview*

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*Monday 30<sup>th</sup>*  
**CHARLI XCX: O2 Academy**  
Someone somewhere has decided that Charli XCX must be marketed as a crazy, messed-up rebel rather than simply a decent straight-up pop singer. For starters that name – Charli herself always said it was simply her Instagram moniker adopted when a promoter needed a stage name for her. Now we’re told it’s something very rude indeed. And then there’s all the interview features claiming she’s proper punk rock and a bit crazy and stuff, when really she sounds like Gwen Stefani, Madonna, Britney and Avril Lavigne sort of rolled into one. It doesn’t get much more mainstream. This is the person who, back when she was a reclusive songwriter, penned Icona Pop’s global hit ‘I Love It’ and co-wrote Iggy Azalia’s ‘Fancy’, which spent seven weeks atop the US charts, before going on to enjoy hits under her own name, including ‘Boom Clap’, which soundtracked *The Fault In Our Stars*. She’s a normal, chart-friendly pop star with a neat line in bombastic electro-pop. Nothing wrong with that. Sometimes pop music is nothing to be ashamed off, so just let it be what it wants to be and let folks make their own minds up.

**BEN POOLE: The Bullingdon** – The Haven Club hosts the rising UK blues-rock guitarist, drawing comparisons to Joe Satriani and Joe Bonamassa, winning fans in Bernie Torme and the late Gary Moore along the way.  
**TUESDAY 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**HERE COMES THE SUN: The Cellar** – Sunshiny party night with groovy bossa-funkers Maracutaya, Hawaiian party band The Honolulu Cowboys and The Suncats.  
**JAZZ CLUB with ALVIN ROY & REEDS UNLIMITED: The Bullingdon** – Trad jazz, bop and swing from veteran clarinetist Alvin Roy and his Reeds Unlimited at tonight’s weekly jazz club.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

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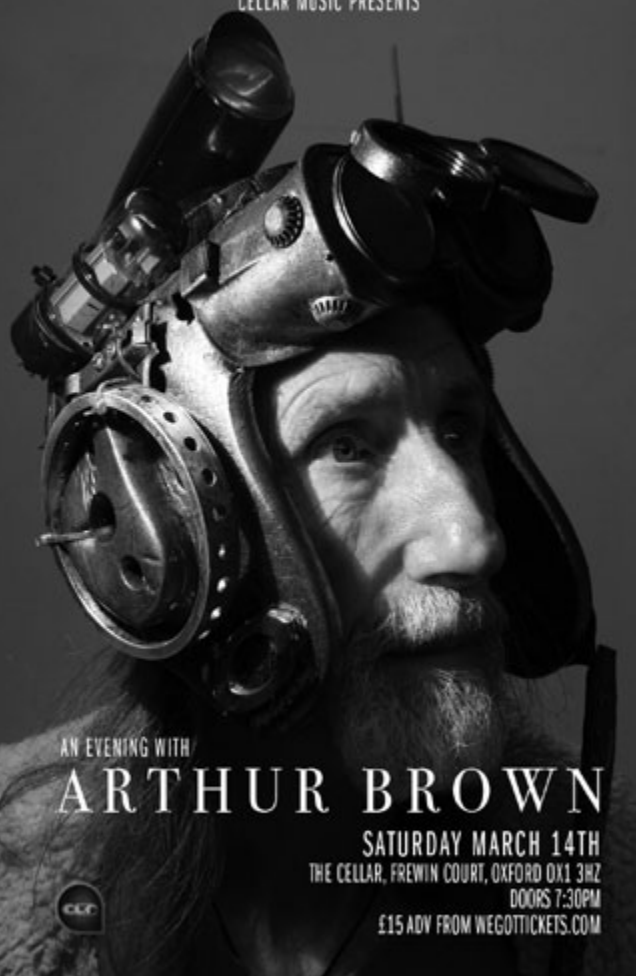
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## BALLOON ASCENTS / DUOTONE

### The Bullingdon

Watching Duotone live is much like the old cliché of observing a swan gliding across a lake. On the surface it’s all grace and stately calm, but beneath it’s all furious paddling as Barney Morse-Brown switches and fidgets between guitar, cello, vocals and all manner of gadgetry and loops. From such patchwork components he builds his songs – softly understated but heavily weighted with melancholy and mystery – with such assuredness that if you shut your eyes you’d swear there was a full band on stage, not just one bloke scrabbling to keep it all together, picking up and discarding instruments as soon

as they’ve played their part. ‘Little White Caravan’, from new album ‘Let’s Get Low’ is simple, gorgeous heartache of the rarest kind, and when he sits down with his cello his virtuosity and invention really shines through. Much of Duotone’s set is half drowned by the excited chatter of Balloon Ascents’ small army of eager fans, but it’s quickly apparent why they’re so excited. As has been regularly pointed out, for a band so young – all still in their teens – to display such musical accomplishment with simple almost boy-band pop appeal is unusual. A doomy, strung-out intro leads into

‘Cutout’ from the band’s new debut EP, a song that’s pure and bold, remarkably laidback with its wandering funk bassline and Thomas Roberts’ almost laconic vocals, but a song that lingers long in the memory with its “It wears me out” refrain. Thomas himself has instant pop idol appeal, somewhere between Little Steven, Nick Cave and Harry Styles and an assured onstage presence as he glides amongst his bandmates. Anyone expecting simple, throwaway indie pop will be confounded by the band’s shifting sands dynamics, strung-out Pink Floyd epics melting into near-folky

melodies, Radiohead’s electro trickery wandering into King Tubby-like dub or even bluesy jams. Maybe they need to reign in those occasional wandering a little but it’s fun hearing neat, unexpected ideas emerge from jams you thought were heading elsewhere or nowhere. Balloon Ascents’ early gigs were mostly populated by schoolmates, but their following is growing exponentially, to the point tonight’s gig, at the newly refurbished Bully, is sold out – no small feat for a still, as yet barely known band only just releasing their first CD, and a crowd made up of teen fans and scene veterans are united in excitement at the prospect of one of Oxford’s most promising young bands. *Dale Kattack*

in the making. The faith-based background of both gospel and the Anúna congregational choral vocal sensibility underpins the night; blues is the other main reference point, most overtly in ‘To Be Alone’ and ‘Work Song’, with soul, folk and jazz interacting variously. The sexual and religious themes of his biggest hit so far pervade other songs, like ‘Foreigner’s God’ and the lulling 5/4-time ‘From Eden’, sung from the devil’s point of view. Hozier and his band – including a cellist – use dynamics and contrast beautifully; delicate vocals float over a menacing rumble in tonight’s opener, ‘Like Real People Do’, and the anguished tone of ‘Angel of Small Death’ and ‘The Codeine Scene’ works masterfully with its simple backing. He does admittedly veer towards tired Commitments-esque arrangements at times, but Hozier’s strength lies in his contemporary interpretation of – and obvious love of and respect for – blues, soul, folk and jazz formats. *Kirsten Etheridge*

## PIXEL FIX / TREMORHEART / BRIAN BRIGGS / ESTHER JOY LANE

### The Cellar

Oxford might not be a city that needs reminding as much as others, but the small, independently run venues of Britain are beyond vital. Tonight we are celebrating The Cellar as part of the now annual Independent Venue Week with a stellar line-up of brand new talent and some established names too. First up is Esther Joy Lane; she plays guitar and accompanies herself with electronic beats. The obvious comparison would be Grimes, a strong feminine voice with R&B beats and heavy bass. Esther’s vocals remind us of Jessie Ware in their fragile power, with the occasional cracking that equally makes us think of The Cranberries’ Dolores O’Riordan. Her performance is engaging and dynamic; definitely one to watch out for. Next up is a face everyone in the room recognises: Brian Briggs of Stornoway. His band are building up to the release of their third album, so Brian has chosen tonight to try out some new material. Stripped of the band’s usual dense arrangements we really get to see what makes Brian’s song so special. His vocals seem more delicate, and the narratives more beguiling. After ‘Fuel Up’ Oli Steadman and Jon Ouin take to the stage and the true magic begins. The three-part harmonies on new single ‘The

Road You Didn’t Take’ are breath-taking; this is one of the most special performances I have ever seen. Wow. Simple as that. Tremorheart couldn’t be more different. Tonight is the band’s first ever gig and they are unbelievably slick. This a band who have gone all in on one sound, and rehearsed until they got it down perfectly. If they had started their career 30 years ago you could imagine them having been huge, but now an act that would be perfect opening for Duran Duran or Huey Lewis seem a little out of place. I guess if you’re gonna go in for a truly 80s sound, you might as well jump two footed. The night is rounded off by Pixel Fix. Their unusual brand of pop is thoroughly satisfying. Following in the footsteps of Glass Animals and Wild Swim, utilising R&B beats, effected vocals and jangly guitars they are an excellent example of what a guitar band can be in the 2010s. The BBC Introducing team and the Storno-boys, ambassadors for tonight’s show, put together an excellent line-up that really show off music as it is today in Oxford. The Cellar has been part of Oxford music for decades and hopefully events like this will keep it that way for many more years. *Matt Chapman-Jones*

## STORYTELLER / AUTUMN SAINTS / LITTLE RED

### The Wheatsheaf

Just like tonight’s headline act name, each performer in tonight’s gig has a story to tell. Whether they succeed or not is debatable, but each act feels greater than the sum of its parts, and a defiant showcase all their own. “Defiant” isn’t a word you’d normally associate with the wispy songs of folk trio Little Red, but tonight they are lacking a member in the delicately-voiced Hayley Bell. Narrowing their track selection (many of their tunes are built on interplay between male and female vocals) frontman Ian Mitchell and producer/guitarist Ben Gosling make the most out of a compacted message: more energy, playing to that well-worn stereotype of male strength - and less of the feminine charm that dotted their warmly-received ‘Sticks And Stones’ LP from late last year. As a result comparisons with Fink and even Level 42 support The Mercurymen on two of their new tracks bears more weight, but if the over-talkative crowd could shut up while they play so we could hear them in their best light, that would be most welcome. “It’s all vaporous, my friend” is a lyric that can also barely be heard from second band Autumn Saints, and despite their set being fairly interesting, pretty much sums them up. They improve as they go, and although the majority here seem into it, and the Hawkwind/Jethro Tull-esque

worded delivery of the vocals demands attention, much is show and no substance, and they need a proper rhythm section and astute instrumental variation to reward our patience. The Fender Rhodes-style guitar notes that dot the middle of the set bring the quality up a notch, as do moments where clarity over loudness gives the band the knowledge of what works and what doesn’t. They show promise, but we sometimes wish they’d be autumn saints for real, not autumn leaves, blowing in the wind. Headliners Storyteller take to the stage with a nippy blast of saxophone as the Sheaf upstairs reaches maximum capacity. Their intriguing mix of jazz, ska and punky pub rock starts out brilliantly, as does the turning of a Booker Prize novel. By the end though, with a steal of almost the entire chorus of Nirvana’s ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ comes the catch. Like a story full of ideas, a novel chock full of pages, there’s often a lot of chaff that could be edited down. Storyteller sometimes pen too many sentences into their sonic diction, leaving you a little lost. They have all the elements to really go places, and a dab hand interplay between guitar and saxophonist. But like oversized books, autumn leaves and even maybe a little red, the vapour needs condensing for the ideas to fully blossom into something special. *Mick Buckingham*

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**LIU BEI**  
**The Cellar**

Liu Bei look and sound pretty much perfect. In fact, almost suspiciously so, as if the band have been grown in Petri dishes in a secret Bon Iver laboratory designed to pump out a steady flow of earnest, immaculately-attired young men who look like they’ve been holed up in a log cabin crafting paeans to lost love for five years. That’s not to damn them with faint praise, as they seem to have emerged practically Glastonbury-ready with a set of

sweeping, keening near-anthems polished down to their essence. Their not-so-secret weapon, as you might expect, is Richard Walters’ voice, which could break your heart in two even if he was singing the ingredients list off a box of Cornflakes. Fortunately, he’s got much stronger material to work with here. While ‘Goodness’ is bursting with the kind of air-punching chorus and winsome charm you might expect from a

debut single, tonight’s set opener, ‘Atlas World’, shows them as a band capable of mood swings too, all lyrical devilry and hellfire. Just when you think they might be getting a little one-paced and running out of ideas, up pops genuine shoegaze royalty – Slowdive’s Rachel Goswell – to add a placid sheen of backing vocal to the celebration-turned-lament ‘Fields’.

It’s clearly an emotional return to his hometown for Richard and,

having first reviewed him fifteen years ago (a fact that probably makes me feel much older than it does him), it’s a pleasure to see how, while his voice has changed little, his songwriting has developed and his knack for spotting collaborators who can add substantially to his craft remains intact.

Closing track ‘Infatuation’ seals the deal with the type of simple, affecting lyric delivered with utter conviction that causes hearts to melt a little across the room. The main stage is ready and waiting.

**Stuart Fowkes**

**ALEX LANYON / WILLIE J HEALEY / CAMERON AG**  
**The Jericho Tavern**

For such a dark room there are an awful lot of bright futures on show here tonight at this Daisy Rodgers Music show.

Scroll back a few years and Cameron A Grote was the backbone backbeat of Warhen and Gunnbunny, so it’s a revelation to see him own the stage, solo, with acoustic guitar and electric piano. There are mournful elements of Jake Bugg in his lone star approach, but shorn of Bugg’s wearing grate, Cameron having instead the ethereal 80s FM nostalgia of a sugar-free Art Garfunkel, in the phrasing of ‘Save It For Winter’ and a David Grey ‘This Year’s Love’ feeling around ‘Double Knot’. He sings of loss and longing’s opened eyes with the wry resolution of knowing that sometimes being

alone and proud is the happier place to be.

If you stick around music through enough generations you get some bizarre bedfellows filtering through the historical soundcloud. If, for example, I said there’s this young guy who sings like Jonathan Richman channeling the Big Bopper, or a low-slung Elvis, you’d be all, “*shut up and take my money*,” but he’s here in the fresh-faced name of Willie J Healey. Like his tousled red hair reminding you of Jerry Lee Lewis’s wayward curls, it’s all unintentional and wildly captivating, with the crowd, whooping and hollering his hip, off-the-beat timing. I for one hope he goes on to seriously mine this vein of gold he’s up to his neck in.

“Bruno Mars meets Ed Sheeran,” proclaims the gig poster about Birmingham’s Alex Lanyon. I want to write, “*but in a good way*” on it. They are not wrong, but there lies his conundrum: does he stay a troubadour, who at his present best writes great ballads like ‘White Horse’ or ‘Reverence’ (probably the finest song I’ve heard written by a son for his father), or does he ditch the occasionally snare-happy rock band sound slowing up his r&b potential, and go all out showbiz? I wish I was faced with such talented dilemma, not to mention his hoard of female fans, as he looks like a young, good looking Milliband brother, one who escaped the over-earnest political household for a life on the stage, enjoying himself and smiling.

So, with this line-up that sounds like a school register, and songwriting that stays with you, the cool kids of the class of 2015 are well and truly in session.

**Paul Carrera**

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**DUOTONE / THE AUGUST LIST**

**Truck Store**

This, the latest in an ever lengthening line of much-loved in-store gigs, is Truck Store’s fourth birthday party, and it is characteristic of the vital role they play for local acts that they

invited two of Oxfordshire’s finest, both recent *Nightshift* cover stars, to help them celebrate. The bleakness of their American gothic lyrics might seem to make husband and wife duo The

August List a surprising choice for a party. But it’s particularly appropriate they come in from their hillside in rural east Oxfordshire for this show as it was Truck’s support for their EP ‘Handsome Skin’, along with a *Nightshift* Demo of the Month, that was the start of the pair getting gigs and becoming established as local favourites.

That debut led onto their excellent album ‘Oh Hinterland’ last year and they feature several numbers from it in today’s set, including the superb ‘High Town Crow’. With ‘Wooden Trunk Blues’, an impressive number three in *Nightshift*’s tracks of 2014, their penultimate number, followed by the storming traditional set closer ‘Forty-Rod of Lightnin’’, they finish as triumphantly as they began. Maybe it’s the intimacy of the setting and maybe we’ve got used to how their beautiful melodic hooks and rock and roll attitude disguise what The August List’s lyrics are about, but the desolation of some of their songs seems more exposed than I’ve ever heard. In between songs Kerraleigh and Martin are so sweet and engaging you’re left wondering how such a charming couple could come up with such disturbing images. Surrounded by mic’s, guitars, percussion, pedals and of course a cello, Barney Morse-Brown claims he’s nervous. It’s likely anyone would be when performing alone all the instrumentation that he uses in the studio.

In the event Barney – who *is* Duotone – turns in a superbly polished performance, switching between instruments, feeding them and his vocals into the looper to build his beautiful, evocative sound world. The performance of ‘You Don’t Need Church’ is even more poignant than on CD, and on this showing ‘Lets Get Low’, the title song of Barney’s imminent third album, with its lilting melody contrasting with its dark subject matter, and particularly ‘Little White Caravan’, with its hypnotic hook, already seem destined to be contenders to be standout tracks of the year.

It’s striking how well Barney’s voice and overall sound blend. Also for this listener, while previously it was the instrumental sound that tended to predominate, now Barney is letting his lyrics fly too and in this set there’s a fresh harmonious balance between words and music.

**Colin May**

**ALVVAYS / MOON KING**

**O2 Academy**

The reach and influence of mid-80s British indie pop continues far beyond its commercial success at the time. The likes of The Shop Assistants or The Primitives would have struggled to play venues anything like this size and yet tonight we have two bands from Canada, owing a massive debt to those acts, packing the place out. Toronto’s Moon King initially snuggle comfortably between a Sundays-inspired groove of pretty indie jangle and summery vocals from Maddie Wilde and a more ethereal Cocteau Twins-like shimmer. In fact even when singing partner Daniel Benjamin take over the mic, you might guess he was female if you couldn’t see him. It’s all very pleasant but threatens to drift into generic jangle as the set progresses. Until, that is, they hit their final number, ‘Roswell’, lock into an almost Krautrock-like groove and kick out sugar-coated sonic thunder not a million miles from Th’Faith Healers. And when it comes to an end, we want them to carry on for another hour at least. Alvays waste no time getting into top gear, the Shop Assistants-like

‘Your Type’ heading straight into the delirious, dreamy ‘Next of Kin’, and before the set is even 15 minutes old they’re onto the glorious, giddy ‘Archie, Marry Me’, one of the most thrilling slices of pure pop sunshine to have exploded like a confetti bomb in the last few years. Of course, having played their aces so early, the rest of the set could feel like a letdown, but then there’s the wide-eyed longing of ‘Atop A Cake, a transatlantic cousin to Camera Obscura, before they barrel to a close after short and sweet 30 minutes. An encore of The Primitives’ ‘Out Of Reach’ is an unexpected treat and proof if any were needed where Alvays are coming from. Whereas the bands that made this music first time round were wonderfully shambolic and all the more loveable for it, Alvays have polish and a pop finesse about them that means they stand a better chance of mainstream success than those 80s heroes could ever dream of.

**Sue Foreman**

**THE LONG INSIDERS**

**The Bullingdon**

The Long Insiders have changed since last we saw them. Gone is co-singer Sarah Dodds, and with her the sultry surf-soul edge the band sometimes had. Nick Kenny is now the sole focus if the band, armed with his trusty Gretsch, out under the spotlight living out every moment of rock’n’roll greatness he must have devoured as a kid. In has come a harder, more straightforward classic rockabilly sound.

Nick, along with brother Simon on bass, and drummer Dan Goddard, have been through the mill of local bands together over the years, from modish Britpop with Thurman to rootsy alt.country as The Four Storeys, but it’s in this incarnation they sound most comfortable, Nick part Elvis, part Lux Interior as the band let loose their bass-heavy rockabilly rumble, all freight train rhythms and swamp-thing twang, in the newly refurbished, and suitably black-clad Bully backroom.

If ‘Infected’ is pure Sun Sessions Elvis, ‘Shades’ is a louche, Roy Orbison lounge surf shimmer. Songs are about women, the Devil and Hell, often all at the same time,

but anyone inclined to dismiss this as a novelty period drama would be floored by ‘Milkshake Baby’, a dark, dirty stray cat strut through the bones of Jerry Lee Lewis.

It doesn’t even seem to matter that Simon is playing with just three strings intact for the entirety of the set; this ain’t the kind of music prone to anything too clever or complicated – and what do you need that high string for anyway?

They close on their early single, ‘Midnight Man’, a rollicking, Cramps-y roustabout, but the real set highlight is a cover of Jody Reynolds’ ‘Endless Sleep’, a slowed-down counterpoint to their more bullish rockabilly, but possessed of a languid power all of its own, particularly in Dan’s almost casual drum tattoo.

Afterwards Nick worries the set, part of a One Gig Closer to Wittstock fundraiser, was a “a bit rough.” Of course it was – and that’s exactly how this kind of music has to be. Always was, always should be. Rough, tough and impossible to kill.

**Dale Kattack**

**SLOW CLUB**

**The Bullingdon**

The pub may still be a building site but a side entrance leads us to the Bully’s back room, pretty much as we remember, except the mixing desk has found its way back to the original location against the rear wall. Sheffield’s Slow Club have packed the place out, everyone eager to see how they’ve faired expanding from a duo to a four-piece band. From humble origins in open mic nights ten years ago, through a deal with Moshi Moshi to touring with Mumford And Sons, their rise is best described as steady rather than meteoric. This being the first night of a tour a few nerves are on display, though their self-deprecating northern humour and Rebecca Taylor’s captivating stage presence, not to mention her extraordinary voice, soon dispels them.

The title track from third LP ‘Complete Surrender’ warms the crowd up with its prominent 60s influences and Motown-style beat, though its joyous abandon sits in contrast with the more typical introspective songs, rich in emotion and veiled meaning. ‘Wander Wandering’ is touched with gentle beauty, but it’s almost

too precious to work as a pop song. In years to come it will be seen as a good example of this time: angst-ridden, reflective and featuring a bloke with a neat, thick beard. Yet they seem determined to throw off the folk-pop tag, Taylor’s shirt boldly proclaiming ‘I Defy Your Labels’. Switching between poignant solo ballads and bombastic barnstormers works better in a live setting than on record, new bassist David Glover adding some extra substance to proceedings. Charles Watson has toned down the fuzz guitar to fit in with their new sound, the last album heavy on strings and complex arrangements. Taylor is a great drummer but the crowd’s attention perceptibly wanders when she settles behind the kit for a while, revealing how much of a focal point she has become.

For the final encore the four take to the centre of the crowd to deliver an unamplified number in a circle, just as Spring Offensive used to. Despite all the pitch perfect talent on show, this band is very much of their time, and in pop music time never stands still.

**Art Lagun**

**SKY:LARK / SCREEN WIVES /**

**MASIRO**

**The Cellar**

Depending on where you cast your gaze you can see any number of representations of underground music in the media: glossy molls swigging bottled lager and singing along with the next big thing; gorgeous soft-focus festival folkies snapping each other on smart phones; rock-crazed ne’er-do-wells spiralling into drug abuse; Swindon. But nothing sums it up for us better than the sight of a man dressed only on his pants crawling round a basement stage, trying to gaffer tape a bass drum back together.

Either side of this dose of literal DIY music, in a necessarily curtailed set, London’s Screen Wives twist out an angular, Fugazoid hardcore that kicks like a hoof to the solar plexus, but has room for cheeky, witty little trills and paradiddles. The songs are brief, the band hissing short bursts of noise into the venue like a demented Glad Plugin.

Before that, Oxford’s Masiro had treated us to one of their displays of sonic science. The twitchy, multi-part structure of their


music is always impressive, like a metal-flavoured Don Caballero, and even like Primus without the schoolyard japes, but they always manage to bring in some melodic or textural originality to save us from mere academic cleverness. The set is like a spiderweb from a fly’s point of view: intricate, beautiful, sludgy, and completely deadly.

Intricate being one thing we wouldn’t accuse Sky:Lark of trying for. Over a bed of unwavering feedback, the trio thrash through dense repetitious snarling grooves something like Motorhead with a krautrock fixation. The best moments of the set are when the vocals bawl and screech over two note unriffs like Finnish minimalists Circle crossed with Megadeth, and the worst moments are when they stop. There’s the odd snatch of fuzzy melody, but in essence theirs is a brief onslaught of brash noise, to finish a night of intriguing, exciting music... and not an iPad or a crackpipe in sight.

**David Murphy**

# The Cellar

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**DESECRATION / NECROSIS / SODOMISED CADAVER**  
**/ MUTAGENOCIDE**

**The Wheatsheaf**

There are, it seems, three unbreakable rules for death metal: hair (long); song titles (nasty), and band name logos (unreadable). As such a night of death/grind bands can get a bit samey, but those willing and able to mess even slightly with the formula can be a treat.

Mutagenocide don't fit comfortably in with any particular sub-genre, mixing both death and grind with a heavy tech edge and lingering echoes of the late-70s Brit-metal renaissance. Singer Jay Taylor is now so guttural his voice amounts to little more than a series of staccato barks, growls and belches,

while behind him the riffage veers from Meshuggah to Iron Maiden with fluid brutality. They're clever but recognise the importance of brevity.

With such provocative name, and an album, 'Vorarephilia', named after a sexual fantasy about being eaten, you'd hope Sodomised Cadaver have their tongues at least slightly in cheek, and it doesn't take long to realise they have. Just guitar, drums and voice, they're stripped of even the barest of fripperies, reduced to a sense of purpose that's Terminator-like. But as the singer bellows out song

titles like 'Martyrdom', 'Torture' and 'Cannibal Butcher', with a soft underbelly of his native welsh accent creeping in, and struggling to stifle a smile, you know they're in on the joke. They're also bloody brilliant, a study in frenetic, unfettered musical hell. What metal was born to be, and just the right kind of silly.

By contrast Necrosis seem to take themselves very seriously indeed, even the bassist who spends the entire set comically grimacing like he desperately needs the loo. Their scrawny, bearded singer looks like a backwoods psycho, one as suited to skinning rabbits as he is rasping

deathly incantations in front of a tightly choreographed display of hair swirling and metal horns.

Desecration of course are proper daddies of the death/grind scene, upsetting public morals since the early 90s and showing little sign of mellowing since. But when the template you've set works perfectly, why change it – 300mph blast beats, dual death growl vocals and riffs like heavy machinery cutting through flesh; the distillation of Carcass' original gore-grind. It hurts; it works. So much so we even think about buying one of the myriad t-shirts on sale. Problem is, try as we might, we can't quite make out what most of them actually say, so thorny and convoluted are the fonts. Nothing nice though, of that we can be sure.

**Ian Chesterton**

**RAE MORRIS**

**O2 Academy**

Blackpool native Rae Morris has a beautiful voice; reminiscent of Emiliana Torrini, Ellie Goulding and sometimes even Björk (especially on 'Skin') in tone, its apparent ethereal vulnerability and emotion belies its strength and confidence. Now 22, she signed to Atlantic at 18, and she's been crafting her life experiences into her debut album, 'Unguarded', since then.

She has been widely compared to Kate Bush, given her effortlessly versatile voice and piano playing and the 'Running Up That Hill'-like heartbeat throughout 'Under the Shadows', though I get more of a Fleetwood Mac vibe from it. In general, she's more soulful; 'Do You Even Know?' reminds me bit of Lena Fiagbe, and there are shades of Sade in 'Closer'.

Rae recorded most of her album with the American producer Ariel Rechtshaid, who has recently worked with HAIM, Charli XCX, Vampire Weekend and Madonna. Even just on the basis of tonight, it sounds like he's taken Rae's voice-piano formula and invigorated it into something a

lot more poppy, while retaining the smoothness and glassiness of her style – even when, in songs like 'Don't Go', the instrumentation is sparse. Rae does however apparently credit Fryars – her support act tonight, and with whom she co-wrote and duets on the oddly autotuned 'Cold' – for guiding her from being an acoustic piano singer-songwriter to her current, more electronic incarnation. She's even written and recorded with Clean Bandit, though the unexpected dubsteppy drumming in her rendition of their collaboration, 'Up Again', jars a bit.

It's a shame that the apparent concentration on instrumentation and production has taken the focus away from the interaction between Rae's voice and her piano; she has enough songcrafting talent and imagination to be more like Tori Amos in this respect. However, her strongest songs are the faster, more anthemic ones like 'Love Again' and 'Under the Shadows', and I end up wishing for more of these.

**Kirsten Etheridge**

**CH-CH-CH-CHANGES?**

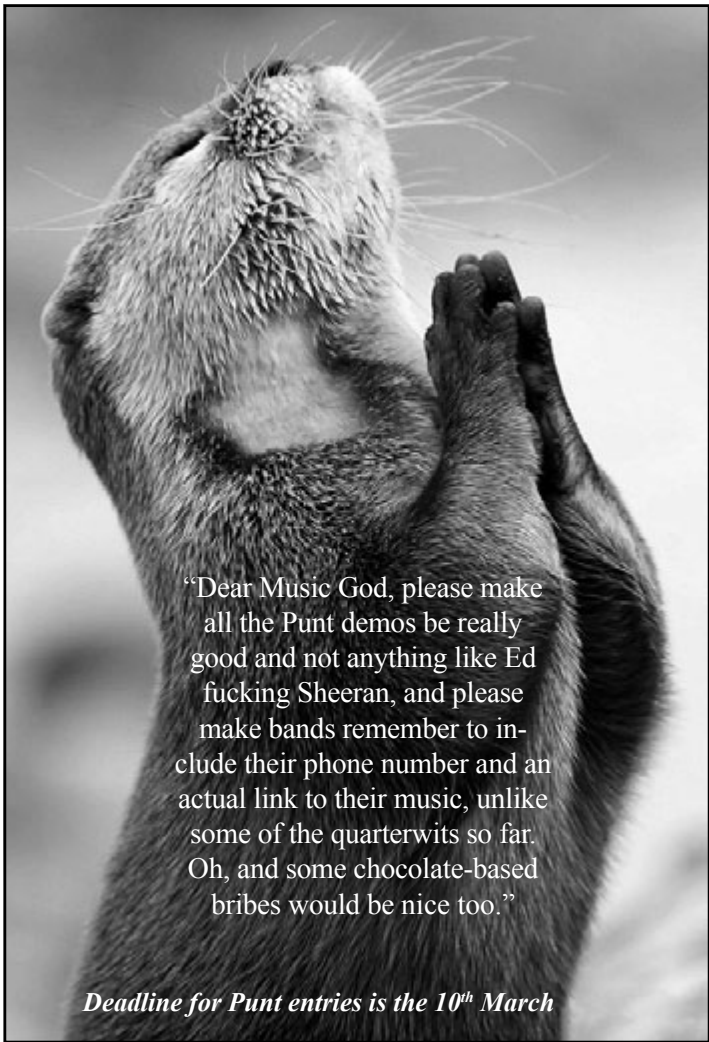
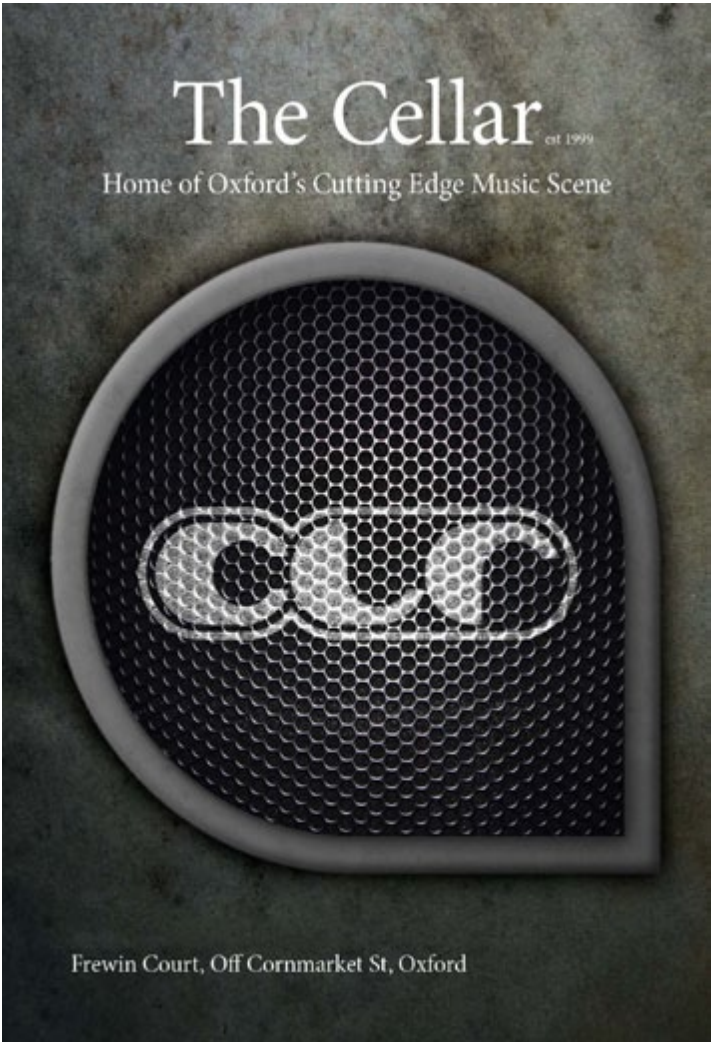


**@NightshiftMag**

Shortly before we went to press with this issue of *Nightshift* we learned our web and email hosting company, Oxfordmusic.net, is closing down at the end of March.

Given such short notice we are doing everything we can to find a new host in time for the April issue.

Obviously this means some things will be changing, including our email address but we don't exactly know what and how much right now. As soon as everything's sorted we'll let you know. In the meantime follow us on Twitter (**@NightshiftMag**) for updates.



“Dear Music God, please make all the Punt demos be really good and not anything like Ed fucking Sheeran, and please make bands remember to include their phone number and an actual link to their music, unlike some of the quarterwits so far. Oh, and some chocolate-based bribes would be nice too.”

*Deadline for Punt entries is the 10<sup>th</sup> March*



# THE WHEATSHEAF

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March – *KLUB KAKOFANNEY*

## PEERLESS PIRATES

MAD LARRY + BEARD OF DESTINY + DECOVO 8pm/£5

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March – *BLACK BULLET LIVE*

## VERA GRACE

PROLONG THE AGONY + BEING EUGENE 8pm/£5 Adv

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March – *IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

## THE MARK

MOMENTO + CLAIRE HOGKIN 8pm/£6

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March – *BURIED IN SMOKE*

## RAGING SPEEDHORN

SEETHE + MUTAGENOCIDE + REVELLER 7:30pm/£12 or £10 Adv

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March – *MD PROMOTIONS*

## PINK DIAMOND REVUE

DUCHESS + GO ON DO IT JUMP + BEN PILSTON 8pm/£5

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March – *IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

## THE STRAYS

TOO MANY POETS + THE GRAFHAM WATER SAILING CLUB + MOGMATIC 8pm/£6

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March

## SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE

BARRY & THE BEACHCOMBERS + OSPREY + HEADINGTON HILLBILIES 8pm/£5

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March – *BLACK BULLET LIVE*

## LIBERATE MAE

CARVING A GIANT 7:45pm /£5 Adv

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March – *MD PROMOTIONS*

## CLOCKWORK

HASHTAG ALICE + THE DEVIATED + LEPER KING 8pm/£5

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March

## ROCKSOC

UNIVERSITY ROCK SOCIETY CLUB NIGHT 8pm

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March – *GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES*

## INDICA BLUES

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# DR SHOTOVER: Sly & The Firmly Stoned

Psst... PSST... I’m over here! Yes, I *know* I’m not on my usual stool at the bar, and I *know* I am speaking – very uncharacteristically - *in a whisper*, but there’s a good reason for all of that. Bedingfield the East Indies Club Steward is on holiday, and I cannot, CANNOT, be held responsible for my actions if I have any more dealings with the substitute bar manager. A ghastly little oik with suspiciously over-styled hair who claims to be a DJ on *BBC Oxford Interfering*, but apparently really works part-time pulling pints at The Eau Too Enormous. Talking of generic pissy lager, I swear he is ‘taking the Carling’ every time I order a drink. Here’s an example:

**Shotover:** Evening, barkeep. Usual please.

**Barman** [sniggering]: Orroight moi Ducklington? What do you Wantage to drink? You can bet I Woodstock your favourite beers if only I knew Witney were...!]

**Shotover:** Bah! PAH! HARRUMPH [retreats to table near the Gents, mine-sweeps a half-finished pint and starts throwing darts at signed photos of the East Indies Club Ice Hockey First XI on the wall]

It can’t go on. I have strong reason to believe that the man may at worst be a police ‘nark’. At the very least, he obviously fancies himself to be a hilarious wit and surrealist, a modern-day Oxonian Professor Stanley Unwin. Whereas he is in fact a blabbermouth, a biter, a chiseller and an all-round slimy MOTHERF... what’s that? He’s my NEPHEW? How did that happen? [Dr S removes a crumpled parchment with *Family Tree* scrawled at the top and begins to study it myopically while taking surreptitious sips from a dented hip-flask ... meanwhile *The Family Machine strike up* It’s a Family Affair by Sly and the Family Stone in the corner of the bar and everyone starts ‘gitting down’... lighters are held aloft... various *Nightshift* hacks stop playing ‘Grumpy Roadies’ on their smart phones and commence twerking wildly... even Our Stern-Yet-Fair Esteemed Editor is seen to crack a brief smile...]

**Next month: The Star is, like, SO last year**

YOUNG BARMAN: ‘Kraaaafterwerk? Is that a type o’ German laaaager?’

# INTRODUCING....

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

# BUG PRENTICE

**Who are they?**  
Bug Prentice is the band formed by local singer and guitarist Ally Craig. Ally started playing in Oxford as a solo artist ten years ago, but “eventually got sick of being alone on stage.” Subsequently he formed Bug Prentice with London-based drummer Stephen Gilchrist and bassist Ruth Goller. The band have played several festivals including Liberty Festival (a celebration of the Paralympics in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park) and Glastonbury. They recently finished work on debut album, ‘The Way It Crumbles’; the first taste of this is a download single, ‘Nicholas Ray’/‘Spoons’ through Soundcloud this month.

**What do they sound like?**  
Warped and fractured avant-punk. Ally manages the rare feat of mixing disarming vulnerability – almost frailty – with virulent abrasiveness, as if someone had opened a chest of sweet lullabies and taken a sonic sledgehammer to them. Or maybe Robert Wyatt locked in musical battle with Sonic Youth. Or, in Ally’s own words, “Silly words with pretty tunes, or vice versa. Dissonant chords, irregular time signatures, contrasting dynamics, spartan production... and hopefully quite catchy.”

**What inspires them?**  
“If it amuses me and there’s not already a song about it, I’ll probably at least try to write one. There’s a song on the forthcoming album inspired by a famous clip of a drunken Orson Welles trying to make a champagne commercial. “Ahhh, the French...”

**Career highlight so far:**  
“Being able to say I’ve played Glastonbury.”

**And the lowlight:**  
“Having to get into Glastonbury.”

**Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:**  
“Rebecca Mosley (and her Cogwheel Dogs). She’s one of my best friends, and an exceptionally gifted songwriter.”

**If they could only keep one album in the world, what would it be?\***  
“Does everyone else get to keep all of their albums? Or will they be pounding on my door demanding to hear The Album? I just don’t know if I could take that kind of responsibility. I’ll keep ‘Pony Express Record’ by Shudder To Think.”

**When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?**  
“At the Bullingdon in early March to coincide with the release of our single. Newcomers can expect songs with loud bits and quiet bits.”

**Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:**  
“Favourite thing: All the artists are genuinely friendly and supportive. Least favourite thing: Not enough venues have disabled access. I’ve missed out on a lot of great gigs over the years, and I can’t be the only one.”

**You might love them if you love:**  
Shellac; Shudder to Think; Sonic Youth; XTC; Cardiacs; Deerhoof; Robert Wyatt.

**Hear them here:**  
[soundcloud.com/bugprentice](http://soundcloud.com/bugprentice)

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# ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

## 20 YEARS AGO

March 1995 will go down as one of the most important months in Oxford music history. While the local gig scene continued to try and regroup after the closure of its core venues and *Curfew* magazine, a bunch of young lads called **Radiohead** released an album called ‘**The Bends**’ and music would never be the same again. Despite its modest initial commercial success – it went top 5 in the UK but never reached higher than 88 in the States – ‘The Bends’ was critically far better received than ‘Pablo Honey’ and would eventually go on to achieve triple platinum status, spawning five chart singles along the way, including classics ‘Fake Plastic Trees’, ‘Just’ and ‘Street Spirit (Fade Out)’. In the last two decades it’s regularly and rightly been hailed as one of – sometimes *the* – greatest and most influential albums of all time, occasionally pipped by its sequel, ‘OK Computer’, with Radiohead themselves recognised as one of music’s genuine game changers. Not bad for a group of schoolmates who started out playing to a few dozen fans in the Jericho Tavern. You see, people, small pub venues are where all tomorrow’s stars are born. Beyond this epoch-making moment, local experimental ‘earth music’ trio **The Aquabats** were pushing their own aural envelope this month, performing at **The Mill** in Banbury with over 500 different instruments on stage. The band – Tim Turan, Sue Smith and Phil Freizinger – also played a gig in **Wookie Hole**, 600ft beneath the ground. Giant gongs and microphones wrapped in condoms were involved, as was some seriously fevered imagination.

## 10 YEARS AGO

In a neat piece of symmetry, just as news reaches us that local pop-punk legends **Dive Dive** are preparing to record a new album, March 2005’s edition of *Nightshift* featured the band on the cover, celebrating their newly revitalised fortunes as they prepared to release what has become their signature tune, ‘5-5-5 For Filmstars’ on Diablo Records. Dive Dive, who formed from the ashes of Dustball, were the band who first inspired a young **Yannis Phillipakis** to pick up a guitar, and three quarters of whom went on to become Frank Turner’s backing band. Recruiting ex-**Unbelievable Truth** drummer Nigel Powell into their ranks had set them on a more determined path (“Nigel is the dictator of the band,” claimed singer Jamie Stuart, “he ‘helped’ me give up smoking. My voice has got better but I’ve lost some good friends.”), playing over a hundred gigs each year as well as releasing half a dozen singles on different indie labels. The band now found themselves a major influence on a new generation of local bands and sang the praises of their new local favourites – **Youthmovies**, **The Edmund Fitzgerald**, **Fell City Girl** and **Young Knives**, while declaring that “Oxford is blessed.”

And blessed it was this month with the launch of a new BBC Oxford radio show dedicated to local music – **The Download**, hosted by **Tim Bearder**, first aired on March 4<sup>th</sup> and featured an interview with Supergrass. The show would later be renamed Introducing as the Beeb stepped up its support for grassroots music, but, as is so often the case, Oxford led the way, and a decade on the show,

## THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

now helmed by **Dave Gilyeat**, is an essential part of the local scene.

## 5 YEARS AGO

And to celebrate its fifth anniversary on the airwaves, and coinciding with the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ‘The Bends’ **Introducing** released ‘**Round The Bends**’, Radiohead’s classic album covered by myriad local stars, including **Winchell Riots**, **Borderville**, **The Epstein**, **Little Fish**, **Witches** and **Xmas Lights**, as well as a star turn from **The Evenings**, turning ‘Street Spirit’ into a major key anthem. Introducing hosts Tim Bearder and Dave Gilyeat declared the show “proper public service broadcasting, exactly what the BBC should be about.” Amen to that.

In less celebratory news, **Stornoway**, **The Candyskins** and **Richard Walters** played a special instore show at **Videosyncratic**, which was shutting its doors for the final time. The video rental shop had become a hub for the local scene when it started selling local bands’ CDs, and while we mourned its closure (and its legendary customer service) it paved the way for **Truck Store** to open in its place.

Leaving us too were **Youthmovies**, who bowed out with a farewell show at The **O2 Academy**. “We are miles apart and it’s time for something new,” declared singer Andrew Mears, revealing plans for his new band, **Pet Moon**. “The best things about the past years have been all the travel, playing with people like Foals and Adam Gnade and getting paid to be antagonistic vagrants.”



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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### BEING EUGENE

Any band can be loud and fast, but if they haven't got the trousers to match the mouth, all that's going to happen is we get to trip them up and laugh as they rampage noisily down the street with their pants on show. Abingdon's Being Eugene have got a serious pair of trousers on. With guns in the pockets and held up by a big fuck-off spiky belt that's got half a dozen grenades hanging from it. This is fucking great pummelling, nagging, stomping groove-core beastliness of a particularly fine vintage. There's a subtle, supple tech-metal edge to the way they bend those riffs and grooves, but such is the singular purpose of their assault, you're too busy ducking killer blows to notice the neat, fancy stuff going on underneath. That's not to downplay the pin-tight orchestration of the band; there are moments of guile here that are just great, it's just they never sit still waiting for you to appreciate them – they're already off the other end of the field picking a new fight. The twin-vocal metalcore vocal thing feels like it was done to death sometime in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century but the two guys here mix and match effectively without letting the intensity of the music drop down even half a notch at any point and by the time you've reached the end of these five tracks you realise you've turned the volume dial to the point where local environmental health officers are being summoned by folks three streets away and your heart's pounding like a cornered gazelle but all ready to go again. Being Eugene: they're loud and fast and they've come to kill you. If we were you, we'd move house immediately.

### AMORAL COMPASS

As we shall see later, dear reader, slick professionalism is a seriously overrated virtue in music; give us ramshackle amateurism any day. It's more fun and doesn't immediately make us think you're only doing this to market your new line in fashion. If Amoral Compass launched a line of clothing it'd doubtless involve scraps of cloth held together by safety pins and an oily residue of indeterminate origin and have weird appendages that didn't really have anything to do with the main bit of the clothes at all. So it is with the jarring incongruity of the trio's music and vocals. Based on a dead-eyed drum machine thump, the guitars are a nasty, spindly industrial rumble and clang of the kind we are complete suckers for here

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

at *Nightshift*. On opener 'Get Soaked' they sound like shards of noise swept up from a factory floor and brought to life by stray sparks from the grinder. But that voice – doleful doesn't even start to describe the flat sense of ennui it conveys. We're really not sure these two sides were ever intended to meet and become one. And maybe that's the point. Once such disassociation starts to wear thin, the band switch singers but the new vocalist, Celina, sounds even more detached from life's joys and the whole thing ends up sounding a bit like an uncompromisingly messy, lo-fi post-punk imagining of a particularly pessimistic Arab Strap track. And if you can't see that as a good thing then really, you are no longer welcome round here. Incidentally, this demo is presented as an EP titled 'Write Drunk, Record Drunk, Listen Drunk'; admirable sentiments for bands and reviewers alike. Cheers!

### WARDENS

The industrial feel continues with Wardens, albeit with the machinery switched on to maximum power and the gravitational field ramped up five-fold. If we describe Wardens as solid, we don't mean it in that staid, safe pub-rock kind of way, more that if you drove a bus into them the bus would crumple like a delicate sponge cake on impact. This is dirty, nasty and noisy. And did we mention heavy? Yes, it's heavy. The guitar alone could scour the paint from an oncoming Panzer division without breaking a sweat and the whole thing is propelled forward through sheer brute force and an unstoppable sense of purpose. They sound like Queens of the Stone Age at their gnarliest, but with a serious stoner groove carrying everything onwards at an almost stately pace. They might not be as lithe as Being Eugene and they don't move fast but when Wardens do move you best get out the way. Not unless you fancy a future as a puddle of something sticky.

### MOMENTO

A sharp change of mood now after all that clanging and fuzzing and general uppityness. Momento have got a harp. Can't remember the last time we had a harp in the demo pile. Harps are cool; they remind us of a better place we might end up going to if we do all our chores and rid the world of rubbish music before bedtime. Momento also have a djemba and, according to their line-up details, a bouzouki. All of which suggests there'll be precious little essence of Noel Gallagher involved. And so it turns out, with the band wavering between a multitude of worldly folk styles – from English to Middle Eastern and onto Balkan – with a hazy lack of purpose. In stark contrast to Being Eugene they aren't up for any kind of fight

and in no hurry to go anyplace there might be the risk of one, instead taking a decidedly downbeat venture down tree-lined paths that lead from Wytham Woods to a Bedouin encampment via a gypsy funeral, chants and laments wandering off seemingly at random to visit isolated pools of airy contemplation. Sometimes it feels like a lot of different musical styles trying – but not too hard – to coalesce into something coherent, but in the end no-one seems particularly bothered if it doesn't happen. In fact the only thing puncturing the general air of slightly hippyish geniality is the odd ping sound throughout 'Heaven Has An Outline' that has us constantly checking the dishwasher to see if its finished its cycle.

### DANNY JEFFRIES

"I know it's not your sort of thing," says Danny Jeffries of his demo. Not sure how he knows what is or isn't *Nightshift*'s sort of thing without sifting in great detail through the tens of thousands of records, CDs and downloads of each and every contributors' collection, but we'll take his word for it. For who knows our tastes better than Danny? And you know what, beloved readers? Danny's dead right. This isn't our sort of thing. Well, in as much as "sort of thing" means the sort of thing we might enjoy listening to or recommending to friends as something worthy of their precious time, rather than the "sort of thing" we carefully avoid stepping in on the pavement or removing from the bottom of the bin with the aid of a pair of Marigolds and lots of bleach. Idle acoustic guitar strumming and vocal noises that emerge as odd squawks and bleats or flat, toneless wailing don't seem to be high on the "my sort of thing" of anyone in close proximity when we conduct a quick straw poll. "I'm no good," he opines wearily at the end of the nominally flamenco-flavoured 'Split In Two'; Danny's sense of awareness obviously knows no bounds.

### BURIED BY BEARS

Buried By Bears have their own slick Youtube channel, Instagram and Facebook pages and a Twitter account. All well and good of course, but they only played their first gig three months ago and this is their first demo. At what point did band's priorities get so spectacularly skewed that having a shiny online prolife was more important than writing a decent fucking song? It makes us cry, people, it really does. Call us old fashioned, called us dinosaurs if you will, but we're not exactly calling for the return of skiffle and the abandonment of fancy electronic instruments here, just that maybe musicians (the clue's in the title) concentrate on giving the world something worth hearing before providing a smorgasbord of platforms on which to hear it, comment on it, like it, follow it, share it and, oh, dunno, stuff a jam doughnut up its backside. It's like sending a rocket to Mars before you've even checked

properly to see where in the vast openness of space Mars actually is. Oh, sure, this isn't terrible as such – it's proficient, polished, well-produced and given their short time together, professional sounding, but since when did words like that elicit anything resembling excitement? The accompanying email suggests Buried By Bears are inspired by Lower Than Atlantis. Copied note for note might be a closer description. They fit neatly into that less than seething morass of near identikit bands that are laughably labelled post-hardcore (so, hardcore with all the good, angry bits taken out in case the church youth club congregation get scared) but seem to keep reproducing like bacteria on a warm Petri dish. Boys, if those online options are so important, maybe use them to download a couple of Black Flag albums, or something by Big Black or Fucked Up or The Minutemen, or... anything nasty and noisy and angry and dirty that hasn't been buffed and polished to a point of anonymity. Then go and wash a couple of tabs of acid down with a 3 litre bottle of cheap scrumpy and write something that will break the internet into a trillion tiny pieces. Then send us a copy; we'd love to hear it.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### MATTY BINGHAM

Maybe we shouldn't have judged Buried By Bears so harshly so quickly. At least they're obviously capable of clicking some buttons on a computer screen and playing most of the notes in the right order. Matty here seems to struggle with basic concepts like writing a short, simple letter with rudimentary punctuation or supplying a tracklisting for his CD, so it's probably no surprise he doesn't seem to have any kind of online presence we can investigate (purely for the purpose of hunting him down like a fugitive heifer from a slaughterhouse – a heifer being something his voice occasionally reminds us of, notably when he's declaring his love for a no-doubt slightly terrified young lady who's already changed her phone number three times since that encounter in the college bar in Freshers' Week). So, looks like we'll have to name the songs ourselves. The first track will be called 'Self-Pitying Heap of Sub-Bob Dylan Shite'; the second can go under the title 'Wretched, Churning Waste of Everyone's Time', while the closing number goes under the succinct moniker 'Aren't You Dead Yet?'. Oh Hell, that's it. Poor old Matty is actually dead. He choked on his own vomit after downing the quadruple gin and tonic he bought for that poor young lady who said she was just popping to the loo and never came back, having emigrated to Jupiter just in case he came after her. And someone recorded the final gurgling moments and presented it to us as a music demo. And we laughed at it. How damned insensitive.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net), clearly marked Demos. **IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact address and phone number; no more than four tracks on a demo please. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. 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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**Email: [richardwalsh@cyard.com](mailto:richardwalsh@cyard.com)**  
**Phone: Richard or Kate on 01235 845800**

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+ TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER**  
**SUNDAY 1ST MARCH**  
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# KIM CHURCHILL

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**'What Does Anything Mean? Basically' Tour**

**MONDAY 1ST JUNE**  
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